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Humanity 'Hurtling Toward Destruction' With Out-of-Control Consumerism, Russian Defense Chief Says

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Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. **The Council of Federation / flickr (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)**

Humanity is hurtling toward its own destruction through unrestrained consumerism, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said in an interview on the anniversary of a 19th-century exploration and geography society he presides over.

"I believe humanity is taking leaps and bounds toward its own destruction and the reason for that is the unrestrained desire for consumption," Shoigu told Russia's oldest travel magazine Vokrug Sveta.

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In a nod to his Siberian roots, Shoigu brought up his grandfather — "he hunted just enough animals in the taiga because he knew he wouldn't eat that much meat and there would be

fewer animals next year" — as an example of restraint.

"These are rules created not by the bureaucracy but by a way of life," said Shoigu, who has been photographed every summer in recent years vacationing in his native taiga with President Vladimir Putin.

"You hunt one rabbit and you'll be full. But when you have 10 carcasses you already need a fridge, otherwise the meat will go bad," Shoigu said. "For the fridge to work, you need electricity. For that, you need to burn fuel, which you need to get first. But why do you need these 10 rabbits?"

"I dream that one day everyone will understand that it's time to stop this crazy race of consumerism," Shoigu, who is also president of the Russian Geographical Society NGO, lamented.

Putin this summer named Shoigu and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to top the ruling United Russia party's ticket for next month's high-stakes parliamentary elections.

Observers widely view Putin's move as an effort to revive United Russia's historically low approval ratings. Shoigu and Lavrov enjoy fairly positive ratings themselves but are not expected to take up seats in the State Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, when the party is widely anticipated to maintain its supermajority during the Sept. 17-19 vote.

Shoigu's interview was timed for the 176th anniversary of the Russian Geographical Society, which was founded in St. Petersburg in 1845 to promote exploration and geographic research.

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