The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

CIA Tells Russians Frustrated by Putin's War: 'We're Open for Business'

November 23, 2022



Russians fleeing mobbilization head for the Georgian border in September. **AP / TASS**

The CIA is seeking to recruit Russian nationals angry with the course of Russia's war in Ukraine, a senior official in the U.S. foreign intelligence ageny has said.

CIA Director of Operations David Marlowe noted that President Vladimir Putin's failure to achieve his military and security goals in the nine-month invasion of Ukraine has given the CIA a useful recruitment opportunity.

"Putin was at his best moment the day before he invaded because he had all the coercive power that he's ever gonna have," Marlowe said at an academic panel discussion in in Arlington, Virginia last week.

Listing concessions from Ukraine, dividing NATO and projecting Russia's military, economic and diplomatic power as Putin's initial objectives, Marlowe said: "He's squandered every single bit of that."

“And so, for the director of operations, we’re looking around the world for Russians who are as disgusted with that as we are because we’re open for business,” he added.

Related article: Half of Russian Spies in Europe Expelled Since Ukraine War – British Spy Chief

More than 400,000 Russians are believed to have left Russia in the months following Putin’s decision to invade Ukraine in February, while a further 700,000 Russians were estimated by the Kremlin to have left the country in the two weeks since Putin declared the “partial” mobilization of reserves in mid-September.

According to The Wall Street Journal, which first reported on Marlowe’s recruitment pitch on Tuesday, the sitting CIA official’s rare public remarks took place before a select audience of faculty and staff at George Mason University’s Hayden Center for Intelligence, Policy and International Security.

Despite wondering aloud if Marlowe’s comments were just an example of “CIA bravado,” The Wall Street Journal noted that the continuing war in Ukraine had unleashed an “intensified spy war” in Europe.

The head of Britain’s MI6 foreign intelligence agency estimates that more than 400 Russian intelligence officers operating under diplomatic cover had been expelled as of this summer, while the Kremlin has cut U.S. and European diplomatic presence in tit-for-tat expulsions.

The Wall Street Journal also cited Western officials saying that CIA and MI6 personnel were providing training and conducting operations on the ground in Ukraine.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/11/23/cia-tells-russians-frustrated-by-putins-war-were-open-for-business-a79476