

Defense Ministry: Unlike U.S., No Anti-Depressants for Soldiers

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A Defense Ministry official took a swipe at the U.S. practice of treating soldiers with anti-depressants, noting that the Russian military, in contrast, does not use medication to treat psychological health issues.

The comments come in the wake of an incident in which an American soldier who may have been suffering from mental health issues killed 16 civilians in Afghanistan.

"The fact that Americans have big moral and psychological problems is written about widely. And then they treat them (soldiers) with anti-depressants. In fact, of course, they don't reach desired outcomes by doing this," Defense Ministry medical official Anatoly Kalmykov said during an interview, RIA-Novosti reported.

Kalmykov acknowledged that psychological problems exist among Russian soldiers but downplayed their effect because they do not occur on a mass scale.

"By the way, after the first and second military conflicts in Chechnya, the Afghan war, and the

appearance of the so-called 'Afghan' syndrome, analysis done by us has shown that Soviet and Russian military personnel have (psychological syndromes) much less frequently," he said.

Kalmykov suggested the difference might be attributed to a higher tolerance for stress among Russian soldiers and officers.

"Maybe we have a higher moral and psychological stability; At least in my case, I served 12 of my 25 years in zones of intense conflict, and for some reason I have had no moral or psychological breakdown," he said.

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