

# Russia's Putin Calls the Internet a 'CIA Project'

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Moscow (AP) — President Vladimir Putin has mocked the Internet as a CIA project and pledged to protect Russia's interests online.

The Kremlin has been anxious to exert greater control over the Internet, which opposition activists — barred from national television — have used to promote their ideas and organize protests.

Russia's parliament this week passed a law requiring social media websites to keep their servers in Russia and save all information about their users for at least half a year. Also, businessmen close to Putin now control Russia's leading social media network, VKontakte.

Speaking Thursday at a media forum in St. Petersburg, Putin said that the Internet originally was a "CIA project" and "is still developing as such."

To resist that influence, Putin said, Russia needs to "fight for its interests" online.

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