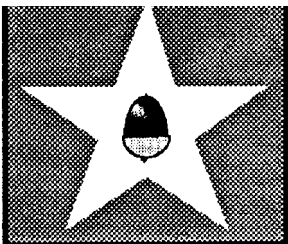


**Conflict Studies Research Centre**

**Gordon Bennett**

**The SVR  
Russia's Intelligence Service**

**March 2000**



**C103**

## Table of Contents

<b>After the PGU</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Primakov's Ideal Job</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Saving the SVR</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Downsizing</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Survive &amp; Impress</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The SVR's Legal Basis</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The New Areas of Interest</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The CIS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The Main Opponent &amp; Its Allies</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>After Primakov</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The Tasks</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Training New Agents</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The New SVR</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>The Future</b>	<b>19</b>

# The SVR Russia's Intelligence Service

**Gordon Bennett**

*There are friendly states but there are no friendly intelligence services*

## **After the PGU**

The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the disappearance of the most powerful security organisation ever created - the KGB. The KGB's omnipresence in the USSR and its extensive network abroad was the result of the Soviet leadership's determination to control the population inside the USSR, and until the mid 1980s, in accordance with Marxist-Leninist principles, to propel its version of communism as far and as wide as was politically, militarily and financially feasible. The KGB was the sword and shield of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, its occasional Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a research organisation forced sometimes to produce analysis which had nothing to do with its statutory mission and which appropriate institutes in Moscow could have done better<sup>1</sup>. The political need to pamper the KGB translated well into almost unlimited funds, facilities, the ability to place KGB personnel in any Soviet organisation, inside or abroad and job offers no other organisation could match<sup>2</sup>. Its foreign intelligence gathering and processing body was known as the PGU, the Russian acronym for the First Chief Directorate. Foreign Minister Boris Pankin said once that 50% of the Soviet staff in the US were working for the PGU. The unofficial FBI figure was 25%<sup>3</sup>.

PGU personnel were paid well, given acceptable housing, had their own separate services and facilities<sup>4</sup>. When working abroad they were paid partly in convertible currencies and by virtue of being abroad had access to goods the rest of the country could only dream of. The PGU staff were regarded as an elite even within their own organisation<sup>5</sup>. At a time when only selected Soviet nationals were able to travel as tourists to the countries regarded in Moscow as sufficiently socialist and western gadgets and items of clothing were obtainable only on the black market for exorbitant sums, living and working in the West guaranteed decent living back home. The career of the Soviet intelligence officer also provided challenges, adventures and risks which attracted many suitable candidates. The required constant display of strong patriotism blended with communist ideology, was attractive for the young generation growing up in the post-war Soviet Union<sup>6</sup>. The PGU made the USSR an intelligence superpower and its image of invincibility was boosted by films, TV programmes and books showing the Soviet knights of cloak and dagger as undefeated defenders of the Soviet Union and the progressive world. No alternative views, or making public failures of intelligence officers, were ever permitted<sup>7</sup>. The PGU had therefore no difficulties in attracting intelligent and dynamic graduates from the most prestigious establishments of higher education in the USSR. With time, ideology and post war threat perception became less important motivators and the effectiveness of the PGU was diluted by a growing contingent of officers whose excellent connections in Moscow were not matched by their skills or devotion to their profession<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless the PGU was one of the few "Made in USSR" creations treated with (grudging) respect by its allies and enemies alike.

The PGU covered every country which the Soviet leadership regarded as important. The importance of a country depended on:

- its physical proximity to the USSR,
- its proximity or importance to Soviet adversaries,
- its attitude towards the USSR,
- its scientific and industrial development,
- its natural resources, depending on their importance on the world market,
- its readiness to copy the Soviet political and economic system,
- the USA's presence on its territory,
- its usefulness for the "class struggle" and
- its position as a recruiting ground.

The consequence of this list was a total intelligence network covering the whole world. The nature of its activities also reflected the breadth and depth of the KGB interest. In its collection of information the PGU worked like a gigantic vacuum cleaner with a substandard main filter, accepting valuable information with paper work and information from small and distant countries of little or no importance for the USSR. PGU interests were mainly of a political, technical and economic nature, but it also looked at ideological friends and opponents of the Soviet Union, "useful" minorities in targeted countries, conducted propaganda and disinformation campaigns, ran publishing projects, paid attention to religious movements and ferried large sums of money to fraternal communist parties and organisations<sup>9</sup>. In their tasks the KGB was assisted by the special services of the Warsaw Pact members, other friendly countries such as Mongolia or Cuba and rapidly dwindling networks of ideological friends and fellow travellers<sup>10</sup>. The Soviet Union also controlled the Warsaw Pact security database, SOUD<sup>11</sup>, a system set up before the Moscow Olympic Games and with the original task of collecting information on special services and organisations and individuals "hostile" to the USSR<sup>12</sup>. The KGB and its Warsaw Pact allies trained security and intelligence personnel of 50 intelligence services in the Third World, creating not always reliable but on the whole useful contacts for decades. The PGU was occasionally helped by the greedy, the frustrated, the resentful and the disillusioned citizens of democracies.

The difficulties facing KGB officers working abroad were the security restrictions imposed on them as a reciprocal gesture in most countries, a general awareness of the Soviet espionage efforts built up by many countries and the media, always ready to use a good story. Very few Soviet nationals could travel to non-communist countries. Soviet citizens in the West were there almost always in some official capacity. They were economically unattractive visitors able to spend small amounts on cheap souvenirs. Among them, a tiny privileged group of individuals with money and feeling at ease stood out immediately and were invariably either CPSU officials or KGB personnel. All business transactions were official affairs conducted by the Soviet state with predictable people and methods involved. Outside the world of the ideological left the Russians were usually feared and distrusted and patronised frequently for the wrong reasons. All this was to change with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

For the KGB, the less enchanting side of CPSU patronage was its ideological control. The CPSU expected to receive from the HQ in Lubyanka and indirectly from Yasenevo information confirming all its political theories or at least not contradicting them. The ruling CPSU did not want to receive information suggesting that the West was not as aggressive and cruel as they wished themselves into believing. The information which the CPSU wanted and received from the PGU ultimately drew the whole country into the arms race. Vadim Bakatin, the last chairman of the USSR KGB said, referring to the information he received from his subordinates, that "so far everything I have seen and read is at the level of the

information of Radio Liberty..."<sup>13</sup>. Vyacheslav Nikonov, Bakatin's assistant during the purges, described a large part of the PGU reports to the centre as the West's reactions to statements made by the Soviet leaders or Western assessments of the situation in the USSR<sup>14</sup>.

The coup of August 1991 should not have damaged the PGU. Physically distant from other parts of the KGB, the directorate was removed from the internal affairs of the country. Its head, Lieutenant-General Leonid Shebarshin, kept his subordinates away from the conflict and retained his job. His directorate became a target of sniping from many directions. One of the most annoying must have been a campaign conducted by the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Boris Pankin, given the job because he was the only Soviet ambassador who stood publicly against the organisers of the August putsch. He began an anti KGB crusade, emphasising the numbers of KGB personnel in the diplomatic service and demanding a drastic reduction in PGU officers using diplomatic cover<sup>15</sup>. One of the first moves made by Pankin after his appointment was disbanding the Main Personnel Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This allowed him to fire all the KGB officers working in the directorate. In mid-September 1991 the head of the PGU, Shebarshin, paid Pankin a visit which allowed the Foreign Minister to complain that in spite of losing their jobs, the KGB officers refused to leave the ministry building. They all left two hours after Shebarshin's visit.

Shebarshin objected to Bakatin's management methods and decided to resign when the Chairman announced the nomination of a new First Deputy Director of the PGU, Colonel Vladimir Mikhaylovich Rozhkov, transferred from the Second Chief Directorate responsible for counterintelligence. After a brief conversation with Bakatin, on 18 September 1991, Shebarshin resigned<sup>16</sup>. His replacement was not found immediately. The caretaker until the end of the month was General Gurgenov, but Bakatin had a list of suitable outsiders for the job. Number one candidate on the list was academician Yevgeniy Primakov<sup>17</sup>. He was acceptable to Gorbachev, but not to Yel'tsin. Yel'tsin was unhappy with Primakov's orthodox and active communist past. It took time before he accepted Primakov's candidature<sup>18</sup>. Primakov was a happy choice for the PGU, whose analysts saw him as their probable future boss well before his appointment<sup>19</sup>. In his previous posts he had contacts with the intelligence organ, "knew it well", fulfilled earlier intelligence tasks and "had continuing contacts with the First Chief Directorate of the KGB"<sup>20</sup>. Primakov took the helm of the unhappy ship in Yasenevo on 1 October 1991 with the title of the Head of the PGU and First Deputy Chairman of the USSR KGB<sup>21</sup>. The Soviet Union, for which Primakov and his new underlings had worked for their whole lives, was falling apart. No one could envisage what would happen to the intelligence community after their Chairman, Bakatin, gave the Americans plans of the listening devices in the new US Embassy without getting anything in return.

The Russian republican KGB organs were building their own organisations and even the RSFSR KGB was planning to have its own intelligence directorate. As in the All Union KGB, it was called the First (although not the Chief) Directorate and was headed by Major-General V Fisenko. The directorate had originally 150 job openings but very few were taken as Yevgeniy Primakov struggled successfully to save his organisation<sup>22</sup>. The number of people employed by the First Chief Directorate was estimated at 12,000<sup>23</sup>. Bakatin mentioned 12,000-15,000 people transferred when in the first post-August reforms the PGU became briefly the Central Intelligence Service (TsRS)<sup>24</sup>. The issue of who in Russia was going to conduct intelligence work was not settled until the end of 1991. After the Russian KGB was transformed into the Federal Security Agency (AFB) its head, Major-

General Viktor Ivanenko, said publicly that the intelligence work abroad would be conducted by the TsRS and the AFB would conduct intelligence work on Russian territory and therefore the agency would not be setting up agents in what he regarded as foreign countries. However, he did not rule out the possibility of organising intelligence networks in former republics of the Soviet Union<sup>25</sup>. The PGU and then the TsRS tried to salvage as much as possible from the crumbling All Union intelligence assets. The Russians held talks with several of their republican counterparts to explore the possibility of joint intelligence operations on the territory of the FSU republics<sup>26</sup>.

The TsRS<sup>27</sup> survived almost two months. It was renamed the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) on 18 December 1991, a separate body subordinate to President Yel'tsin. The Soviet Union was to disappear officially a week later. Primakov rang Yel'tsin, asking who was going to implement the new reforms. Yel'tsin told Primakov that he trusted him but that there were misgivings in the SVR leadership<sup>28</sup>. Yel'tsin went to Yasenevo on 26 December 1991 to talk to the leadership of the SVR. It was the first ever visit of a Russian/Soviet head of state to the intelligence HQ. He was received by 40-50 people whom he told, "You intelligence officers are courageous people and this is why I expect from you frank opinions about your leader"<sup>29</sup>. Twelve high ranking SVR officials took the floor. All of them supported Primakov. Yel'tsin signed on the spot Decree 316, nominating Primakov for the post of SVR director<sup>30</sup>.

### **Primakov's Ideal Job**

Before becoming officially a full-time intelligence employee, Primakov met and befriended several high ranking KGB officials. These were the former station heads in Turkey, Aleksey Savich Voskoboy and Vladlen Nikolayevich Fedorov, in the USA Dmitri Ivanovich Yakushkin and Boris Aleksandrovich Solomatin, in Japan Yuriy Ivanovich Popov; also Viktor Nikolayevich Spolnikov, the KGB official representative in Kabul at the time of the Soviet intervention in 1979 and Sergey Mikhaylovich Golubev, resident in Egypt at the end of the 1970s. Some of Primakov's KGB colleagues were still at Yasenevo when he took over the SVR. General Zaytsev, with whom Primakov drove in 1976 through war-torn Beirut, and who later became the KGB representative in Kabul, was almost immediately sent to Belgrade as the SVR representative, General Gurgenov accompanied Primakov during his visits to Saddam Hussein before the Desert Storm campaign, General Kirpichenko with whom he studied at the Oriental Institute was his senior consultant. He also knew General Trubnikov, who was later to replace him as SVR Director.

The new director wanted the return of Lieutenant-General Shebarshin but could only offer him the position of First Deputy Director. There were three other problems with that nomination: the position of first deputy was occupied by Vadim Bakatin's appointee, Rozhkov, Yel'tsin did not trust Shebarshin<sup>31</sup>, and Shebarshin did not want the job<sup>32</sup>. Primakov was forced to abandon the idea. However, the tandem Primakov-Rozhkov was not sufficiently professional or experienced and Primakov was aware of this. Even when the PGU became an independent body Primakov could not replace Rozhkov. Only after the departure of Vadim Bakatin and the decree abolishing the Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs did Primakov succeed in promoting his candidate, Trubnikov, to the position of First Deputy Director of the SVR<sup>33</sup>. Primakov offered Rozhkov a demotion to Deputy Director with the specific responsibility for combating organised crime with links abroad. Rozhkov accepted the offer. Primakov also brought with him two assistants, Robert Vartanovich Markaryan, who had been Primakov's assistant for many years and

Rear-Admiral Yuriy Antonovich Zubakov, a music teacher conscripted as young man into the Navy, where he made a career as a naval counterintelligence expert<sup>34</sup>. Zubakov became Deputy Director of the SVR responsible for personnel<sup>35</sup>. Primakov head-hunted into the SVR another outsider, Lieutenant-General Ivan Ivanovich Gorelovskiy, and offered him the position of deputy director responsible for administration.

### **Saving the SVR**

Primakov continued battling on all fronts to save the SVR. The PGU had in its history only one professional intelligence officer as its head. The nomination of Primakov was the next best thing the service could expect. He was highly experienced in bureaucratic combat and manipulation at every level and was a foreign affairs specialist. With his colourful ethnic and educational background he was an ideal choice to talk to political and security leaders in near and far abroad countries. In spite of his image as an aggressive and slippery interlocutor on the international arena, he was calm, patient and a very agreeable person to work with<sup>36</sup>. He attempted to undo the damage done to the service by politicians and the collapsing economy. His most urgent and immediate problem was intelligence personnel leaving the service. He succeeded in bringing intelligence personnel back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by successfully lobbying Yel'tsin who personally signed orders transferring intelligence personnel to the Ministry<sup>37</sup>. (During his first press conferences after he became Minister of Foreign Affairs Primakov joked that no one should worry about new transfers from the Intelligence Service to the Ministry because they were there already.)

With his foreign affairs experience Primakov was able to change the SVR's strategic outlook. Some geographic departments were merged and the economic department was upgraded to a directorate. Primakov redirected the SVR from mainly geographic directions to international issues occupying all major governments and intelligence services, such as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, transnational organised crime, the international drug trade and international terrorism. All this was to be undertaken without abandoning the primary task of the service, to spy on the opposition. The tasking readjustments were confirmed at a very early stage in the reforms by one of the new political appointees, Air Force Major-General Nikolay Stolyarov, deputy chairman of the USSR KGB<sup>38</sup>. Primakov added yet another item to the task list of his organisation: preventing regional conflicts from developing into global crisis<sup>39</sup>, officially giving the SVR a broader operational remit.

Primakov saved the SVR. The service was not involved in internal political battles and Primakov and his team were respected and liked in the Kremlin. By 1994 he succeeded in solving most of the urgent and immediate problems. The beginning of 1994 marked two important events in SVR history: completion of several reforms and the arrest of Aldrich Ames, the most successful foreign spy in the USA. His arrest on 21 February 1994 and American reactions shook the SVR. In the light of the slowly emerging facts the Russians did not look very pretty. Not only did they spy on the USA when talking peace - the Americans were able to be self-righteous about it only because most of their own intelligence assets had been betrayed by Ames - but also all but one of those betrayed by him were shot. As if to stress the importance of the SVR Boris Yel'tsin visited Yasenevo on 27 April 1994 and spoke to the rank and file members of the service. Speaking to 800 employees of the SVR, Yel'tsin said that for the first time in history Russia had a law on foreign intelligence service, and that at a time when military budgets were being cut, intelligence

information was becoming an important guarantee of security. This, he said, means that the role of intelligence should and will increase. “Extensive use is made of the methods of secret diplomacy in the practice of international relations. We should be able to look under the cover of these secrets so as not to be caught napping”<sup>40</sup>.

Primakov had introduced an illusion of openness by authorising publication, on 28 January 1993, of the first ever Russian intelligence organisation report. The report, entitled “New Challenge After the Cold War: Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction”, was based on Russian and foreign open sources and urged the nuclear powers, USA, UK, China and France to cut their existing nuclear weapons stocks and to control their fissionable materials. Primakov was also behind the publication of a 6-volume history of Russian civilian intelligence organs and a CD on a similar theme. None of these efforts impressed potential partners or opponents but it underlined the SVR’s legal existence in Russian society and was a small part of its recruiting campaign. Primakov was also behind the SVR report on “Russia-CIS: Does the West’s Position Need Modification?” released in September 1994, which comprehensively covered all aspects of CIS cooperation but dwelled too much on the past: it presented the West and Islamic extremism as threats to CIS cohesion<sup>41</sup>.

### **The Downsizing**

In the immediate post Soviet years the SVR was cut by 30-40%<sup>42</sup>. Yuriy Kobaladze, the head of the SVR press office, announced that the SVR missions abroad were being cut by 50%<sup>43</sup>, that “the Russian intelligence staff is now being reduced both in the centre and abroad, throughout the world” including the USA, Sweden, Germany and Italy. The SVR strove to achieve “reasonable sufficiency”<sup>44</sup>. Cynics pointed out that the reductions in the USA had something to do with the Ukrainian and Belorussian delegations in the UN and associated organisations becoming independent, the reductions in Germany included the 14 KGB liaison offices in the GDR and the counterintelligence personnel of the Western Group of Forces returning to Russia and the downsizing in Sweden and Italy could be the result of two defections from the KGB. A year later Kobaladze said that 30 SVR residencies had been closed down in recent times<sup>45</sup>.

1992 was the most difficult year because of an exodus of qualified personnel from Yasenevo. Those whose departure was most painfully felt were the mid-level and middle aged officers with experience of working abroad<sup>46</sup>. The haemorrhage was stopped in 1993<sup>47</sup>. By the mid 90s there was also an increasing number of reserve personnel wanting to return<sup>48</sup>. Most of the reductions in the KGB teams operating abroad were unavoidable, for the following reasons:

- The USSR abandoned its ideological antagonistic posture towards the free market area and those who regarded their work as a part of an ideological battle had no business in the new system.
- Because the PGU served as the cash courier for the CPSU and the new leaders were happy to expropriate the CPSU funds, the 20 million hard currency roubles deposited by the intelligence-gathering community in the USSR in the Bank of Foreign Economic Relations was frozen<sup>49</sup>.
- Members of the political intelligence departments often indirectly worked for the CPSU. The new leadership in Moscow had direct lines to the Western leaders and opinion forming bodies and the new Russian media provided good coverage of the world affairs.



- The technical intelligence work in the developed countries was, in theory at least, still important. However, the system of procurement which gave various industries the opportunity to request from the KGB what they wanted to have stolen for them, was also falling apart. Many of the “clients” suddenly found themselves in other countries, the centrally budgeted industries were not able to pay. They gradually ceased to be able to produce what they specialised in, and even if they were, the state was not able to pay for their products<sup>50</sup>.
- The work of propaganda and disinformation in its Soviet form was pointless if Russia had no political media restrictions.
- The front companies had to either make money or disappear.
- Owners of the private media could not be forced or intimidated to accept journalists working full time for someone else, ie the SVR.
- Cryptography became the responsibility of FAPSI, the government communications service.
- Military counterintelligence officers in the Russian embassies did not belong to the SVR.
- Many officers were leaving the service either because the outside world was paying better or they had families in other republics.

The speed with which the USSR fell apart and the accompanying chaos made it impossible to plan and coherently implement the downsizing of the intelligence structures. In some cases it was difficult to supply officers working abroad with money because the usual money carriers were recalled home and the front companies closed down. Igor Nikulin, member of the parliamentary committee responsible for law and order, reported to the parliament that once a decision had been made to cut the foreign personnel of external services and to freeze foreign currency accounts in the USSR it was becoming impossible to pay the wages and even to get the people back to Russia<sup>51</sup>. Disillusioned and resentful, many officers began to look for other jobs after their return home<sup>52</sup>. They were for the first time allowed to retire prematurely and apply for jobs in private companies. Russia found itself in a situation in which even a realistic threat to its national interest would not be acted on because the country’s political chaos and economic situation would not allow it.

### **Survive and Impress**

Every day Yel'tsin received information sent from Yasenevo and on Mondays Primakov would give the president a detailed briefing on required subjects<sup>53</sup>. Yel'tsin was informed about world events, how they should be perceived and what should be done. In the past the PGU had sent its reports to the KGB HQ in the Lubyanka where they were sanitised for the weekly briefings of the leadership. Sometimes Lubyanka ordered what the reports from Yasenevo should or should not contain. Unlike his predecessors, Primakov was subordinated directly to the president and briefed him sticking religiously to facts. The subject matter, plus his acting talents and extensive experience in briefing VIPs and the inclusion into his presentations of information about quirks and strange habits of people Yel'tsin wanted to know about must have been a breath of fresh air in the Kremlin, heavy with intrigues and political mudslinging. In spite of his popularity, Primakov was never close to Yel'tsin and made no attempt to get closer. Unlike Minister of Foreign Affairs Kozyrev, he was not a target of attacks by the hard-liners in the Duma. He not only worked in Yasenevo but occupied one of the houses in the SVR village which he relinquished only after becoming Prime Minister. He did not hang around the Kremlin, the Duma or seek another career. The new director tried to the best of his abilities to stem the outflow of officers to the private sector. General Gorelovskiy

was instrumental in restoring order in the SVR administration and improving the personnel's facilities and services. Primakov persuaded Yel'tsin to allocate suitable accommodation to the most needy SVR officers<sup>54</sup>.

### **The SVR's Legal Basis**

The SVR was set up as an independent state body by Presidential Edict 293 on 18 December 1991<sup>55</sup>. Sergey Stepashin, Chairman of the Russian parliament's Committee for Defence and Security, said in June 1992 that the following month the parliament was expected to adopt a law on intelligence because the service had been functioning, after the division of the KGB, only on the basis of Boris Yel'tsin's decree setting up the SVR<sup>56</sup>. The Russian Duma enacted the law "On Foreign Intelligence [Organs]" on 8 July 1992 and the provision on the intelligence organs was ratified by the President<sup>57</sup>. The decree of 30 September 1992 on the reorganisation of the Government of the Russian Federation envisaged changing the name of the SVR. This decision was annulled by a decree of 7 October 1992. The law was amended in December 1993. The new version of the Law "On Foreign Intelligence [Organs]" was accepted by the Duma in December 1995 and signed by Yel'tsin on 10 January 1996<sup>58</sup>. Among other points, the law stipulates that the organs of foreign intelligence:

- acquire and process information affecting vital interests of the Russian Federation;
- assist the state in implementing measures ensuring the security of Russia;
- are allowed to conduct their activities not only to ensure the country's security but also for the benefit of the economic, scientific and technical development of the country (Art 5);
- protect employees of Russian institutions abroad, and their families;
- ensure security of individuals with access to state secrets, and their families, on official assignments abroad;
- are allowed to cooperate with foreign special services within the framework of the existing law and in accordance with appropriate treaties;
- may establish their own information systems and communication, except cryptographic work.

Financing of intelligence organs is considered by appropriate committees and subcommittees of the Federal Assembly during closed sessions. The relevant financial decisions have to be approved by both chambers at closed meetings. Article 9 includes a section aimed at protecting intelligence organ employees against too inquisitive members of the media. The law forbids the organs to use intelligence methods against Russian citizens in Russia.

Presidential supervision of all the activities of the intelligence organs are described in Articles 2, 4, 5, 10, 12 and 14. The law gives the president the right to nominate the leadership of all Russian intelligence organs and gives him complete control over operational and organisational matters. The parliament has a limited right to monitor the financial issues concerning intelligence organs (Art 24)<sup>59</sup> and the General Prosecutor is permitted (Art 25) to monitor whether the organs respect federal laws. The members of the Security Committee and subcommittees of the State Duma and the Federation Council have the right to put questions to the SVR leadership<sup>60</sup>. It is not clear however whether they are allowed to summon them to the Parliament, ask only written questions or whether the SVR leadership can hide behind operational secrecy or specific instructions issued by the President forbidding them to discuss certain issues. The Law on Intelligence Organs obliges

them to inform the President, Prime Minister and appropriate Duma committees and subcommittees about their findings, although it does not specify who receives what or when, or whether the President is allowed to censor reports before they reach the Duma. The SVR (together with other intelligence bodies) sends to the selected representatives of the executive and legislative powers, in-depth analyses of topical problems. The upper Chamber of the Parliament also receives "special national intelligence assessment"<sup>61</sup>.

Additional orders, instructions and statutes issued by the president are secret. It is not known whether they violate democratic rules or create loopholes in the published decrees because the appropriate committees in the Duma are not given powers to question organisational issues or operational methods. At the beginning of August 1993 the First Deputy Director of the SVR, Vyacheslav Trubnikov, said that there was a large scale review of internal departmental orders, instructions and other documents which the SVR inherited from the KGB. In 1993 Yel'tsin approved several statutes pertaining to Russian foreign intelligence bodies<sup>62</sup>.

### **The New Areas of Interest**

With Marxism-Leninism gone and constant financial problems, the Russian special services had to reduce the breadth and depth of their interests around the world and were forced to pull out from distant and less important countries. This process did not result in a surplus of operational personnel because many of the disillusioned officers "defected" to private companies and Russia had to establish new intelligence stations and networks in all former Warsaw Pact and FSU countries. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary quickly became intelligence targets as important as any European member of NATO. In fact they were even more so, because they were geographically closer to Russia and offered many recruitment possibilities. Never enthusiastically pro-Moscow, Romania was on the opposing side in the Transdnestr conflict, Slovakia was Russia's ally only as long as Vladimir Meciar was in power and Bulgaria, historically close to Russia's heart, saw less and less benefit from relations with Moscow. The Russian intelligence teams in former Eastern Europe were known to the local services and in many cases had to be changed. The three Baltic states considered their Soviet period as an undeserved quirk of history and wanted to become members of international organisations which could help them to join the West economically, culturally and even militarily. The proof that they have succeeded, in some areas at least, was the statement of Tatyana Samolis in April 1994 that the SVR treats the Baltic states the way it treats any other European country.

### **The CIS**

The CIS countries, and especially the Central Asian republics are the priority area for Russia. Moscow has frequently expressed its unhappiness at losing control over the region. Its present economic situation does not permit it to return there as a superpower but its geographic position and historical and ethnic links will allow it to play a major role in all the CIS republics. Russia worries about Islamic extremism creeping in, hostile governments, foreign military influence and the individual countries in the region becoming outposts for anti-Russian operations of third countries' intelligence services. The Russians have accused the CIA of stationing 15 agents in each of the CIS capitals<sup>63</sup>.

Russia has been trying to help several CIS countries to fill the vacuum in their security structures. They have succeeded in many cases in forging new links from which the SVR can also profit.

The intelligence vacuum left in all former Soviet republics was far greater than the weaknesses in their security structures. The intelligence apparatus in the Soviet Union needed only a small number of operatives in the republics. This depended on the republic, the neighbouring countries, the number of foreign visitors and world events. The republican intelligence personnel had only three tasks:

- recruiting foreign nationals visiting the republic or locals travelling abroad,
- taking part in operations against neighbouring countries, and on occasion,
- assisting in large scale operations in one or more third countries.

All the operations were planned, run and monitored from Moscow. The fragments of the locally collected “puzzle” were then sent to Moscow where appropriate analyses were run and decisions taken. In the post Soviet period the intelligence bodies of the individual republics were sometimes able to look at their non FSU neighbours but had no means to operate either in more distant countries, if only as liaison offices, or to follow many world events. Those countries which accepted intelligence or security training from developed democratic countries were often disillusioned. They were familiar with and valued the Soviet methods. The western teachers often taught very basic skills, asked far too many questions, wrote too many answers down and on occasions treated the locals like poor and retarded relatives.

When it came to cooperation between the Russians and the individual special services of the CIS, the SVR had the advantage of knowing the area and the people they were negotiating with. This may change only after the generation of the old “apparatchiks”, still ruling in most of Russia’s southern neighbours, is replaced. The disadvantages facing the SVR were political fluidity in all capitals, diverging economic and security interests, lack of funds and slow restructuring of special services. On 25 March 1992, Tatyana Samolis, press secretary of the director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, said that an agreement on the main principles of cooperation among the intelligence services of the security bodies of the CIS member states would be signed in Alma-Aty in April. The appropriate document had already being drafted. The signing parties were to renounce intelligence activities against one another. During a lecture to students at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations Yevgeniy Primakov said that his service and the special services of the CIS “constantly exchange information” and added, “I don’t think we will start to set up our own agents’ network on CIS territory”<sup>64</sup>. This was confirmation of a statement issued by his press secretary Tatyana Samolis that Russian intelligence agents would not be conducting intelligence work against the CIS states because information on the area was gathered by other means<sup>65</sup>.

The first agreement on the basic principles of cooperation between the intelligence services of the CIS was signed in Alma-Aty on 5 April 1992 by representatives of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine. The Alma-Aty meeting took place with fewer CIS members taking part than originally expected. The signing parties pledged not to spy on one another and to cooperate and assist each other with the training of personnel<sup>66</sup>. The agreement laid a corner-stone for future cooperation between the signatories. Since then both Primakov and Trubnikov have made several visits to CIS capitals, either to attend multilateral meetings or for bilateral talks. They were occasionally received by the heads of states of the host countries<sup>67</sup>. SVR

cooperation with its CIS counterparts aims at preserving a single security area, and organising with CIS members a regular exchange of information on foreign countries' plans to weaken the CIS or to provoke confrontation between its members<sup>68</sup>. In 1995 12 CIS states signed an agreement in Tbilisi on cooperation on combating organised crime, international terrorism and drug business.

The security agreements signed within the CIS are almost entirely focused on these areas. The main crime fighters in Russia are the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Federal Security Service (FSB). They have to co-ordinate their foreign activities with the SVR but the latter plays only an auxiliary role in crime fighting, although it collects information on the deals and assets of Russian companies and individuals abroad. The security agreements of Russia's partners are often, and not only in the CIS countries, signed by crime fighting bodies with very modest contacts with their own special services. Mutual mistrust among CIS officers is still very strong.

The CIS countries have signed several multilateral and bilateral agreements on cooperation within the organisation, and in some cases on cessation of intelligence operations on each other's territories. This may stop more flagrant intelligence activities for a while, but it cannot last long. Stability and rapid economic growth in Central Asia would make any country try to improve its state institutions, including the armed forces and special services, if only to protect its economic achievements. It would also result in closer contacts at every level with developed countries seeking markets. Russia would want to share in these benefits. Instabilities in one or more countries would intensify the interest of all other countries of the region. Afraid of militant Islam and observing the Chechen events with apprehension, the Central Asian states will be interested in strengthening links with the Russian special services. Strong economic downturn, internal fighting or chaos would produce the same result as the neighbouring countries and larger regional powers would try to fill a power vacuum. Russia could not afford to lower its vigilance in either case.

### **The Main Opponent And Its Allies**

Throughout the Cold War the United States was regarded by the KGB as the main opponent. The terminology used by the staff of the Russian intelligence organs may have changed but the USA still is and will remain their main object of interest as the only pole of the new unipolar world. The USA is the only country able to project its power anywhere, anytime with second to none nuclear and conventional arms and equally impressive scientific achievements. The USA is NATO's only senior partner and the Gulf War and the events in Yugoslavia emphasised the unipolar nature of the new world. The Americans are also very active in former Soviet republics.

Vladimir Kryuchkov the KGB Chairman accompanied Gorbachev on his American trip in 1989 and was well received by the CIA<sup>69</sup>. The post August 1991 leaderships of Soviet and then Russian intelligence bodies made several attempts to establish limited cooperation with the USA. Lieutenant-General Vadim Kirpichenko, the head of a group of consultants of the SVR, said that there was a need to set up contacts between the SVR and the CIA. The Russians wanted both sides to reject coercive recruitment and the use of psychotropic means<sup>70</sup>. The Americans were not impressed. They found the PGU/TsRS/SVR leadership unreformed and essentially anti-America and anti-West. Primakov was disliked and distrusted, especially after the role he played in the Gulf War. Trubnikov had headed in the past the 1<sup>st</sup> Department of the PGU working against the USA and Canada. Gurgenov worked

against American interests in India, Africa and the Middle East, Shecherbakov was expelled from Belgium. Rapota was expelled from Sweden, Yevstafyev worked in the USA and Zubakov spent years in the Central Committee of the CPSU. The only top intelligence leaders of the time who did not spend most of their lives working against the USA were Rozhkov, soon to be sent to Germany, and the sinologist Aleksey Medyanik.

Both the USA and Russia saw the need for cooperation but the adversarial relations between their intelligence services made it very difficult. The First Deputy Director of the SVR Vyacheslav Trubnikov announced on 27 May 1992 that "The principal directions of Russian intelligence remain the same – political, economic, scientific and technological ... But life and the Russian authorities have set new tasks before the intelligence service ... accents are being shifted in Russian intelligence towards the investigation of new world processes ... attention is being given to the development of an intelligence section responsible for collecting economic information". He mentioned also Russian readiness to abandon confrontational approaches in their intelligence work<sup>71</sup>.

CIA director Robert Gates visited Moscow and St Petersburg in October 1992. The visits were followed by working contacts developed between the first deputy heads of the CIA and SVR. A SVR three-man delegation led by Vadim Kirpichenko visited the USA at the beginning of January 1993 to talk to congressmen, journalists and members of the academic community about the need for a joint effort to combat organise crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to explain the changes in the security system. The Americans kept accusing Russia of intensifying its intelligence efforts. In June 1993 Primakov went to the USA to meet James Woolsey, the new CIA director. The return visit paid by the CIA director to Moscow and St Petersburg took place in August 1993. Woolsey decided to cut the visit short and fly to Tbilisi after the CIA station chief in Georgia was murdered. The role played by Primakov in the pre-Gulf War diplomatic efforts and the CIA awareness that they had a Russian mole in their midst did nothing to improve the relations between the two countries. Aldrich Ames was arrested on 21 February 1994. Three days later two CIA officials flew to Moscow with questions and demands<sup>72</sup>. Their questions were not answered and demands were not met as the Russians were angry and aware, probably warned by Ames, that the CIA had tried to recruit their resident in Bern. The arrests in May 1996 of Dmitriy and Irina Alshevskiy, two members of an illegal network working in Canada, and the November 1996 arrest of a CIA employee working for Russia damaged the relations between Langley and Yasenevo even further.

Russia's internal chaos, its less than honest approach to disarmament issues, corruption at the highest level, and large stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction made it a natural target for all larger special services. As the most powerful among the Western allies and, together with the UK, the most unyielding on security issues, the USA remained the main opponent of the SVR. The cooperation between the CIA and the SVR was practically zero, announced the SVR spokesman at the beginning of 1997, quoting First Deputy Director Trubnikov<sup>73</sup>. Cooperation in combating crime, drugs trafficking and non-proliferation issues could be conducted by the FSB and the FBI if the Presidents of both countries could reach an agreement, he said. The components from the CIA and the SVR would not be removed from law enforcement agencies but would be reduced to a minimum.

Russian increasing interest in combating international terrorism and drug trafficking makes the United Kingdom, Germany, Israel and France the most

interesting potential security partners. Contacts between the SVR and MI6 were established in 1991 in Oslo. But relations were damaged by British rejection of the first candidate for the official SVR post in London, General Gurgenov<sup>74</sup>, who was accused of helping Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War. After the death of General Gurgenov and a series of delicate negotiations a new candidate was accepted by London.

The discussions with Germany went much more smoothly because both sides were concerned by the Russian criminal network blossoming in the Western Group of Forces. Primakov visited Germany in mid February 1993 and met Berndt Schmidbauer, minister of state responsible for German special services, and other German officials. A week later Tatyana Samolis, Primakov's spokeswoman, announced that the SVR would have an official representative in Germany. A German BND representative had been working in Moscow since autumn 1992. But relations between the Russian and German special services have since turned sour for several reasons:

- Helped by the East German HVA, the Russian special services were well established in Germany, and in spite of the widely advertised friendship between Yel'tsin and Kohl, had no intention of reducing their intelligence activities there.
- Germany was the most powerful European economy, the EU's main financial contributor and the most dynamic in Central and Eastern policies. They were also active in the Baltic states and Kazakhstan.
- The Russians were not as helpful as they might have been in tackling their criminals operating in Germany because of their political and military links at home.
- The Russians accused the German intelligence service BND of masterminding an anti-Russian smuggling operation, the Red Mercury affair. In return the SVR attempted to undermine the Germany's commercial effort in Iran<sup>75</sup>.

The German press began to publish articles suggesting that the Russians had not curtailed their spying activities in their country and some of their allegations were reprinted by the Russian press. Unspecified German sources claimed that there were 160 Moscow agents in Germany. Major-General Yuriy Kobaladze, the SVR spokesman, admitted that the SVR spies on Germany but added the Germans spy on Russia as well and that not all Russian spies worked for the SVR. The situation was summed up by the president of the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Hansjorg Geiger, who accused the SVR of using increasingly "traditional methods" and regarding Germany as a key to Europe and NATO<sup>76</sup>.

The Russian commitment to fight international crime and terrorism was questioned by friends and foes alike when Boris Yel'tsin transferred to the SVR one of his staunchest supporters, Army General Viktor Yerin. As Interior Minister Yerin saved Yel'tsin's career, and possibly his life, standing by him during the October 1993 coup, but after many disastrous decisions taken in the Chechen conflict he was allowed to resign and was transferred to the SVR on 5 July 1995<sup>77</sup>. He was given the rank of deputy director, and responsibility for combating crime and terrorism with foreign links. Yerin spent the first 16 years of his career as a policeman in Tatarstan. His career was a natural progression within the MVD but he knew little about other countries and had never worked with special services. His transfer was seen as a blatant misuse of power by Boris Yel'tsin and did not inspire Russia's crime fighting partners.

Having to face a growing Islamic movement at its southern borders and the Chechens assisted by several Islamic countries, organisations and individuals, the Russian special services turned to Israel for assistance. The Israelis assisted Russia in its crime fighting effort but, knowing that the SVR had been until the mid 1990s top heavy with Arabists and having their Minister of Interior brought up in Russia, they prefer to have their contacts with the FSB. Moscow's preoccupation with what it sees as an Islamic threat is also reflected by their first choice of SVR liaison officer in Paris and London, Generals Zelenin and Gurgenov<sup>78</sup>. Because of the will of the political leaders in Paris, France will play an important role in European defence and security structures set up in the future. The Russians are also willing to cooperate with Turkey although they accuse the Turkish intelligence service, the MIT, of helping the Chechens. The Russian media has stressed on numerous occasions that Turkey's better funding and better management of the special services and special forces had brought rich dividends.

Russian special services enter the new millennium as a potentially valuable crime fighting partner simply because America and Europe have failed to address growing crime seriously. That role was stressed, correctly, by the FSB head Kovalev during his visit to Davos in January 1997. When told by his Swiss hosts that cooperation between Switzerland and the FSB in fighting organised crime had been scaled down for political reasons, because Russia was accused of stepping up its spying activity on the territory of Switzerland, Kovalev answered that the problem had nothing to do with him; intelligence work in Switzerland was not conducted by the FSB<sup>79</sup>. This may suggest that as long as the countries which are dealing with Russian special services and law enforcement agencies are willing to reduce the SVR role to a minimum and look carefully at who represents the FSB and the Interior Ministry, cooperation is possible. The importance of the Russian special services was underlined at the end of 1996 when the representatives of the Russian special services were invited to take part, for the first time, in a meeting of the heads of NATO special services<sup>80</sup>. As they were talking to their Russian visitors, they must have thought about two potentially contradictory statements made by the then First Deputy Director of the SVR Vyacheslav Trubnikov "... the question of partnership in some way precludes a situation which could give rise to threats to a partner's interests"<sup>81</sup> and that the SVR was still among the four best secret services in the world, with the CIA, MI6 and Mossad<sup>82</sup>. They must have asked themselves how the SVR achieved that and which way it would choose in the future.

### **After Primakov**

Primakov was "volunteered" by Yel'tsin for the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, to which he moved on 10 January 1996<sup>83</sup>. He was given four days to move to the ministry, and was replaced by his First Deputy, Vyacheslav Ivanovich Trubnikov<sup>84</sup>. Trubnikov, an expert on India and Pakistan, made a good career thanks to his talent, hard work and exceptional luck. India was an ideal country for the Soviet intelligence services. Large, chaotic and poor, India was a useful ally, and natural opponent of China, especially after the border clashes between the USSR and China in 1968. The generation of activists fighting for India's independence and hostile to both the UK and the USA held many important posts in the Indian administration.

The Pakistani factor was also important in the Soviet-Indian alliance and made Moscow Delhi's largest weapons contractor. Trubnikov was sent to India in 1971 when the KGB resident in Delhi was Yakov Prokofevich Medyanik, who went on to become a deputy head of the PGU responsible for the whole region. Medyanik was replaced by Leonid Shebarshin, who 13 years later became the PGU head. It was



Shebarshin who transferred Trubnikov to the American Department, increasing his chances for promotion. From there he moved directly to replace Rozhkov as the First Deputy Director of the SVR. Primakov appreciated Trubnikov's skills and experience and did not take a single decision which had anything to do with field work without consulting him<sup>85</sup>. On the other hand Primakov did everything to help and promote Trubnikov as his heir apparent<sup>86</sup>.

Vyacheslav Trubnikov has been a success. He was promoted to Army General in January 1998, two years after becoming Director of the SVR. With Trubnikov's promotion the SVR had two Army Generals, more than any other power structure at that time<sup>87</sup>. In recognition of the importance of his service in 1996 Trubnikov became a member of the Security Council of the Russian Federation<sup>88</sup>. Trubnikov's place as First Deputy Director was taken by Lieutenant-General Anatolii Anatolevich Shcherbakov.<sup>89</sup>

### **The Tasks**

The struggle against foreign special services is still one of the most important tasks of the SVR. This will not change although the methods will, reflecting the political climate, financial means and development of information technologies. Political restrictions imposed on the SVR during the 1990s and the leadership of Primakov and Trubnikov put emphasis on analytical work. Barring exceptional circumstances, Trubnikov, born in 1944, with the rank of Army General and having one of his former colleagues running the country, can look to many years of SVR leadership, without fear of dismissal or forced retirement. He might, however, be forced to change the ratio between acquisition and analysis if the international situation changes or the SVR is told to provide more scientific-technological information.

Political intelligence, ie obtaining information as to the intentions of other countries, is also there to stay with better targeting of the interest areas and personalities and continuation of emphasis on the high analytical quality of reports. Russia is particularly worried about the US presence in several CIS countries where the intelligence stations work against Russian interests<sup>90</sup>. The SVR was also tasked with finding out about the USA's intentions in former Yugoslavia and what the scope was to manoeuvre the European members of NATO. In relation to the Chechen conflict the SVR decided to have a closer look at Turkey.

For Russia's economic growth to continue, the Military Industrial Complex will demand new technologies urgently. Parts of Russian scientific potential can be saved but even its partial restoration would demand many years and continuous investment. Much faster, cheaper and time-tested would be a return to the old methods of espionage. Vyacheslav Trubnikov, then Primakov's First Deputy, admitted at a press conference on 9 September 1992 that "Russia is in no position to consume everything we [the SVR] receive..." and that technical and scientific intelligence had to be reorganised as a result of defections<sup>91</sup>. Between 1991-1992 five scientific-technical intelligence officers defected from Italy, Canada, Belgium, Finland and France, exposing much of the Russian scientific-technical espionage network. Since then the military-industrial requisition machinery has been resurrected. In July 1999 Russia even set up a Commission for Military Industrial Affairs of the Government of the Russian Federation<sup>92</sup>.

The SVR will be more involved in the media manipulation game, ranging from public relations to disinformation. Every government tries to various degree to manipulate

the media and the Russian special services have considerable experience in that respect. The difference between the way the media were handled in the first and the second Chechen conflicts would suggest that internal lessons in media handling have been learned successfully and campaigns abroad may follow.

As one of the implementers of Russian foreign policy, the SVR has been involved in most recent conflicts in the Middle East and the Balkans, sometimes behaving more like an adversary of Western interests rather than a partner.

To fight international terrorism, international crime and drug trafficking Russia will have to cooperate with other countries. Russia's own intelligence activities would complicate such cooperation. The leaders of Russia's special services might also be tempted to use Russia's criminal diaspora in some of their undertakings, especially against other criminals or religious or ethnic radicals based abroad.

If the Chechens show as much initiative and aggression in their underground resistance as they have shown in the two conflicts, all Russia's special services, including the SVR, will be very busy. SVR spokesman Yuriy Kobaladze said in a radio interview that the SVR "did not work in Chechnya as such"<sup>93</sup>. This is because the SVR does not operate on Russian territory. However, their expertise will be needed in gathering intelligence on Chechen foreign contacts. In this they will partner the FSB, which in theory should be dealing with such problems but legally needs SVR's supervision when operating abroad.

The SVR appears to have a joint collegium with the FSB. This allows both organisations to work on joint operations and analyse problems of mutual concern. The collegium met probably for the first time in 1995. Another meeting took place in November 1997 to discuss the improvement of communication between the two organisations<sup>94</sup>.

### **Training New Agents**

The admission of Primakov's spokesman in February 1992 that the Intelligence Service had lost its unique financial advantages in attracting suitable recruits and that intelligence work had lost its romantic image was almost immediately followed by Primakov's visit to the biggest non-technical pool of civilian intelligence personnel, the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. Primakov spoke at the institute on 17 March 1992. He announced that the old methods of recruitment had gone and that in 1993 a special course on the activities of the Russian Intelligence Service was to be started at the institute. If the scheme proved to be successful and the service acquired 25 suitable graduates, Russian intelligence officers would give similar courses "throughout Moscow"<sup>95</sup>.

Graduates are recruited into the Foreign Intelligence Academy. Primakov visited the Foreign Intelligence Academy several times and was instrumental in its educational reforms introduced in 1994<sup>96</sup>.

The SVR recruits young men<sup>97</sup> between 22 and 35 with higher education and physically healthy. The recruit is expected to have linguistic and analytical abilities. He should have an unspecified but sufficient level of technical and political knowledge. He must be a Russian citizen but his ethnic origin is of no importance. A candidate entering the Academy has to leave his political convictions outside the gates and his religion will be treated as his private affair as long as he does not try to propagate it. He will be required to undergo a compulsory polygraph test.

The students have to study:

- operational work;
- languages;
- philosophy;
- sociology;
- economics;
- psychology;
- information, operational and technical analysis<sup>98</sup>;
- literature and art, Russian and foreign, relevant to their future work;
- basics of unarmed combat;
- driving various types of vehicles;
- basic firearms practice.

The academy also offers post-diploma and doctoral courses. The commandant of the Academy, Lieutenant-General Nikolay Petrovich Gribin, is not always happy with the life experience offered by the candidates, and their lack of military service. Because graduates from well-known establishments are not flocking to join, the SVR accepts candidates from more modest establishments although most of them are recruited in Moscow<sup>99</sup>. The teaching staff of the Academy is obliged then to patch up the educational shortcomings of the new students<sup>100</sup>.

Not able to compete with richer private enterprises, employment with the SVR, in addition to all its disadvantages, still offers several attractive features. Those joining are offered:

- good training;
  - reasonably good conditions, by state employees' standards;
  - payment on time and partly in foreign currency when working abroad<sup>101</sup>;
  - challenging and interesting work;
  - opportunities to see people and enter places to which even the richest Russians have no access;
  - diplomatic immunity in most cases;
  - service accommodation;
  - subsidised shops;
- and all this at a reasonably young age.

### **The New SVR**

The authorised strength of the SVR is said to be 15,000<sup>102</sup> which might suggest that in spite of the cuts of the early 1990s the organisation grew considerably in the second half of the decade. It is divided into three principal groups of directorates and departments:

#### 1. Operational:

- Internal Security;
- Technical Intelligence;
- Illegal networks;
- Operational Planning;
- Non proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- Psychops<sup>103</sup>;
- Organised Crime, Terrorism and Drug Trafficking;
- Economic intelligence<sup>104</sup>;
- Long term forecasts and analysis.

## 2 Regional:

- USA, Canada;
- Latin America;
- Western, Northern and Central Europe;
- Southern Europe;
- Asia/Australia;
- Middle East and Northern Africa;
- Central and Southern Africa;
- CIS.

## 3 Support:

- Foreign Liaison (non CIS);
- Operational analysis and planning;
- Technical support;
- Liaison with other Russian power structures;
- Administration;
- Radio Communication;
- Finance;
- Legal;
- Operational Archives.

Considerable attention is paid to maintaining a high degree of readiness in order to allocate available men and equipment in priority areas<sup>105</sup>.

## **The Future**

In December 1997 Vyacheslav Trubnikov was quoted as saying “Confrontation between intelligence organs never ended but with the end of the Cold War, contrary to expectations, actually intensified”<sup>106</sup>. Firm political leadership and an improving economy might add a new dimension to another statement by Trubnikov that Russia has a presence everywhere where it has national interests<sup>107</sup>.

After almost nine economically and politically lean years under Boris Yel'tsin, Putin will attempt to make Russia more prosperous, efficient and better organised. Putin's Russia will be stronger and more assertive on the international arena. Some of its actions will be detrimental to the West's interest, because some of the West's actions are not in Russia's interest. Russia will not threaten its neighbours with invasion, unless attacks on Russia are launched from their territories, but the next step of NATO enlargement would make the SVR and the GRU (military intelligence) more active in NATO and its candidate countries.

Putin will use the SVR because the other Russian institutions dealing with foreign affairs have been weakened and de facto downgraded in the Kremlin's pecking order, and because the SVR is still in the first league of world intelligence services. As an ex-intelligence officer Putin knows how the service works and what it can deliver. There are other reasons, too: gradual internationalisation of many conflicts requires intelligence input in several hot spots; the growth of transnational economy has resulted in an increase in transnational industrial espionage; if the rich Russian criminal structures are forced abroad, some of them will be pursued by the SVR together with the FSB and the Russian judiciary; if the Russian economy picks up, requests for secret technologies will follow.

Trimmed and reduced, the SVR will nevertheless have many advantages not available to its predecessors. The Russian communities in the industrialised

democratic countries have grown enormously. Many of them legally acquired citizenship of their countries of residence, giving them access to the EU and many other countries. Many others acquired permanent residence permits either through investments in the countries in which they reside temporarily or through faked marriages. This network of new Russians can be explored by the SVR and the GRU, because much of what they have has been stolen and they can be blackmailed. The interest displayed by the Russian special services in wealthy Russians abroad has been demonstrated. Lieutenant-General Vladimir Tsekhanov, the head of the FSB Economic Counterintelligence Directorate, who said at the end of 1995 that Russians owned more than 200 houses in France, most of which are in Paris or its surroundings<sup>108</sup>. This kind of information could only have been collected either with the cooperation of the French DST or some very effective footwork of the local SVR residency.

Human intelligence has historically been Russia's strong point. Its main advantage in Russia's present economic situation is that it is cheap. A slow dilution of national identities and a lack of knowledge of history in EU countries among their younger citizens, which has not been replaced by European patriotism or European allegiance, have removed many psychological and other barriers but have also made European security and defence a remote issue to an average citizen<sup>109</sup>. European countries are paying the price for not investing in their defence and security by having to rely on the USA to solve even European problems. Part of this price is bruised egos in European capitals when Washington treats them like junior and not always mature partners. This will bring a new dimension to two old recruitment principles, "money" and "ego", institutionalised "anti-Americanism" hiding behind seemingly noble attempts to balance the unipolarism of the military and security world<sup>110</sup>. The Russians tried to split NATO during the Cold War period. They might find some of their old skills useful. Lieutenant-General Vadim Kirpichenko listed in October 1993 reasons why some people are willing to work with the SVR. The main reason is money, then come dissatisfaction with superiors, seeking a special status in the mysterious world of espionage and warm feelings towards Russia<sup>111</sup>.

All this may result in the return of the image of Russia as a threat, especially if the actions taken by, or attributed to, the SVR or the GRU are brutal and are picked up by the media as front page news. That image of Russia can be damaged even further if those pursued by Russia's law enforcement agencies, in hopes of obtaining residence permits or refugee papers, succeed in painting Putin's law and order campaign as simply a return to dictatorship.

## ENDNOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> *Likholetye*, Nikolay Sergeevich Leonov, *Mezhdunarodnye Otnosheniya*, 1994, p357.

<sup>2</sup> One third of those working for Gosteleradio were undercover KGB officers. Russian TV Network, Moscow, 28 August 1991, FBIS-SOV-91-168. Working under cover of a Soviet enterprise meant that that a PGU officer's first working loyalty was to the KGB. His boss in the "cover job" was entitled to grumble but unless he was exceptionally well connected he could not do anything if his KGB subordinate treated his official duties as occasional moonlighting.

<sup>3</sup> Interfax, 28 November 1991.

<sup>4</sup> PGU personnel in Yasenevo lived in a separate world partly for security reasons and partly because its HQ was far away from shops and services. The directorate has its own

discreet bus network. The Yasenevo complex has its own clinic, swimming pool, hair stylist and cinema, bars and a canteen and food shops. *Yevgeniy Primakov. Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf 1999, p203-208 and 226.

<sup>5</sup> *Ot Pervovo Litsa*, Razgovor S Vladimirem Putinyem. Vagrius, March 2000. Putin mentions in the book, "... we all know what a foreign trip was for a person in the Soviet Union".

<sup>6</sup> At least 25 KGB officers, 9 of them generals, working for the PGU published their memories (in some cases as a joint effort) in Russia. Most of them try to downplay the role of the CPSU in their professional lives and on occasion emphasise the negative influence of the party officials on their work abroad. Very few come out as real "believers" and that was probably the case in their professional lives too. The ban on political activities in special services introduced in August 1991 is still in force. The employees of the SVR are forbidden to take part in any political parties. *Rossiyskiye Vesti*, 23 November 1993, p3, FBIS-SOV-93-225.

<sup>7</sup> Several defections or betrayals of Soviet nationals resulted in one-sided mini hate campaigns against the perpetrators. Foreigners working for the USSR were invariably presented as Soviet agents, which suggested their long standing ideological commitment.

<sup>8</sup> *Ot Pervovo Litsa*, Razgovor S Vladimirem Putinyem. Putin uses a term "blatniki", which means those with connections but also has criminal overtones.

<sup>9</sup> *Izbavlenye ot KGB*, Vadim Bakatin, *Novosti* 1992, p65.

<sup>10</sup> The importance of the Non Soviet Warsaw Pact (NSWP) intelligence services has been successfully downplayed by all democratic governments in these countries. The NSWP intelligence services' behaviour reflected their political allegiance to Moscow. The East Germans, the Bulgarians and the Czechoslovaks, with their own target areas, were the most openly supportive of the KGB. The Poles and the Hungarians were less open about their co-operation but their activities were on occasion equally damaging. The tasks given and material obtained by the Polish and Hungarian special services in the Zacharski and Szabo/Conrad cases shows that both services had an interest in technologies their countries could neither analyse nor process for their own benefit. Their operations were exclusively for the benefit of the Soviet Military Industrial Complex. The NSWP special services served also as a Soviet buffer zone in their countries, did not work against the KGB and gave way to their colleagues from Moscow when ordered. NSWP special services officials had only modest travel restrictions in NATO countries and were in many cases used as observers and messengers. All this meant big savings for the USSR and stretched resources for NATO or any other country graced by the KGB attention.

<sup>11</sup> *SODU - Sistema Ob'yedinennogo Ucheta Dannykh* - System of Unified Registration of Data. The system was set up in accordance with an agreement signed by Eastern Bloc countries in 1977 and was fully functional in 1979. The stake holders in SODU were the USSR, the GDR, Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Mongolia, Cuba and Vietnam. *Segodnya*, 19 November 1999, p1.

<sup>12</sup> In his memoirs, *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno, 1999, p116, Primakov describes the intelligence co-operation of the Warsaw Pact as the "intelligence pool".

<sup>13</sup> *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 23 October 1991, p2, FBIS-SOV-91-206. Bakatin's dissatisfaction with his subordinates' reports may suggest that they cut him off from operational and top secret information.

<sup>14</sup> *Predstateli KGB, Rassekrechennye Sudby*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentropoligraf, 1999, p610.

- 
- 15 *Yevgeniy Primakov, Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf, Moskva 1999, p209-212.
- 16 Lt-Gen Rozhkov died in Germany, where he served as the official SVR representative, in 1996.
- 17 *Izbavleniye ot KGB*, Vadim Bakatin, Novosti 1992, p88-89.
- 18 *Yevgeniy Primakov, Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf, Moskva, 1999, p187, Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p104.
- 19 *Razvedka: Litsa I Lichnosti*, Lt-Gen Vadim Kirpichenko, Geya 1998, p288.
- 20 *Razvedka: Litsa I Lichnosti*, Lt-Gen Vadim Kirpichenko, Geya 1998, p277 & 285.
- 21 *Izbavleniye ot KGB*, Vadim Bakatin, Novosti 1992, p89.
- 22 Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 2 November 1991, p7, FBIS-SOV-216.
- 23 Izvestiya 25 September 1991, p2, FBIS-SOV-91-191.
- 24 Vadim Bakatin, Intefax, 24 October 1991.
- 25 Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 28 November 1991, p1; TASS, 29 November 1991; Interfax, 29 November 1991.
- 26 Moscow Central TV1, 19 October 1991, FBIS-SOV-91-203.
- 27 The State Council accepted the creation of the Central Intelligence Service (TsRS) on 11 October 1991 as part of wider reforms. TASS, 14 October 1991. Yel'tsin put the RF KGB Intelligence under his control earlier by amending his own decree No 1148 "On the Structure of the Central Organs of Federal Executive Power". Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 9 October 1992, p1, FBIS-SOV-92-20.
- 28 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p105.
- 29 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p106.
- 30 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p106 and Yevgeniy Primakov, *Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf, Moskva 1999, p201.
- 31 *Boris Yel'tsin: Ot Rassveta Do Zakata*, Aleksandr Korzhakov, Interbook 1997, p117.
- 32 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p110.
- 33 At the beginning of 1992 it was still not certain which organisation would be allowed to conduct intelligence operations. The Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs was declared to be unconstitutional by the Russian Constitutional Court. The new Security Ministry admitted that it ran intelligence network (TASS, 14 May 1992). This was the result of an unresolved problem: who would be allowed to operate in CIS countries. This and Bakatin's resignation gave Primakov more room to reform the SVR.
- 34 R V Markaryan and Yu A Zubakov serve as ambassadors to Syria and Lithuania respectively.
- 35 Deputy Directors of the SVR are nominated by Presidential decrees.

- 
- 36 *Razvedka: Litsa I Lichnosti*, Lt-Gen Vadim Kirpichenko, Geya 1998, p287/8.
- 37 *Yevgeniy Primakov, Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf, Moskva 1999, p211.
- 38 Trud, 15 November 1991, p1 &4, FBIS-91-226.
- 39 Radio Rossii, 26 February 1992, FBIS-SOV-92-039.
- 40 TASS, 29 April 1994; Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 29 April 1994, p3, FBIS-SOV-94-083.
- 41 Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 22 September 1994, FBIS-SOV-94-185.
- 42 *Yevgeniy Primakov, Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf, Moskva 1999, p212.
- 43 Radio Rossii, 2 November 1992, FBIS-SOV-92-213 & Radio Rossii, 24 January 1999, FBIS-SOV-92-019. Several Soviet and Russian officials announced cuts in the SVR without specifying whether the cuts referred to the number of places or people and how much of that was the total KGB personnel abroad or whether this would include directorates and departments which after October 1991 were not part of the SVR.
- 44 TASS, 6 March 1992.
- 45 TASS, 24 March 1993. This statement was repeated until 1995.
- 46 Vyacheslav Trubnikov, first deputy director of the SVR, said that the salaries of his subordinates were considerably lower than in the private sector. Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 16 June 1994, p3, FBIS-SOV-116. A colonel heading a regional department in the SVR earned before 17 August 1998 R3200 a month. *Yevgeniy Primakov, Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf, Moskva 1999, p208. His counterpart in the FSB would earn 50% less, have fewer perks and no chance for a foreign assignment.
- 47 Interview with Yuriy Kobaladze, the head of the SVR Press Bureau (Rabochaya Tribuna, 24 April 1996, p1 & 3, FBIS-SOV-96-084).
- 48 Kommersant Daily, 8 May 1996.
- 49 The PGU had 10 departments responsible for CPSU financial affairs in various parts of the world. Komsomolskaya Pravda, 4 February 1992, p1, FBIS-SOV-92-125.
- 50 In 1980 Soviet intelligence bodies were instructed to collect scientific information on 3,617 topics. Sovetskaya Rossiya, 20 December 1997, p3. The Soviet system obliged the intelligence community to report on plan fulfilment but it could not demand a delivery deadline. The KGB and the GRU would report on fulfilling the plan five years later because for the bureaucrats in Moscow it did not matter whether the required product or a formula was by then freely available everywhere.
- 51 Radio Rossii, 24 January 1999, FBIS-SOV-92-019.
- 52 At a press briefing organised by the SVR Tatyana Samolis, press secretary to the director, accepted that the service would have difficulties in recruiting new personnel, stressing that new commercial structures would often offer the same advantages without risk and that "there are not many people who see romance in intelligence work or people who feel vocation for the work". Kuranty, 20 February 1992, p8, FBIS-92-035.
- 53 *Yevgeniy Primakov, Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf, Moskva 1999, p242.



- 
- 54 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p115.
- 55 Rabochaya Tribuna, 20 May 1997, p3, FBIS-SOV-97-100 and Argumenty i Fakty 22-23 December 1997, p2.
- 56 Interfax, 23 June 1992, FBIS-SOV-92-122.
- 57 *Spetssluzhby I Ikh Predstaviteli V Rossiyskom Obshchestve*, Aleksey Mukhin, Moscow 1999, p14.
- 58 *Spetssluzhby Rossii: Zakony I Kommentariy*, A Yu Shumilov, Moscow 1996. The law applies not only to the SVR but also to the GRU, the FAPSI and to the Federal Border Guard Service.
- 59 The Russian Federation Comptroller's Office has the right to audit the intelligence expenditure estimates.
- 60 Valeriy Kantorov, chief of the SVR legal department, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 16 January 1997, p7.
- 61 Interview with Yevgeniy Ivanovich Nazdratenko, governor of Maritime Kray and member of the Defence and Security Committee of the federation Council. Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 13 August 1998 (EV).
- 62 Rossiyskiye Vesti, 4 August 1993, FBIS-SOV-93-148.
- 63 Segodnya, 15 April 1997, p1-2.
- 64 Izvestiya, 19 March 1992, p3, FBIS-SOV-92-059.
- 65 Kuranty, 20 February 1992, p3, FBIS-SOV-92-035.
- 66 Radyo Mayak, 12 November 1998.
- 67 The last such meeting took place in February 2000 when during a visit to Kazakhstan Trubnikov was received by President Nazarbayev. In July 1998, Trubnikov was received by the Armenian president Robert Kocharyan.
- 68 Interview with Vadim Kirpichenko, the head of the SVR group of consultants, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, 16 January 1997, p7.
- 69 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p141.
- 70 Radio Rossii, 26 April 1992, FBIS-SOV-92-082.
- 71 TASS, 28 May 1992.
- 72 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p152.
- 73 Novaya Gazeta, 13 January 1997, p5, FBIS-SOV-97-015.
- 74 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p154-157.
- 75 Segodnya, 16 April 1997, p1 & 4.
- 76 Frankfurter Allgemeine, 9 March 1996, p12.
- 77 TASS, 5 July 1995.

- 78 *DST Police Secrete*, Roger Faligot and Pascal Krop, Flammarion, 1999, p411. Gen Zelenin is an expert on Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. The late Gen Gurgenov, the SVR candidate for a job in London, was an expert in Middle Eastern affairs.
- 79 Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 5 February 1997, p1-2.
- 80 Izvestiya, 10 December 1996, p5.
- 81 Trud, 11 January 1995, p6, FBIS-SOV-95-009.
- 82 TASS, 14 June 1994.
- 83 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p202 and *Yevgeniy Primakov, Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf, Moskva 1999, p267.
- 84 Vyacheslav Ivanovich Trubnikov was born on 25 April 1944 in Irkutsk, where his family was evacuated from Moscow. His father was a metal worker in the Ilyushin Design Bureau. Young Trubnikov entered the Moscow State Institute of International Relations where he hoped to study Arabic, but the faculty was oversubscribed and he was told to study Hindi and Urdu. He joined the KGB in 1967 and four years later was sent to India under "Novosti" cover. He worked in India, where he was the resident in the late 1980s, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal.
- 85 Kommersant – Daily, 23 January 1998, p1.
- 86 *Yevgeniy Primakov, Istoriya Odnoy Karyery*, Leonid Mlechin, Tsentrpoligraf, Moskva 1999, p263.
- 87 The other Army General, Yerin, was given his fourth star before he was moved from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the SVR.  
 The Ministry of Defence had one Army General (Kolesnikov)  
 Rosvooruzheniye (Grachev)  
 Ministry of Interior (Kulikov)  
 Presidential Security Service (dismissed) (Barsukov)  
 Federal Border Guards (Nikolayev)  
 Federal Security Service (dismissed) (Kovalev)  
 Assistants to Yel'tsin (Shaposhnikov) Marshal of Aviation.  
 Kommersant – Daily, 23 January 1998, p1; Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 23 January 1998, p2.
- 88 TASS, 1 August 1996.
- 89 Born in Moscow on 20 May 1941, after graduating from the Moscow Bauman Higher Technical School Shcherbakov joined the KGB. His first foreign assignment was Belgium, from which he was expelled in 1971. He was then stationed twice in India.
- 90 Yevgeniy Primakov. *Gody V Bolshoy Politike*, Sovershenno Sekretno 1999, p136.
- 91 Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 10 September 1992, p1-2, FBIS-SOV-92-180.
- 92 Segodnya, 4 February 2000, p7.
- 93 Radyo Mayak, 12 November 1998.
- 94 ITAR-TASS, 21 November 1997.
- 95 Izvestiya, 19 March 1992, p3, FBIS-SOV-92-059.

---

<sup>96</sup> In 1994 the name of the institute was changed from the Red Banner Institute to the Foreign Intelligence Institute (Izvestiya, 16 October 1998, p3). The Institute offers three-year courses although it seems that entrants with good knowledge of foreign languages can complete the course in two years.

<sup>97</sup> When asked about women students studying in the Intelligence Academy its head Nikolay Petrovich Gribin sidestepped the question by answering that in his view physical and psychological pressures made intelligence work difficult for women. Izvestiya, 16 October 1998, p3.

<sup>98</sup> Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye, No 43, 1998.

<sup>99</sup> Yuriy Kobaladze, the head of the SVR Press Office, said that in the USSR the PGU recruited its cadres from all over the country. "Now the geography of those who are coming into our service has narrowed down practically just to Moscow". Some moved to other republics because their relatives and friends live there. Rabochaya Tribuna, 24 April 1996, p1 & 3, FBIS-SOV-96-084.

<sup>100</sup> Izvestiya, 16 October 1998, p3.

<sup>101</sup> Payment in convertible currency is not as attractive as it used to be during the Soviet era but the crash of the rouble in August 1998 made it an interesting perk. In addition the SVR spokesman said that its employees are the only ones among the Russian special services paid on time. Radyo Mayak, 12 November 1998.

<sup>102</sup> Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 23 January 1998, p2.

<sup>103</sup> Tatyana Samolis, the SVR Director's press secretary, said at the end of 1993 that the A service, responsible for disinformation and covert action still existed although its methods had changed (Segodnya, 11 December 1993, p6, FBIS-SOV-93-238). The A service was most probably merged with Directorate T, responsible for active measures.

<sup>104</sup> The Economic Intelligence Directorate was created at the beginning of the 1990s to determine the scale and consequence of the foreign influence on Russian economic development to facilitate the process of integration of the former USSR and to deal with economic crime with foreign links.

<sup>105</sup> Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye, 17-23 July 1998, p8.

<sup>106</sup> Russkiy Telegraf, 19 December 1997, p3, FBIS-SOV-97-356.

<sup>107</sup> Argumenty i Fakty, 22-23 December 1997, p2.

<sup>108</sup> Trud 7, 24-30 November 1995, p5, FBSI-SOV-95-228.

<sup>109</sup> It is not the author's aim to consider whether such structures are needed. The fact is that they are not there.

<sup>110</sup> Rabochaya Tribuna, 24 April 1996, p1 & 3, FBIS-SOV-96-084.

<sup>111</sup> Krasnaya Zvezda, 21 October 1993, p1.

**Disclaimer**

The views expressed are those of the  
Author and not necessarily those of the  
UK Ministry of Defence

# **The Conflict Studies Research** **Centre**

Directorate General Development and Doctrine  
Royal Military Academy Sandhurst  
Camberley  
Surrey  
GU15 4PQ  
England

Telephone : (44) 1276 412346  
Or 412375  
Fax : (44) 1276 686880  
E-mail: [csrc.dgd&d@gtnet.gov.uk](mailto:csrc.dgd&d@gtnet.gov.uk)  
<http://www.ppc.pims.org/csrc>