

Blowing Up Russia

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Contents

Foreword

Chapter 1.

The special services foment war in Chechnya

Chapter 2.

The security services run riot

Chapter 3.

Moscow detectives take on the FSB

Chapter 4.

Nikolai Platonovich Patrushev (a biographical note)

Chapter 5.

The FSB fiasco in Ryazan

Chapter 6.

The FSB resorts to mass terror: Buinaksk, Moscow, Volgodonsk

Chapter 7.

The FSB against the people

Chapter 8.

The FSB sets up free-lance special operations groups

Chapter 9.

The FSB organizes contract killings

Chapter 10.

The special services and abductions

Chapter 11.

The FSB: reform or dissolution?

The FSB in power (in place of a conclusion)

Epilogue

Foreword

The pedigree of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB RF) scarcely requires any comment. From the very earliest years of Soviet power the punitive agencies established by the Communist Party were alien to the qualities of pity and mercy. The actions of individuals working in these departments have never been governed by the values and principles of common humanity. Beginning with the revolution of 1917 the political police of Soviet Russia (later the USSR) functioned faultlessly as a mechanism for the annihilation of millions of people; in fact these structures have never taken any other business in hand, since the government has never set them any other political or practical agenda, even during its most liberal periods. No other civilized country has ever possessed anything to compare with the state security agencies of the USSR. Never, except in the case of Nazi Germany's Gestapo, has any other political police ever possessed its own operational and investigative divisions or detention centers, such as the FSB's prison for detainees at *Lefortovo*.

The events of August 1991, when a rising tide of public anger literally swept away the communist system, demonstrated very clearly that the liberalization of Russia's political structures must inevitably result in the weakening, perhaps even the prohibition, of the Committee of State Security (KGB). The panic which reigned among the leaders of the coercive agencies of the state during that period found expression in numerous, often incomprehensible instances of old special service agencies being disbanded and new ones set up. As early as May 6 1991 the Russian Republic Committee of State Security was set up with V.V. Ivanenko as its chairman in parallel to the All-Union KGB under the terms of a protocol signed by Russian president Boris Yeltsin and chairman of the USSR KGB V.A. Kriuchkov. On November 26 the KGB of Russia was transformed into the Federal Security Agency (AFB). Only one week later on December 3 president of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev signed a decree "On the reorganization of the agencies of state security." Under the terms of this law a new Interdepartmental Security Service (MSB) of the USSR was set up on the basis of the old KGB, which was abolished.

At the same time the old KGB, like some multiheaded hydra, split into four new structures. The First (Central) Department (which dealt with external intelligence) was separated out as the new Central Intelligence Service, later renamed the External Intelligence Service (SVR). The KGB's Eighth and Sixteenth Departments (for governmental communications, coding and electronic reconnaissance) were transformed into the Committee for Governmental Communications (the future Federal Agency for Governmental Communications and Information, or FAPSI). The border guard service became the Federal Border Service (FPS). The old KGB Ninth Department became the Bodyguard Department of the Office of the President of the RSFSR. The old Fifteenth Department became the Governmental Security and Bodyguard Service of the RSFSR. These last two structures later became the President's Security Service (SBP) and the Federal Bodyguard Service (FSO). One other super-secret special service was also separated out from the old Fifteenth Department of the KGB: the President's Central Department for Special Programs (GUSP).

On January 24 1992 Yeltsin signed a decree authorizing the creation of a new Ministry of Security (MB) on the basis of the AFB and MSB. A Ministry of Security and Internal Affairs appeared at the same time, but only existed for a short while before being dissolved. In December 1993 the MB was in turn renamed the Federal Counterintelligence Service (FSK) and on April 3 1995 Yeltsin signed the decree "On the formation of a Federal Security Service in the Russian Federation" by which the FSK was transformed into the FSB.

This long sequence of restructurings and renaming was intended to shield the organizational structure of the state security agencies, albeit in decentralized form, against attack by the democrats, and along with the structure to preserve the personnel, the archives and the secret agents.

A hugely important role in saving the KGB from destruction was played by Yevgeny Savostianov (in Moscow) and Sergei Stepashin (in *Leningrad*), both of whom had the reputation of being democrats appointed in order to reform and control the KGB. In fact, however, both Savostianov and Stepashin were first infiltrated into the democratic movement by the state security agencies and only later appointed to management positions in the new special services, in order to prevent the destruction of the KGB by the democrats. And although as the years went by very many full-time and free-lance officers of the KGB-MB-FSK-FSB left to go into business or politics, Savostianov and Stepashin did succeed in preserving the overall structure. Furthermore, the KGB had formerly been under the political control of the Communist Party, which served to some extent as a brake on the activities of the special agencies, since no significant operations were possible without the sanction of the Politburo. After 1991 however the MB-FSK-FSB began operating on Russian territory absolutely independently and totally unchecked, apart from the control exercised by the FSB over its own operatives. This all-pervading predatory structure was now unrestrained by either ideology or law.

Following the period of evident confusion resulting from the events of August 1991 and the mistaken expectation that operatives of the former KGB would be subjected to the same ostracism as the Communist Party, the special services realized that this new era, free of communist ideology and party control, offered them certain advantages. The former KGB was able to exploit its vast personnel resources (both official and unofficial) to position its operatives in virtually every sphere of activity throughout the vast state of Russia.

Somehow former prominent KGB men began turning up at the very highest echelons of power, frequently unnoticed by the uninitiated: the first of them were secret agents, but later they were former or serving officers. Standing at Yeltsin's back from the very first days of the events of August 1991 was KGB man Alexander Vasilievich Korzhakov, former bodyguard to the chairman of the KGB and general secretary of the Communist Party, Yury Andropov. The security service of the *MIKOM Group* was headed by retired GRU colonel Bogomazov and the vice-president of the *Financial and Industrial Group* was N. Nikolaev, a KGB man of twenty years' standing who had once worked under Korzhakov.

Filipp Denisovich Bobkov, four-star general and first deputy chairman of the KGB of the USSR, who in Soviet times had been the long-serving head of the so-called "fifth line" of the KGB (political investigation) found employment with business tycoon Vladimir Gusinsky. The "fifth line" numbered among its greatest successes the expulsion from the country of Alexander Isaevich Solzhenitsyn and Vladimir Konstantinovich Bukovsky, as well as the arrest and detainment in camps for many years of those who thought and said what they believed was right and not what the party ordered them to think and say. Standing at the back of Anatoly Sobchak, mayor of *Leningrad* (*St. Petersburg*) and a prominent leader of the reform movement in Russia, was KGB man Vladimir Putin. In Sobchak's own words, this meant that "the KGB controls *St. Petersburg*."

How this all came about has been described in detail by head of the Italian Institute of International politics and Economics Marco Giaconi, who teaches in Zurich. "The attempts made by the KGB to establish control over the financial activities of various companies always follow the same pattern.

The first stage begins when gangsters attempt to collect protection money or usurp rights which are not their own. After that special agency operatives arrive at the company to offer their help in resolving its problems. From that moment on the firm loses its independence forever. Initially a company snared in the KGB's nets has difficulty obtaining credit or may even suffer major financial setbacks. But subsequently it may be granted licences for trading in such distinctive sectors as aluminium, zinc, foodstuffs, cellulose and timber. These provide a powerful stimulus to the firm's development. This is the stage at which it is infiltrated by former KGB operatives and also becomes a new source of revenue for the KGB."

However, the years from 1991 to 1996 demonstrated that despite being plundered rapaciously by the coercive state structures (who acted both openly and through organized criminal groups under the total control of the special services), Russian business had managed in a short period to develop into an independent political force which was by no means always under the full control of the FSB. Following Yeltsin's destruction in 1993 of the pro-communist parliament, which sought to halt liberal reform in Russia, the leaders of the former KGB, who had gone on to head Yeltsin's MB and FSK, decided to destabilize and compromise Yeltsin's regime and his reforms by deliberately exacerbating the criminal situation in Russia and fomenting national conflicts, first and foremost in the North Caucasus, the weakest link in the multinational Russian state.

At the same time an energetic campaign was launched in the mass media to promote the message that impoverishment of the general public and an increase in criminal and nationalist activity were the results of political democratization, and the only way to avoid such excesses was for Russia to reject democratic reforms and western models and follow its own Russian path of development, which should be based on public order and general prosperity. What this propaganda really promoted was a dictatorship similar to the standard Nazi model. Of all the dictators, great and small, enlightened and bloodthirsty, the one chosen as a model was the most personable and least obvious, the Chilean general Augusto Pinochet. For some reason it was believed that if a dictatorship did emerge in Russia, it would be no worse than Pinochet's Chile. Historical experience, however, demonstrates that Russia always chooses the worst of all possible options.

Until 1996 the state security services fought against the democratic reformers, since they saw the most serious threat in a democratic ideology which demanded the immediate implementation of radical, pro-western economic and political reforms based on the principles of a free-market economy and the political and economic integration of Russia into the community of civilized nations. Following Yeltsin's victory in the 1996 presidential election, when Russian big business showed its political muscle for the first time by refusing to permit the cancellation of the democratic elections and the introduction of a state of emergency (the demands being made by the pro-dictatorship faction in the persons of Korzhakov, FSO head M.I. Barsukov and their like) and, most importantly, was able to ensure the victory of its own candidate, the state security services redefined the major target of their offensive as the Russian business elite. Yeltsin's victory at the polls in 1996 was followed by the appearance, at first glance inexplicable, of propaganda campaigns dedicated to blackening the reputations of Russia's leading businessmen. Heading up the vanguard in these campaigns were some familiar faces from the agencies of coercion.

Russian language acquired a new term, "oligarch," although it was quite obvious that even the very richest man in Russia was no oligarch in the literal meaning of the word, since he lacked the basic component of oligarchy, power. Real power remained, as before, in the hands of the special services.

Gradually, with the help of journalists who were operatives or agents of the FSB and SBP and an entire army of unscrupulous writers eager for easy, sensational material, the small number of “oligarchs” in Russian business came to be declared thieves, swindlers and even murderers. Meanwhile the really serious criminals, who had acquired genuine oligarchic power and pocketed billions in money that had never been listed in any accounts, were sitting behind their managers’ desks at the Russian state’s agencies of coercion: the FSB, the SBP, the FSO, the SVR, the Central Intelligence Department (GRU), the General Public Prosecutor’s Office, the Ministry of defense (MO), the Ministry of the Interior (MVD), the customs service, the tax police and so on.

It was these people who were the true oligarchs, the gray cardinals and shadowy managers of Russian business and the country’s political life. They possessed real power, unlimited and uncontrolled. Behind the secure protection of their identity cards from the agencies of coercion, they were genuinely untouchable. They abused their official positions on a regular daily basis, taking bribes and stealing, building up their ill-gotten capital and involving their subordinates in criminal activity.

This book attempts to demonstrate that modern Russia’s most fundamental problems do not result from the radical reforms of the liberal period of Yeltsin’s terms as president, but from the open or clandestine resistance offered to these reforms by the Russian special services. It was they who unleashed the first and second Chechen wars in order to divert Russia away from the path of democracy and towards dictatorship, militarism and chauvinism. It was they who organized a series of vicious terrorist attacks in Moscow and other Russian cities as part of their operations intended to create the conditions for the first and second Chechen wars.

The explosions of September 1999, in particular the terrorist attack which was thwarted in *Ryazan* on September 23, are the central theme of our book. These explosions provide the clearest thread for following the tactics and strategy of the Russian agencies of state security, which have declared war on the entire Russian people. Against the background of general lawlessness in Russia, the extremes of which have made human life cheap, the terrorist activities conducted by the FSB against Russia’s own citizens should not come as any great surprise. In these hard times the FSB has changed its methods. The philistine argument that “it’s just not possible” is merely an expression of the potential victim’s psychological inability to accept the worst.

A brief word about the authors

Yuri Georgievich Felshtinsky was born in Moscow in 1956. In 1974 he began studying history at the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute. In 1978 he immigrated to the USA and continued his study of history first at Brandeis University and later at Rutgers, where he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (History). In 1993 he successfully defended his doctoral thesis at the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences and became the first citizen of a foreign state to be awarded a doctoral degree in Russia. He has compiled and edited several dozen volumes of archival documents and is the author of the following books: *The Bolsheviks and the Left SRS* (Paris, 1985); *Towards a History of Our Isolation* (London, 1988; Moscow 1991); *The Failure of World Revolution* (London, 1991; Moscow 1992); *Big Bosses* (Moscow 1999).

Alexander Valterovich **Litvinenko** was born in Voronezh in 1962. After graduating from school in 1980 he was drafted into the army and over the next twenty years he rose through the ranks from

private to lieutenant-colonel. Beginning in 1988 he served in the counterintelligence agencies of the Soviet KGB and from 1991 in the Central Staff of the MB-FSK-FSB of Russia, specializing in counter-terrorist activities and the struggle against organized crime. For operations conducted with MUR (Moscow criminal investigation department) he was awarded the title of "MUR veteran." He saw active military service in many of the so-called "hot spots" of the former USSR and Russia and in 1997 he was transferred to the most secret department of the Russian KGB, the Department for the Analysis of Criminal Organizations, as senior operational officer and deputy head of the Seventh Section. He is a Candidate Master of Sport in the modern pentathlon. In November 1998 at a press conference in Moscow he publicly criticized the leadership of the FSB and disclosed a number of illegal orders which he had been given. In March 1999 he was arrested on trumped-up charges and imprisoned in the FSB prison at *Lefortovo* in Moscow. He was acquitted in November 1999 but no sooner had the acquittal been read out in court than he was arrested again by the FSB on another trumped-up criminal charge. In 2000 the criminal proceedings against him were dismissed for the second time and **Litvinenko** was released after providing written assurances that he would not leave the country. A third criminal case was then instigated against him. After threats were made against his family by the FSB and the investigating officers, he was obliged to leave Russia illegally, which led to yet another, fourth criminal charge being brought against him. At the present time he lives with his family in Britain, where he was granted political asylum in May 2001.

The reader may find the genre of this work somewhat surprising, something between an analytical memoir and a historical monograph. The abundance of names and facts and the laconic style of presentation will come as a disappointment to anyone hoping for an easy-reading detective story. As conceived by the authors this book should be distinguished from superficial journalism and belletristic memoirs by its intrinsic faithfulness to historical fact. It is a book about a tragedy which has overtaken us all, about wasted opportunities, lost lives and a country that is dying. It is a book for those who are capable of recognizing the reality of the past and are not afraid to influence the future.

Chapter 1

The FSB foments war in Chechnya

No one but a total madman could have wished to drag Russia into any kind of war, let alone a war in the North Caucasus. As if Afghanistan had never happened. As if it wasn't clear in advance what course such a war would follow, or just what would be the outcome and the consequences of a war declared within the confines of a multinational state against a proud, vengeful and warlike people. How could Russia possibly have become embroiled in one of its most shameful wars during the very period of its development which was most democratic in form and most liberal in spirit? This war required the mobilization of resources and increased budgets for agencies of coercion, government departments and ministries. It enhanced the importance and increased the influence of men in uniform and sidelined or rendered irrelevant the efforts made by supporters of peace, democracy and liberal values to maintain the impetus of pro-Western economic reforms. This war resulted in the isolation of the Russian state from the community of civilized nations, since the rest of the world did not support it and could not understand it. A previously popular, well-loved president therefore sacrificed the support of both his own public and the international community. Once he had fallen into the trap he was left with no option but to resign before the end of his term and hand over power to the FSB in return for a guarantee of immunity for himself and his family. We know who it was that benefited from all of this -- the people to whom Yeltsin handed over power. We know how the result was achieved -- by means of the war in Chechnya. All that remains to be discovered is who it was that set the process in motion.

Chechnya had become the weakest link in Russia's multinational mosaic, but the KGB raised no objections when Djokhar Dudaev came to power there because they regarded him as one of their own. General Dudaev, a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) since 1968, might as well have been transferred from Estonia to his home town of *Grozny* especially so that in 1990 he could retire, stand for election in opposition to the local communists, become president of the Chechen Republic and in November 1991 proclaim the independence of Chechnya (*Ichkeria*), thereby seeming to demonstrate to the Russian political elite the inevitability of Russia breaking apart under Yeltsin's liberal regime. It was probably no accident either that another Chechen who was close to Yeltsin, Ruslan Khazbulatov, would also be responsible for inflicting fatal damage on his regime. Khazbulatov, a former Communist Youth Organization (*Komsomol*) Central Committee functionary and a Communist Party member since 1966, had become chairman of the parliament of the Russian Federation in September 1991.

The history of escalation in the complex and confused relations between Russia and Chechnya is a theme for a different book. In any case, by 1994 the political leadership of Russia was already aware that it could not afford to grant Chechnya independence like Belarus and Ukraine. To grant Chechnya sovereign status could pose a genuine threat of the disintegration of Russia. But could they afford to start a civil war in the Northern Caucasus? The "party of war" based on the military and law enforcement ministries, believed that they could, if only public opinion could be prepared for it, and thought it should be easy enough to influence public opinion if the Chechens were seen to resort to terrorist tactics in their struggle for independence. All that was needed was to arrange terrorist attacks in Moscow and leave a trail leading back to Chechnya.

Knowing that Russian troops and the forces of the anti-Dudaev opposition might begin their storm of *Grozny* at any day, on November 18 1994 the FSK made its first recorded attempt to stir up anti-

Chechen feeling by committing an act of terrorism and laying the blame on Chechen separatists: if the chauvinist sentiments of Muscovites could be inflamed it would be easy to continue the repression of the independence movement in Chechnya.

It should be noted that on November 18 and in later instances, the supposed “Chechen terrorists” set off their explosions at the most inopportune times, and then never actually claimed responsibility (rendering the terrorist attack itself meaningless). But in any case in November 1994 public opinion in Russia and around the world was on the side of the Chechen people, so why would the Chechens have committed an act of terrorism in Moscow. It would have made far more sense to attempt to sabotage the stationing of Russian troops on Chechen territory. Russian supporters of war with Chechnya were, however, only too willing to see the hand of Chechnya in any terrorist attack, and their response on every occasion was to strike a rapid and quite disproportionately massive blow against Chechen sovereignty. The impression was naturally created that the Russian military and law enforcement agencies, while quite unprepared for the terrorist attacks, were incredibly well prepared to launch counter-measures.

The explosion of November 18 1994 took place on a railroad track crossing the river *Yauza* in Moscow. According to experts it was caused by two powerful charges of about 1.5 kilograms of TNT. About twenty meters of the railroad bed were ripped up and the bridge almost collapsed. It was quite clear, however, that the explosion had occurred prematurely, before the next train was due to cross the bridge. The shattered fragments of the bomber’s body were discovered at a distance of about a hundred meters from the site of the explosion. He was captain Andrei Shchelenkov, an employee of the oil company *Lanako*, and he had been blown up by his own bomb as he was planting it on the bridge.

It was only thanks to this blunder by the operative carrying out the bombing that the immediate organizers of the terrorist attack became known. The boss of *Lanako*, who had given his firm a name beginning with the first two letters of his own last name, was thirty-five year-old Maxim Lazovsky, a highly valued agent of the Moscow and Moscow Region Department of the FSB, who was known in criminal circles by the nicknames of “Max” and “Cripple” (“Khromoi”). At the risk of anticipating events, we can also point out the significant fact that every single one of *Lanako*’s employees was a full-time or freelance agent of the Russian counterespionage agencies.

On the day of the explosion on the river *Yauza*, November 18 1994, an anonymous phone call to the militia (the ordinary police force) claimed that a truck full of explosives was standing outside the *Lanako* offices. As a result the FSB department actually did discover a *ZIL-131* truck close to the firm’s offices containing three *MON-50* mines, 50 charges for grenade launchers, 14 *RGD-5* grenades, 10 *F-1* grenades and four packs of plastic explosive with a total weight of six kilograms. The FSB claimed, however, that it had been unable to determine who owned the truck, even though a *Lanako* identity card was found on Shchelenkov’s remains and the explosive used in the *Yauza* bombing was of the same kind as that on the truck.

War in Chechnya offered a very easy way to finish off Yeltsin politically, a fact understood only too well by those who provoked the war and organized terrorist attacks in Russia. But there was in addition a primitive financial aspect to relations between the Russian leadership and the president of the Chechen Republic: the Russians were continuously extorting money from Dudaev. It began in 1992, when bribes were accepted from the Chechens in payment for the Soviet armaments left behind in Chechnya that year. The bribes for these weapons were extorted by head of the SBP

Korzhakov, head of the FSO Barsukov and first deputy prime minister of the Russian Federation Oleg Soskovets. And of course, the Ministry of Defense was in on the deal. Some years later the naive citizens of Russia began to wonder how all those weapons the Chechens were using to kill Russian soldiers could have been left behind in Chechnya. The answer was nothing if not mundane: they were paid for by Dudaev in multi-million dollar bribes to Korzhakov, Barsukov and Soskovets.

After 1992 the Moscow bureaucrats continued their successful bribe-based collaboration with Dudaev and the Chechen leadership continued sending money to Moscow on a regular basis because there was no other way Dudaev could resolve a single political question. But in 1994 the system began to falter as Moscow extorted larger and larger sums of money in exchange for political favors relating to Chechen independence. Dudaev started refusing to pay. The financial conflict gradually developed into a political stand-off and then a contest of strength between the Russian and Chechen leaderships. The threat of war hung heavy in the air. Dudaev requested a personal meeting with Yeltsin, perhaps even intending to tell him what had been going on. But the threesome who controlled access to Yeltsin demanded a bribe of several million dollars for organizing a meeting between the two presidents. Dudaev refused to pay and demanded that the meeting with Yeltsin take place without any money changing hands in advance. Furthermore, for the first time he threatened the people who had been helping him strictly for payment with the disclosure of documents in his possession which contained compromising information about the functionaries' self-serving dealings with the Chechens. Dudaev believed that possession of these documents was his insurance against arrest. He could not be arrested, he could only be killed, since he was an eyewitness to crimes committed by members of Yeltsin's entourage. But Dudaev had miscalculated. His blackmail failed and the meeting he wanted never took place. The president of Chechnya was now a dangerous witness who had to be removed. And so a cruel and senseless war was deliberately provoked. Let us trace the sequence of events.

On November 22 1994 the State Defense Committee of the Chechen Republic, which Dudaev had founded by decree the previous day, accused Russia of launching a war against Chechnya. As far as the journalists could see, there was no war, but Dudaev knew that the "party of war" had already taken its decision to commence military action. The Chechen State Defense Committee which, in addition to Dudaev, included the leaders of the military and other agencies of coercion, as well as a number of key governmental departments and ministries, held an emergency session in response to "the threat of military incursion" into Chechnya. A statement by the State Defense Committee which was distributed in *Grozny* claimed that "Russian regular units are occupying the *Nadterechny* district, part of the territory of the Chechen Republic", adding that in the days immediately ahead it was planned "to occupy the territory of the *Naursk* and *Shelkovsk* districts. For this purpose use is being made of regular units of the North Caucasus Military District, special subunits of the Russian Ministry of the Interior and army aircraft from the North Caucasus Military District. According to information received by the State Defense Council, special subunits of the Russian FSK are also taking part in the operation."

The Central Armed Forces HQ of Chechnya confirmed that military units were being concentrated on the border with Chechnya's *Naursk* district, in the village of *Veselaia*, in the *Stavropol* Region: there were heavy tanks, artillery and as many as six battalions of infantry. It later became known that the backbone of the forces drawn up for the storming of *Grozny* consisted of a column of Russian armored vehicles assembled on the initiative of the FSK, which also paid for it and hired

soldiers and officers on contract, including members of the elite armed forces from the armored *Taman* and *Kantemirov* divisions.

On November 23 nine Russian army helicopters, presumably *MI-8s*, from the North Caucasus Military District launched a rocket attack on the town of *Shali*, located approximately 40 kilometers from *Grozny*, in an attempt to destroy the armored vehicles of a tank regiment located there, and were met with anti-aircraft artillery fire. There were wounded on the Chechen side, which announced that it had a video recording showing helicopters bearing Russian identification markings.

On November 25 seven Russian helicopters from a military base in the *Stavropol* Region fired several rocket salvos at the airport in *Grozny* and apartment buildings close by, damaging the landing strip and the civil aircraft standing on it. Six people were killed and about 25 were injured. In response to this raid the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chechnya forwarded a statement to the authorities of the *Stavropol* Region pointing out, among other things, that the region's leaders "bear responsibility for such acts and in the case of appropriate measures being taken by the Chechen side" all complaints "should be directed to Moscow."

On November 26 the forces of the "Provisional Council of Chechnya" (the Chechen opposition), supported by Russian helicopters and armored vehicles, attacked *Grozny* from all four sides. More than 1,200 men, 50 tanks, 80 armored personnel carriers and six *SU-27* planes from the opposition took part in the operation. An announcement made by the Moscow center of the puppet "Provisional Council of Chechnya" claimed that "the demoralized forces of Dudaev's supporters are offering virtually no resistance and everything will probably be over by the morning."

In fact, the operation was a total failure. The attackers lost about 500 men and more than 20 tanks, and another 20 tanks were captured by Dudaev's forces. About 200 members of the armed forces were taken prisoner. On November 28 a column of prisoners was marched through the streets of *Grozny* "to mark the victory over the forces of opposition." At the same time the Chechen leadership disclosed a list of fourteen captured soldiers and officers who were members of the Russian armed forces. The prisoners confessed in front of television cameras that most of them served in military units 43162 and 01451 based outside Moscow. The Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation replied that the individuals concerned were not serving members of the Russian armed forces. In response to an inquiry concerning prisoners captain Andrei Kriukov and senior lieutenant Yevgeny Zhukov, the Ministry of Defense stated that these officers had indeed been serving in army unit 01451, but that they had not reported to the unit since October 20 1994 and an order for their discharge from the armed forces was being drawn up. In other words, the Russian Ministry of Defense declared the captured soldiers to be deserters. The following day Yevgeny Zhukov's father refuted the ministry's statement. In an interview with the Russian Information Agency *Novosti* he said that his son had left his unit on November 9, telling his parents that he had been assigned for ten days to *Nizhny Tagil*. The next time Yevgeny's parents had seen him was in a group of captured Russian soldiers in *Grozny* on the weekly television news program *Itogi* on 27 November. When he was asked how their son came to be in Chechnya, unit commander Zhukov refused to answer.

A little later the following colorful account of the events of November 26 was given by major Valery Ivanov following his release in a group of seven members of the Russian armed forces on December 8:

“By unit order of the day all those who had been recruited were granted compassionate leave due to family circumstances. For the most part they took officers without any settled domestic arrangements. Half of them had no apartments -- you were supposed to be able to refuse, but if you did refuse, when they started handing out apartments you’d find yourself left out. On November 10 we arrived in *Mozdok* in Northern *Ossetia*. In two weeks we made ready 14 tanks with Chechen crews and 26 tanks for Russian servicemen. On November 25 we advanced on *Grozny*... I personally was in a group of three tanks which took control of the *Grozny* television center at mid-day on the 26th. There was no resistance from the Interior Ministry forces defending the tower. But three hours later, in the absence of communications with our command, we came under attack by the famous *Abkhazian* battalion. We were surrounded by tanks and infantry and decided it was pointless to return fire, since the [anti-Dudaev] opposition forces had immediately run off and abandoned us, and two of our three tanks were burnt out. The crews managed to bail out and surrender to the guards of the television center, who handed us over to president Dudaev’s personal bodyguard. They treated us well, in the last few days they hardly guarded us at all, but then there was nowhere we could run off to.”

The impression given by all this was that the armored column had been deliberately introduced into *Grozny* on 26 November so that it would be destroyed. The column was not capable of disarming Dudaev and his army, or of taking the city and holding it. Dudaev’s army was at full strength and well armed. The column could not possibly have been anything more than a moving target.

Russian minister of defense Grachyov hinted that he had not been involved in the irresponsible attempt to take *Grozny*. From a military point of view, Grachyov declared at a press conference on November 28 1996, it would be entirely possible to take *Grozny* “in two hours with a single regiment of paratroopers. However, all military conflicts are ultimately settled at the negotiating table by political methods. Introducing tanks into the city without infantry cover was really quite pointless.” But why then were they sent in?

General Gennady Troshev would later tell us about Grachyov’s doubts concerning the Chechen campaign: “He tried to do something about it. He tried to extract a clear assessment of the situation from Stepashin and his special service, he tried to delay the initial introduction of troops until the spring, he even tried to reach a personal agreement with Dudaev. We know now that such a meeting did take place. They didn’t come to any agreement.” General Troshev, who at this stage was in control of the second war in Chechnya, could not understand how Grachyov had failed to reach an understanding with Dudaev. The reason, of course, was that Dudaev insisted on a personal meeting with Yeltsin and Korzhakov refused to set up the meeting unless he was paid.

The brilliant military operation in which a Russian armored column was burnt out was indeed not organized by Grachyov, but by director of the FSK Stepashin and head of the Moscow UFSB Savostyanov, who was responsible for handling questions relating to the overthrow of Dudaev’s regime and the introduction of troops into Chechnya. But those who expatiated at great length on the crude miscalculations of the Russian military leaders who had sent the armored column into the city only for it to be destroyed failed to understand the subtle political calculations of the provocateurs who organized the war in Chechnya. The people who planned the introduction of troops into *Grozny* wanted the column to be wiped out in spectacular fashion by the Chechens. It was the only way they could provoke Yeltsin into launching a full-scale war against Dudaev.

Immediately after the rout of the armored column in *Grozny* President Yeltsin made a public appeal to Russian participants in the conflict in the Chechen Republic and the Kremlin began preparing public opinion for imminent full-scale war. In an interview for the Russian Information Agency *Novosti* Arkady Popov, a consultant with the president's analytical center, announced that Russia could take on the role of a "compulsory peace-maker" in Chechnya and that all the indications were that the Russian president intended to take decisive action. If the president were to declare a state of emergency in Chechnya, the Russian authorities could employ "a form of limited intervention, which would take the form of disarming both sides to the conflict by introducing a limited contingent of Russian troops into *Grozny*" -- exactly what had been tried in Afghanistan. And so, having provoked a conflict in Chechnya by providing political and military support to the Chechen opposition, the FSK now intended to launch a war against Dudaev under cover of peacemaking operations.

The Chechen side took Yeltsin's statement to be an "ultimatum" and a "declaration of war." A statement issued by the Chechen government confirmed that this statement and any attempt to put it into effect were "in contravention of the norms of international law" and gave the government of Chechnya "the right to respond by taking adequate measures for the protection of its independence and the territorial integrity of its state." In the opinion of the government of the Chechen Republic the threat of a Russian declaration of a state of emergency on Chechen territory expressed "an undisguised desire to continue military operations and interfere in the internal affairs of another state."

On November 30 *Grozny* was subjected to air-strikes by the Russian air force. On December 1 the Russian military command refused to allow into *Grozny* an aircraft carrying a delegation of members of the Russian State *Duma*. The delegation landed in the *Ingushetian* capital of *Nazran* and set out overland to *Grozny* for a meeting with Dudaev. While they were traveling to the Chechen capital, on December 1 at about 14.00 hours, eight *SU-27* planes carried out a second raid on the Chechen capital, encountering dense anti-aircraft fire in the process. The planes specifically shelled the district of the city where Dudaev lived. According to the Chechen side, one plane was shot down by anti-aircraft defense forces.

On December 2 the chairman of the *Duma* Defense Committee and head of the delegation that had arrived in *Grozny*, Sergei Yushenkov, declared that reliance on force in Russian-Chechen relations was doomed to failure. Yushenkov also stated that familiarization with the situation on the ground had convinced him that negotiation was the only possible way to resolve the situation that had arisen and claimed that the Chechen side had not set any preconditions for negotiations.

Public opinion was still on the side of the Chechens, but the leadership of the FSB had become absolutely convinced that it could be manipulated by the use of acts of terrorism blamed on the Chechens. On December 5 the FSK informed journalists that foreign mercenaries had surged across the state border into Chechnya and therefore "activity by the terrorist groups being infiltrated into Russia today cannot be ruled out in other regions of the country as well." This was the first undisguised announcement by the FSK that acts of terrorism with "a trail leading back to Chechnya" would soon begin in Russia. At this point, however, they still spoke of Russia being infiltrated by foreign agents a ploy drawn, no doubt, from the pages of the old Soviet KGB handbooks.

On December 6 Dudaev declared in an interview that Russia's policy was creating a rising tide of Islamic sentiment in Chechnya: "Playing the 'Chechen card' may bring into play the global interests of foreign Islamic states, who could make it impossible to control the development of events. A third force has now emerged in Chechnya, the *Islamists*, and the initiative is gradually shifting over to them." Dudaev characterized the mood of the new arrivals in *Grozny* with the words: "We are no longer your soldiers, Mr. President, we are the soldiers of Allah", and summed up: "the situation in Chechnya is beginning to get out of control, and this concerns me."

As though in reply to Dudaev, Russian minister of defense Grachyov held a public relations exercise which took the external form of a peacemaking gesture, but in reality provoked a further escalation of the conflict. Grachyov proposed that the Chechen opposition headed by Avturkhanov, which was financed, armed and staffed by the FSK, should disarm, on condition that Dudaev's supporters would agree to give up their weapons at the same time. In other words, he suggested to Dudaev that the Chechens should disarm unilaterally (since there was no suggestion of the Russian side disarming). Naturally this proposal was not accepted by the government of the Chechen Republic. On December 7 Grachyov had a meeting with Dudaev but the discussions proved fruitless.

On the same day in Moscow the Security Council held a session devoted to events in Chechnya and the State *Duma* held a closed session to which the leaders of the government departments responsible for the armed forces and other agencies of law enforcement were invited. However, they failed to show up at the *Duma*, because they did not wish to answer the parliamentarians' questions about who had given the orders to recruit members of the Russian armed forces and bomb *Grozny*. We now know that the Russian military personnel were recruited by the FSK on Stepashin's instructions and that the directives to bombard *Grozny* were issued by the Ministry of Defense.

On December 8 the Chechen side announced it was in possession of information that Russia was preparing to advance its forces on to Chechen territory and launch an all-out land war against the republic. At a press conference held at the State *Duma* in Moscow on December 9 the chairman of the *Duma* Federal Affairs and Regional Policy Committee and chairman of the Republican Party of Russia, Vladimir Lysenko, announced that in that case he would table a motion in the *Duma* for the Russian government to be dismissed. But on December 8 the Working Commission on Negotiations for the Settlement of the Conflict in the Chechen Republic managed to broker an agreement between the representatives of president Dudaev and the opposition under which negotiations were due to start in *Vladikavkaz* at 15.00 hours on December 12. The Russian federal authorities' delegation to the negotiations was to have consisted of 12 members led by deputy minister for nationalities and regional policy Vyacheslav Mikhailov. The delegation from *Grozny* was to have numbered nine members, headed by Chechen minister of the economy and finance Taimaz Abubakarov. From the opposition there was to have been a three-man delegation led by Bek Baskhanov, the Public Prosecutor General of Chechnya. It was provisionally agreed that the main problems to be discussed at the negotiations between Moscow and *Grozny* were halting the bloodshed and establishing normal relations. Negotiations with the supporters of the Chechen opposition were only supposed to deal with questions of disarmament.

All this increased the chances of peace being preserved, and left the "party of war" with very little time until December 12. In effect the announcement by the Working Commission for the Settlement of the Chechen Conflict determined the date on which military land operations began. If the peace

negotiations were due to start on December 12, the war had to be launched on December 11. The Russian leadership acted accordingly: on December 11 land forces crossed the demarcation line into the Chechen Republic, and for the first few days Russian military reports spoke of the absence of any real resistance or any losses.

By December 13 Soskovets had already determined his main lines of action and he informed journalists that the total cost of implementing measures to normalize the situation in Chechnya could amount to about a trillion rubles. (This was the sum that would first have to be allocated from the budget so that it could be systematically embezzled). He said that the government's first priority was to get the aid delivered to the population of Chechnya, and special attention would be paid to ensuring that it was not wasted or stolen (we now know for certain that no aid ever reached Chechnya and all of it was wasted and stolen).

Soskovets emphasized that members of the Chechen diaspora living in Moscow and other Russian cities should not be considered potential terrorists. Note this phrase. So far nobody had even dreamed of regarding the members of the Chechen diaspora as potential terrorists, and there had not actually been any terrorist attacks. The war with Chechnya was still not even regarded as a war, but something more in the nature of a police operation, and there had not yet been any serious casualties. Yet for some reason the first deputy premier seemed to think it possible that the Chechens might organize acts of terrorism on Russian soil. Soskovets' remark that no discriminatory measures would be applied to the general mass of Chechen citizens, and that the federal authorities were not even considering the enforced deportation of Chechens, was clearly a suggestion from the "party of war" that war should be waged against the entire Chechen people throughout the whole of Russia, including by both discriminatory measures and enforced deportation.

Lieutenant-general Alexander Lebed, commander of the 14th Russian Army in *Pridniestrovie* (the region along the *Dniestr* river in Moldova), firecely opposed the "party of war" because he understood perfectly well what Soskovets was hinting at and the price Russia would have to pay. In a telephone interview from his headquarters in *Tiraspol* he declared that "the Chechen conflict can only be resolved by diplomatic negotiations. Chechnya is repeating the Afghanistan scenario point for point. We are risking unleashing war with the entire Islamic world. Solitary fighters can go on forever burning our tanks and picking off our soldiers with individual shots. In Chechnya we have shot ourselves in the foot exactly as we did in Afghanistan, and that is very sad. A well reinforced and well stocked *Grozny* is capable of offering long and stubborn resistance." Lebed reminded everyone that in Soviet times Dudaev had commanded an airborne division of strategic bombers capable of waging war on a continental scale and that "fools were not appointed" to such posts.

Beginning on December 14 Moscow was transferred to a state of semi-military alert and Muscovites were deliberately frightened with the prospect of inevitable Chechen terrorism. The agencies of the Ministry of the Interior stepped up their protection of the city's vital installations and FSK personnel worked to improve their security. A large number of state institutions were guarded by police patrols armed with automatic weapons. The Ministry of the Interior announced that this was all a response to the threat of terrorist groups being sent to Moscow from *Grozny*. The first suspected Chechen terrorists began to be sought out. On the evening of December 13 the Chechen Israil Getiev, a native and resident of *Grozny*, had been arrested for setting off New Year crackers and bangers outside the *Prague* restaurant on *New Arbat* (*Novyi Arbat*) street and detained at the station of the Fifth Moscow Police Precinct. At this stage announcements like this could still

raise a smile, but on December 14 it was suddenly announced that after less than three full days of military operations “casualties on both sides are already in the hundreds.” It was all getting beyond a laughing matter.

On December 15 the true scale of the operation being launched was revealed. Advancing on *Grozny* alongside subunits of the Ministry of the Interior were two general army divisions from the North Caucasus Military District and two assault brigades at full strength. Chechen territory was also entered by composite regiments from the *Pskov*, *Vitebsk* and *Tula* divisions of the airborne assault forces (VDV), with 600 to 800 men in each. In the region of *Mozdok* disembarkation had begun of composite regiments from the *Ulyanovsk* and *Kostroma* divisions of the VDV. *Grozny* was being approached along four main lines of advance: one from *Ingushetia*, two from *Mozdok* and one from *Dagestan*. The Russian forces were preparing to storm the city. On the Chechen side, according to information from the Russian Ministry of the Interior and the FSK, more than 13,000 armed men had been assembled in and around *Grozny*.

Yeltsin was moving towards the edge of an abyss. A session of the Security Council held under his chairmanship on December 17 reviewed a plan for “the implementation of measures to restore constitutional legality, the rule of law and peace in the Chechen Republic.” The Security Council made the Ministry of Defense (Grachyov), the Ministry of the Interior (Viktor Yerin), the FSK (Stepashin) and the Federal Border Service (Nikolaev) responsible for using every possible means to disarm and destroy illegal armed formations in Chechnya and secure the state and administrative borders of the Chechen Republic. The work was to be coordinated by Grachyov. This was the day that marked the end of Russia’s liberal-democratic period. President Yeltsin had committed political suicide.

On December 17 the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that from 00.00 hours on December 18 units of Interior Ministry and Defense Ministry forces would be obliged to take decisive action and make use of all means at their disposal to re-establish constitutional legality and the rule of law on the territory of Chechnya. Groups of bandits would be disarmed and, if they offered resistance, destroyed. The Ministry of the Interior statement claimed that the civilian population of Chechnya had been informed of the urgent need to leave *Grozny* and other centers of population in which rebel groups were located. The Interior Ministry strongly recommended foreign citizens and journalists in the zone of hostilities to leave *Grozny* and make their way to safe areas. (Despite the warnings from the Russian leadership, most of the foreign journalists remained in *Grozny*, and at the *Frantsuzsky Dvor* (*The French Courtyard*) hotel where they stayed rooms were in as short supply as ever.)

On the same day Soskovets announced to the world that president Dudaev had been summoned to *Mozdok* to meet a Russian government delegation headed by deputy premier Nikolai Yegorov and FSK director Stepashin. Soskovets stated that if Dudaev did not come to *Mozdok* the Russian forces would take action in accordance with the regulations for the elimination of illegal armed formations, and he also announced that expenditure on the operations over the preceding week amounted to 60 billion rubles by the Ministry of the Interior and 200 billion rubles by the Ministry of Defense.

Four hours before the deadline expired, at eight in the evening on December 17, Dudaev made his final attempt to avert war and wired the Russian leadership that he would agree “to start negotiations at the appropriate level without any preconditions and to lead the governmental

delegation of the Chechen Republic in person.” In other words, Dudaev was again demanding a personal meeting with Yeltsin, but since Dudaev persisted in his refusal to pay any money for such a meeting to be arranged, his cable went unanswered.

At 9 in the morning on December 18 the Russian forces blockading *Grozny* began storming the city. Front-line air units and army helicopters delivered “precision blows against Dudaev’s command post at *Khankala* near *Grozny*, the bridges over the *Terek* river to the north and also against maneuverable groups of armored vehicles.” An announcement from the Temporary Information Center of the Russian High Command stated that following the destruction of the armored vehicles, the plan was for the forces blockading *Grozny* to advance and proceed with the disarmament of illegal armed groups on the territory of Chechnya. President Yeltsin’s plenipotentiary representative in Chechnya announced that Dudaev now had no choice but to surrender.

On December 18 Soskovets, having been appointed to yet another post as head of the Russian government’s operational headquarters for the coordination of action taken by agencies of the executive authorities, informed the press that in *Grozny* “they are studying the possibility” of carrying out terrorist attacks aimed at military and civilian targets in Central Russia and the *Urals*, and also of hijacking a civilian passenger plane. The first deputy premier’s astonishingly detailed information was in fact an indication that terrorist acts could be expected within a few days.

On December 22 the press office of the Government of the Russian Federation announced that Chechens were blowing themselves up in order to throw the blame for the explosions on to the Russian army. The statement issued read as follows:

“Today at 10 in the morning a meeting was held under the chairmanship of first deputy chairman of the government Oleg Soskovets which was attended by members of the government, members of the Security Council and representatives of the President’s Office. The meeting discussed the situation which has arisen in the Chechen Republic and the measures being taken by the president and the government to restore constitutional legality and provide economic assistance to the population of areas which have been liberated from the armed formations of the Dudaev regime. Reports made by those present at the meeting indicate that last night operations to disarm the armed bandit formations continued and bombing raids were carried out against their strongholds. The city of *Grozny* was not subjected to bombardment. However, the guerrillas made attempts to imitate the bombardment of housing districts. At about one in the morning an office building and an apartment block were blown up. The residents, both Chechen and Russian, were not given any warning of the planned attack. The imitation of bombardment was undertaken in order to demonstrate the thesis of ‘a war being waged by the Russian leadership against the Chechen people’. This thesis was proclaimed yesterday in Dudaev’s ‘appeal to the international community’.”

In other words the Russian government’s press office attempted to blame the Chechens for the destruction by Russian forces of an office building and apartment block containing civilians.

Initiated by Soskovets, this announcement couched in Stalinist prose was made public one day before the explosion between the stations of *Kozhukhovo* and *Kanatchikovo* on the Moscow circular railroad (there were no casualties and no terrorists were found).

December 23 is the date which can be regarded as the beginning of the FSB’s terrorist campaign against Russia. From then on terrorist attacks became a commonplace occurrence.

Chapter 2

The special services run riot

It is worth noting the way in which the press office of the Russian government described the terrorist attack carried out on December 23: “Information has been received concerning the dispatch to Moscow [from Chechnya] of three experienced guerrilla fighters, including one woman, who have instructions to assume the leadership of groups of terrorists sent here previously. A group of foreigners who were seeking contact with guerrillas from *Grozny* has been detained and a number of radio-controlled explosive devices they were carrying have been confiscated, together with 20 kilograms of TNT and 16 radio-controlled anti-personnel and anti-tank mines. On the night of December 23 the rails were blown up on one section of the Moscow circular railroad. Another bomb was rendered harmless. Measures are being taken to identify sabotage groups active in Moscow and the Moscow Region.”

No investigation of any acts of terrorism was carried out. But then the picture was clear enough anyway: first the Chechens sent “sabotage groups” to Moscow and the Moscow Region; then they sent three experienced guerrilla leaders to help them; and finally a “group of foreigners” was brought in to help them from abroad with TNT and bombs (apparently they were carrying the bombs on their persons as they entered the country). The result of all these complicated preparations was a terrorist attack on one section of the Moscow circular railroad, which indicated that the groups of saboteurs already sent to Moscow and the Moscow Region had not yet been neutralized (one could assume that the terrorist attacks would continue).

Everything in the press office statement was absolutely untrue, except for the announcement that there had been an explosion on a section of the Moscow circular railroad on December 23. The modus operandi suggests that this attack was also carried out by Lazovsky’s people. In any case, it is impossible to regard as mere coincidence the fact that only four days later yet another terrorist attack was carried out in Moscow. At 9 in the evening on December 27 1994 Vladimir Vorobyov, a free-lance FSB agent and employee of Lazovsky’s company *Lanako*, who came from a long line of military men (in 1920 his grandfather had been in charge of the *Arsenal* arms plant in *Tula*), had a Candidate degree (i.e. Ph.D.) in Technical Sciences and was employed at the *Zhukovsky* Academy on the development of a new anti-missile defense system, planted a remote-controlled bomb in a bus at a bus stop on route 33 between the All-Union Economic Exhibition (VDNKh) and the *Yuzhnaya* subway station. There were no passengers on board the bus when the bomb exploded and the only casualty was the driver, Dmitry Trapezov, who suffered severe bruising and concussion. Trolley buses standing close by were lacerated by shrapnel.

Vorobyov’s boss Lazovsky worked not only for the FSK, but also for the SVR, where his controller was the experienced officer Pyotr Yevgenievich **Suslov**, who was born in 1951. Lazovsky was one of his secret agents. **Suslov** officially quit the intelligence service and went into business in 1995, after which he made repeated journeys to war-torn *Grozny*, *Baghdad*, *Teheran*, the Arab Emirates and other countries in the Middle East. In fact **Suslov** was organizing extra-legal reprisals. In order to carry out missions involving acts of coercion and killings he hired qualified former operatives from special units, in particular from the special missions unit of the First (Central) Department (PGU) of the KGB of the USSR, known as *Vympel* (*Pennant*), who possessed advanced sniper’s skills. *Vympel*’s officers were involved both as instructors and front line operatives and a special *Vympel* Fund was even established to finance this work. The chairman of the fund was a criminal

“boss” well known in Russia, Sergei Petrovich Kublitsky (his underworld nickname was *Vorkuta*). **Suslov** was the vice-chairman. At the same time **Suslov** was also chairman of the board of directors of the “Law and Order Center” regional social fund (Moscow, *Voronkovskaya* Street, 21).

Suslov maintained extensive contacts in the state’s departments of law enforcement and agencies of coercion, including the leadership of the FSB. Operational data obtained via the Central Office of the Interior for the Moscow Region indicates in particular that **Suslov** maintained close contact with major-general Yevgeny Grigorievich Khokholkov, head of the Long-Term Programs Office (UPP) established in summer 1996, which provided the basis for the establishment in 1997 of the FSB’s Office for the Analysis and Suppression of the Activity of Criminal Organizations (URPDPO), more commonly known as the Office for the Analysis of Criminal Organizations (URPO). Alexei Kimovich Antropov, a graduate of the intelligence school of the External Intelligence Service, was a sector head in the Third Section of the URPO, specializing in the struggle against internal terrorism. Both Lazovsky and **Suslov** were on good terms with Antropov.

It is worthwhile examining in greater detail this secret department of the FSB with its long, incomprehensible title that is impossible to remember and was frequently changed to prevent the public penetrating its veil of secrecy. The Office for the Analysis of Criminal Groups was established in order to identify and then neutralize (liquidate) sources of information representing a threat to state security. In other words, to carry out extra-judiciary killings, acts of provocation and terrorism and abductions. One of Khokholkov’s deputies was major-general N. Stepanov and another was the former minister of state security for the Republic of *Kabardino-Balkaria*, A.K. Makarychev. The UPP possessed its own external surveillance section; its own security consultant, colonel Vladimir Simaev; its own technical measures section, and two private detective and bodyguard agencies called *Stealth* and *Cosmic Alternative*. The latter specialized in bugging pagers and mobile phones and other technical operational measures, while *Stealth* had a legendary reputation.

A private bodyguard and detective agency which changed its name periodically, just like the UPP, *Stealth* was registered as a business in 1989 at the very dawn of *perestroika* by a resident of Moscow called Ivanov, who was an agent of the Fifth Department of the KGB of the USSR (which subsequently became Department Z). Ivanov was used in the struggle against internal terrorism and his line of contact was with a member of colonel V.V. Lutsenko’s department, which had provided operational support for the establishment and activities of *Stealth*. With the assistance of Lutsenko, who used the private bodyguard firm to resolve personal rather than operational matters (the free provision of various types of protection, or “roofs”, for commercial organizations), during the period from 1989 to 1992 *Stealth* developed extensive contacts in the criminal underworld and the sphere of law enforcement, becoming one of the most well-known security agencies in Russia.

Following his discharge from the special agencies in 1992 Lutsenko took control of the detective and bodyguard firm, which he reregistered with himself as one of the partners. Lutsenko’s solid connections in various departments of the former KGB, in combination with the exodus from the Russian security services of large numbers of experienced operatives who also maintained their own well-tested contacts and networks of agents, meant that Lutsenko was able to hire highly qualified professionals to work in *Stealth*.

From his old area of operations (the struggle against terrorism) Lutsenko had retained reliable contacts with representatives of the former Ninth Department of the KGB (protection of high-level

national leaders). This made it possible for him to contact Korzhakov, Barsukov and their entourages and offer them the services of *Stealth*, under his management, to assist the SBP and FSK in the less traditional forms of struggle against organized criminal activity.

His suggestion met with approval and a general plan of action was rapidly developed with input from Korzhakov's first deputy, general G.G. Ragozin. The program envisaged the use of criminal and extremist organizations, individual criminals and retrained military personnel from the special missions department of the GRU of the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Interior and the FSB to undermine and break up criminal groupings and physically eliminate underworld "bosses" and leaders of criminal organizations.

In practise everything turned out according to that eternal Russian principle: "we wanted to do better, but things turned out the same as always." *Stealth* provided a "roof" for a range of commercial organizations and carried out various kinds of operations to put pressure on criminal and commercial competitors, up to and including contract killings. In support of this activity Korzhakov, Barsukov and Trofimov arranged for any possible criminal investigations of the bodyguard firm by the agencies of law enforcement and the security forces (the FSB, Ministry of the Interior, the tax police, the Public Prosecutor's Office) to be neutralized. The heads of all of these state departments were informed of the contents of the initial program for which *Stealth* had been set up and an understanding was reached that their agencies would not investigate *Stealth's* activities.

Stealth used the *Izmailovo* organized criminal group as its strike force, but gradually the financial influence of the group and the infiltration of its personnel transformed *Stealth* into *Izmailovo* group's "roof", or cover, and Lutsenko became its puppet leader. Other private security companies, such as *Kmeti* and *Cobalt*, also found themselves in the same situation. All of them were exploited to implement the existing program for combating organized crime by non-traditional means. They became implicated in a series of well-known contract killings of criminal leaders, businessmen and bankers. The operatives who carried out these murders were hired killers from free-lance special agency groups. As a rule all of the operations were planned and carried out in a highly professional manner, with the subsequent elimination, if necessary, of the hired killers themselves and the individuals who provided their cover. There was no prospect of investigations into this kind of crime ever producing a trial. Any criminals involved in the crimes who happened to be detained simply didn't live long enough to get to the court.

In time *Stealth* developed into an efficient bodyguard and detection organization equipped with a wide range of technology, including special items and weapons (some of them illegal), with a payroll of up to 600 individuals. Approximately 70 per cent of its personnel consisted of former members of the FSB and SBP, and about 30 per cent were former members of the police force (militia). *Stealth* was transferred to the UPP when it was set up in 1996, although it did maintain a certain degree of autonomy.

The main principle on which the UPP operated was "problem-solving": if there's a problem, then a solution must be found. Clues to the existence of this operating principle can be found in Pavel Sukhoplatov's memoirs published in Moscow in 1996, which happen to be the favorite reference text of the UPP's leaders. The murder of the president of Chechnya Djokhar Dudaev provides a good example of the problem-solving approach to the achievement of a combat goal. The people who organized this killing were also involved in setting up the UPP.

In a certain sense Dudaev's murder was a contract killing, but in the case the contract was put out by the leadership of the state. The oral, but nonetheless official, order to eliminate Dudaev was given by Russian president Yeltsin. The prehistory to this decision is vague and mysterious. Some time after May 20 1995 informal negotiations began between the Russian and Chechen sides on a cessation of military operations and the signing of a peace agreement. On the Chechen side the negotiations were organized by the former General Public Prosecutor of Chechnya, Usman Imaev and on the Russian side by the well-known businessman Arkady Volsky. The Russians tried to persuade the Chechens to capitulate. On behalf of the Russian leadership Volsky offered Dudaev the chance to leave Chechnya for any other country on his own terms (as Yeltsin put it: "anywhere he wants, and the further from Russia the better").

The meeting with Dudaev was far from pleasant for Volsky. Dudaev felt he had been insulted and he was in a fury. Volsky was probably only saved from immediate measures of reprisal by his parliamentary status. Imaev was not spared Dudaev's wrath either, soon afterwards he was accused of collaborating with the Russian special services. Having been withdrawn from the negotiation process and demoted, Imaev returned to his native village of *Kulary* where he turned pious and began preaching the norms of Muslim *Shariah* law. The Russian authorities made no attempt to prevent Imaev from travelling to *Istanbul* and *Cracow*, where the Chechens felt secure enough to engage in open anti-Russian propaganda. Dudaev expressed concern about Imaev's journey. Imaev returned to Chechnya shortly before the Chechen president was assassinated and was last seen at a Russian fortified position near the village of Kulary, where he had gone for a meeting with representatives of the federal authorities. Imaev told the men who accompanied him on the way to *Kulary* that he would be back in a week. He and the people who had been waiting for him flew off in a helicopter to an unknown destination and he was never seen again.

However, the negotiations begun by Volsky and Imaev did have a sequel: Dudaev was able to reach an agreement with Moscow on halting military operations. For the appropriate decree Dudaev was asked to pay another multi-million dollar bribe. He paid the money so that no more people would be killed for nothing, but no decree calling a halt to military operations emerged. The people in Yeltsin's entourage had "dumped" the Chechens.

Then Dudaev ordered his lieutenant Shamil Basaev either to get the money back or arrange for the beginning of peace talks and the halt to military action for which money had already been paid over. Basaev came up with a novel idea. On June 14 1995 he attempted to coerce Korzhakov, Barsukov and Soskovets into honoring their debt by seizing a hospital in *Budyonnovsk*, with more than a thousand hostages. After all, this was a serious business deal he was trying to close!

Responding to Basaev's occupation of the hospital, the Russian special operations squad *Alpha* had already taken the first floor of the building and was on the point of freeing the hostages and disposing of the terrorists, when Russian premier Chernomyrdin, who had undertaken to mediate, judged correctly that the Chechens had been "dumped out of order." He promised to start peace talks immediately, insisted on a halt to the operation to free the hostages and guaranteed Basaev's men an unhindered withdrawal to Chechnya. There was another chance to liberate the hostages and eliminate Basaev's men on their way home, with the interior forces special subunit *Vityaz* standing by, simply waiting for the order. But the order was not given: Chernomyrdin had given Basaev certain guarantees and he had to keep his word.

On July 3 1995 president Yeltsin signed the Decree that Dudaev had paid for, No. 663 “On the stationing of agencies for the military management of communications, military units, institutions and organizations of the armed forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of the Chechen Republic.” On July 7 Yeltsin signed a second decree detailing the procedure for implementing the first.

After the seizure of the hostages at *Budyonnovsk* the Kremlin bureaucrats added Shamil Basaev’s name to Dudaev’s in their list of undesirable witnesses. They decided to eliminate him with the assistance of a specially established combat operations unit commanded by the head of the Third Section (Intelligence) of the Military Counterintelligence Department of the FSB of the Russian Federation, major-general Yury Ivanovich Yarovenko.

At the same time a combat operations group was set up under the command of Khokholkov (in Chechnya he worked under the pseudonym *Denisov*) in order to eliminate Dudaev. The group included captain, first rank, Alexander Kamyshnikov (the future deputy head of URPO) and a number of other officers. It was stationed at the military base in *Khankala*. Chechen nationals were also brought into the group, such as Umar Pasha, who had previously served in *Dagestan* and following Dudaev’s elimination was promoted and transferred to Moscow. Also used in the operation was the air arm of the GRU, which had two planes for targeting rockets on beacons in radiotelephones. Dudaev’s ordinary phone was successfully switched for one with such a beacon.

On April 22 1996 Dudaev, his wife Alla and several companions set out from the settlement of *Gekhi-Chu* in the *Urus-Martansk* district of western Chechnya, where they had spent the night, and made their way into the woods. Dudaev always moved out of settled areas when he needed to make phone calls, because it was harder to get a fix on his position away from centers of population. There was no unbroken forest cover in that area, only scrub with occasional trees. Alla began preparing a meal, while the men stood off to one side. Dudaev didn’t allow them to come close to him when he was talking on the phone, since there had already been one case of an air-strike against him while he was making calls, but on that occasion the rocket had missed.

This time, however, Dudaev spoke on the phone for longer than usual (they say he was talking with the well-known Russian businessman and politician Konstantin Borovoi, who stayed on the line to Dudaev until he was cut off). A guided missile from a Russian *SU-24* assault plane, targeted on the signal from Dudaev’s satellite phone, exploded close to Dudaev and his face was burned a yellowish-orange color. The car was brought up, they put Dudaev on the back seat and his wife sat beside him. Dudaev was unconscious and he had a wound behind his right ear. He died without regaining consciousness. The State Defense Committee of Chechnya entrusted the arrangements for his funeral to Lecha Dudaev, the Chechen president’s nephew. Dudaev’s burial place can only have been known to a very narrow circle of individuals, including Zelimkhan Yandarbiev, who succeeded Dudaev as the chairman of the State Defense Committee and acting president of the Chechen Republic until the election of 1997, when Aslan Maskhadov was elected as president. According to Chechen sources, when Alla Dudaeva, the president’s widow, and Musa Idigov, the president’s personal bodyguard, were arrested in the airport at the town of *Nalgik*, Dudaev’s remains were hurriedly reburied at a new site. Since Lecha Dudaev was killed during the second Chechen war there have been no official sources which can say where Djokhar Dudaev is buried.

The elimination of Dudaev was probably the most successful operation carried out by Khokholkov and his group. Khokholkov himself was nominated for the order of “Hero of Russia” for

successfully completing his mission, but he preferred the post of head of the newly founded UPP, with the rank of major-general.

In the summer of 1996, after the Korzhakov-Barsukov-Soskovets group had fallen from power and general Lebed had been dismissed from his post as secretary of the Security Council, *Stealth* could no longer count on support from state structures and was left entirely under the control of the *Izmailovo* criminal group. Lutsenko's only remaining serious contacts at state level were now in the UPP-URPO, which was headed by general Khokholkov. The absorption of organized criminal groups into the state's agencies of coercion had seemed a natural and logical step to the leadership of the FSB. Unfortunately the logic of events tended more and more frequently to draw the special services into purely criminal activity. In theory this tendency should have been countered by the USB of the FSB, but in practise the USB was incapable of maintaining the fight against mass crime committed with the direct connivance or participation of the FSB and the SBP. The only hope left was the single remaining law enforcement agency, the criminal investigation department (UR). In January 1996 38 year-old Vladimir Ilyich Tskhai, "criminal investigation's last romantic" was transferred to MUR, the Moscow Criminal Investigation Department.

Chapter 3

Moscow detectives take on the FSB

Tskhai was made head of the Twelfth Section, which specialized in solving contract killings, and only ten months later he was already the deputy chief of MUR (Moscow Criminal Investigation Department). He had previously worked in the Central Criminal Investigation Department (GUUR) of the Russian Ministry of the Interior. Tskhai was regarded as being an exceptionally hardworking and talented detective. “He was a born detective and there’ll never be another like him,” was what his friends told us. “Tskhai was easy and interesting to work with,” said Andrei Suprunenko, specially important cases investigator for the Moscow Public Prosecutor’s Office. “A competent and decent man. One of the romantics. He provided the link between the operatives and the investigators, he believed that even the most complicated cases could be untangled...”

It was Tskhai who succeeded in exposing the group which produced fake identity cards from the departments of coercion. In that case FAPSI contributed the efforts of its USB under the leadership of colonel Sergei Yurievich Barkovsky. In an article which was evidently commissioned by the FSB the Moscow journalist Alexander Khinshtein wrote that Lazovsky himself oversaw the production of false documents and that was why his people had cover documents from the FSB, FAPSI, GRU and MO. But this was not the case. Lazovsky had absolutely nothing to do with the business of forging official identity documents which Tskhai uncovered. Naturally enough, Barkovsky doesn’t even mention Lazovsky in his version of events and names entirely different people as the organizers. Here are Barkovsky’s own words:

“Even the specialists found it rather difficult to distinguish the fakes from genuine documents. Sometimes the quality of the ‘dud’ was actually better. Expert analysis showed there was clearly just one workshop involved. Following a whole series of operational and investigative measures four very far from ordinary people were detained. One was the former deputy head of a section of the KGB of the USSR, who had become the head of a firm with the attractive name of *Honor* [*Chest’* in Russian]. Another was the head of one of the printing shops in Moscow and the former head of the printing shop of the administration of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU). Detained together with them was a former FAPSI lieutenant who had been involved in processing passes during his period of service. It is assumed that the idea of producing counterfeit documents must have been his. And there was one very talented engraver.”

From Barkovsky’s account it follows that the forgeries were not produced by bandits, but by a former member of the *nomenklatura*, the Soviet professional elite (from the administrative apparatus of the CC CPSU) and a member of the special services (FAPSI). If that is the case, the possibility cannot be excluded that the laboratory for producing high-quality forgeries was also set up with the permission of the FSB and FAPSI and controlled by them.

But let us get back to Lazovsky. The liquidation of his group during the period from February to August of 1996 was the greatest success achieved by the Twelfth Section of MUR. The personnel of Lazovsky’s group were not organized on local territorial lines like ordinary criminal groupings. Lazovsky’s brigade was international, which was a pointer to its distinctive nature. Working under Lazovsky were Chechens and people from Kazakhstan and gunmen from groups based in towns close to Moscow. Marat Vasiliev was a Muscovite, Roman Polonsky was from *Dubna*, Vladimir Abrosimov was from *Tula*, Anzor Musaev was from *Grozny*... The brigade was very well equipped too.

Lazovsky had been on the Russian federal wanted list from 1995 for offenses under article 209 (“banditry”) of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation. He was accused in connection with a number of different episodes. For instance, in December 1993 Lazovsky’s group killed the guards who were transporting cash for the *MMST* company and 250 thousand dollars were stolen.

At the same time there were disputes between *Lanako* and the *Viktor* corporation over deals involving deliveries of oil products. On January 10 1994 persons unknown (obviously working for the *Viktor* corporation) shelled the automobile of Vladimir Kozlovsky, a director and chairman of the management board at *Lanako*, with a grenade thrower. (The first syllable of Kozlovsky’s surname had provided the third syllable of the name *Lanako*.) Barely two days later, on January 12, a bomb exploded outside an apartment belonging to one of *Viktor*’s managers with such massive controlled force that the steel door was hurled into the apartment and clean through the next wall standing in its way. It was purely a matter of luck that no one in the apartment was hurt. The explosion, however, triggered off a fire in the apartment block and neighbors were forced to jump from the windows. Two of them were killed and several other people were injured.

On January 13 persons unknown turned up at *Lanako*’s Moscow premises at corpus 3 of 2 *Perevedenovsky* Lane, where insult-swapping with *Lanako* staff was followed by an exchange of gunfire. Ten minutes later two bus-loads of *OMON* officers (the special purposes militia brigade) arrived at the *Lanako* offices, where they overcame armed resistance and took the office by storm (it was only by good luck that there were no casualties). They then proceeded to ransack the premises, arrest about 60 people and take them away to the station, where they were recorded on video-tape. After that almost everyone was allowed to go. The only persons still detained at the station the following day were four bodyguards who had firearms in their possession when they were arrested. They were later tried, but received surprisingly lenient treatment for a shoot-out with the police. Two were released by the court and two were given one year’s penal servitude.

On March 4 1994 a full-scale battle broke out in the *Dagmos* restaurant on *Kazakov* Street between Lazovsky’s gunmen and members of a *Dagestan* criminal organization, with about thirty men involved from each side. The final tally was seven dead and two wounded. All of the dead were members of the *Dagestan* group.

On June 16 1994 three members of the *Taganka* criminal group were mowed down by machine-gun fire near the offices of the *Credit-Consensus Bank*. Lazovsky had demanded that the bank pay him two and a half billion rubles in interest on a sum of money over which the bank was in dispute with the firm *Rosmyasmoloko*, and the bank had turned for help to the *Taganka* group, its “roof.” The battle was sparked off by the *Taganka* bandits’ refusal to pay Lazovsky.

Lazovsky committed one of his most brutal crimes on September 5 1994. That year arguments had flared up between Lazovsky and his partner, the joint owner of the *Grozny* Oil Refinery *Atlan* Nataev (whose surname had provided the second syllable of *Lanako*’s company title). Nataev was last seen at about ten o’clock in the evening on September 5 close to the *Dynamo* subway station, in a dark-blue BMW 740 which belonged to *Lanako*. He was with two bodyguards, Robert Rudenko and Vladimir Lipatov, who disappeared with him. Lazovsky did not bother to report the disappearance of his colleagues to the militia.

By circumstantial coincidence on September 7 the head of the Regional Department for Combating Organized Crime (RUOP) Vladimir Dontsov, escorted by ten men wielding automatic weapons, carried out an “operational inspection” at the *Lanako* offices. During the search Moscow RUOP’s

personnel discovered a certain quantity of unlicensed arms, in particular “TT” pistols intended for resale on the illegal market. However, the find was not treated as seriously as it should have been and no arrests were made.

It emerged later that Nataev, Rudenko and Lipatov had been kidnapped by Polonsky and Shchelenkov and taken to a *dacha* in the Academy of Science’s suburban settlement outside Moscow. Nataev was killed and his corpse was beheaded. Then the corpse and the two bodyguards were driven to the peat bogs in the *Yaroslavl* district, where Rudenko and Lipatov were also beheaded. All three bodies were buried in the peat, from which they were recovered in 1996 by members of MUR. The identity pass of a General Staff officer was discovered on Nataev’s corpse.

On September 18 Nataev’s brother arrived in Moscow in a state of alarm. Lazovsky summoned him to talks at a parking lot on *Burakov* Street which belonged to his uncle Nikolai Lazovksy. The owner of the parking lot sent his bodyguards home so there would be no witnesses, and when the second Nataev arrived Shchelenkov, Polonsky and Grishin met him with a hail of bullets from automatic weapons, pistols and even a sawn-off shotgun. Nataev returned fire 14 times and before he was killed himself he managed to gun down Polonsky and Grishin. The exchange of fire was so intensive that several cars in the parking lot caught fire. When the militia arrived on the scene all they found were pools of blood and spent cartridges. A few minutes later news reached them from an emergency ambulance station that doctors there had Polonsky’s body (six persons unknown had blocked off *Korolenko* Street with their *Volga* automobile, stopped an emergency ambulance and handed over Polonsky to the medics).

Lazovsky’s group was also responsible for the killing of the general director of the *Tuapsi* Oil refinery, Anatoly Vasilenko, an old business associate of *Lanako*, who was shot in *Tuapsi* shortly before a meeting of the partners in the refinery. According to operational information, not long before the shooting Lazovsky had taken a charter flight to *Tuapsi* for a meeting with Vasilenko (Lazovsky was met at the airport by members of the *Tuapsi* FSB) and had apparently failed to reach an understanding with him. Lazovsky was also suspected of the abduction in 1996 of State *Duma* deputy Yu.A. Polyakov, but this case remained a “loose end” that was never tied up.

It is obvious that no attempt was made to bring in Lazovsky before Tskhai was transferred to MUR. No attention had been paid to *Lanako* after the *Yauza* bombing primarily because it was an FSB outfit. According to MUR almost all the members of Lazovsky’s group used “cover documents” which were not fakes, but the genuine item. This led MUR operatives to draw the correct conclusion that *Lanako* had close links with the special services, especially as Lazovsky himself took part in operations to free FSB personnel who had been taken prisoner in Chechnya.

MUR, which at that time was headed by Savostianov, repeatedly observed and even detained senior *Lanako* personnel in the company of FSB officers. Lazovsky’s personal bodyguard and his firm’s security service were headed by a serving officer from the Moscow Department for Illegal Armed Formations of the UFSB, major Alexei Yumashkin, who employed FSB officers Karpychev and Mekhkov (on one of the occasions when Lazovsky was arrested, they produced their FSB passes and were released, together with Lazovsky). Lazovsky’s close friend and comrade-in-arms Roman Polonsky used to carry in his pocket the identity card of a member of the GRU and General Staff officer. When Polonsky was shot down at the parking lot on *Burakov* Street on September 18 he had a Ministry of Defense GRU holster on his belt and a GRU identity card in his pocket.

In February 1996 MUR operatives traced Lazovsky to an apartment on *Sadovo-Samotechnaya* Street in Moscow which belonged to an individual by the name of Trostanetsky. Lazovsky and his bodyguard Marcel Kharisov were arrested in the yard of the building as they got into a jeep which was being driven by Yumashkin (who was also immediately detained). Tskhai arrested Lazovsky in person. He himself had obtained the sanction for his arrest and the search warrants, since no one else wanted to get involved in the case. When searched Lazovsky was found to be carrying 1.03 grams of cocaine and a loaded “PM” pistol, while a revolver, a grenade and a shotgun were removed from Trostanetsky’s apartment. Kharisov was also discovered to be carrying an unlicensed “TT” pistol. He and Lazovsky were taken to the FSB’s detention center at *Lefortovo*, where they refused to answer the investigator’s questions. Yumashkin was taken away by the UFSB duty officer.

In addition to MUR, Lazovsky’s case was also dealt with by the First Section of the Department for Combating Terrorism (UBT) of the FSK of the Russian Federation, where it had been handled since 1994 by major Evgeny Makeiev, a senior operations officer for especially important cases. The head of the First Section at that time was Alexander Mikhailovich Platonov. Even then the operatives understood just who Lazovsky was and who stood behind him, which was why Platonov warned Makeiev that it was a difficult and complicated case, gave him a small separate office to share with just one colleague on the ninth floor of the newly refurbished old *Lubyanka* building and asked him not to discuss the contents of the operational report with any one. The colleague who found himself in Makeiev’s office was Alexander **Litvinenko**, one of the authors of this book, who first learned from Makeiev that the Moscow Department of the FSB had been transformed into a gang of criminals.

Makeiev worked in a highly conspiratorial manner. As a rule he himself was the only member of his section who attended joint operations meetings with MUR, carrying a MUR identity pass as a cover. In 1995 Platonov was removed from operational duties and lieutenant-colonel Evgeny Alexandrovich Kolesnikov (who is now a major-general) became the new head of the section. Kolesnikov joined the FSB from the FSO after Barsukov was appointed head of the FSB in June 1995. Further work on the case of Lazovsky’s group was blocked. The only person who would now sanction any measures concerning Lazovsky was the deputy section head Anatoly Alexandrovich Rodin, who was appointed in Platonov’s time. Then Rodin and Makeiev were both dismissed.

In its investigations into Lazovsky and *Lanako* MUR identified in all six Moscow UFSB operatives as being involved in Lazovsky’s gang. Journalists got wind of this and on November 11 1996 *Novaya gazeta* (*The New Newspaper*) published the text of a letter of inquiry written by its deputy senior editor Yury Shchekochikhin, a deputy of the State *Duma*:

To: Director of the FSB of the Russian Federation N.D. Kovalyov

Copies: Minister of the Interior of the Russian Federation A.S. Kulikov; Public Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation Yu.I. Skuratov; Head of the Office of the President of the Russian Federation A.B. Chubais

The Security Committee of the State Duma of Russia has received a letter addressed to me from a high-ranking officer of the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation. The letter claims, in particular, that “recent times have seen the emergence of a tendency for organized criminal

groupings to merge with members of the agencies of law enforcement and the special services.” In order to be able to confirm or refute the conclusion drawn by the author of the letter, I request you to reply to the following series of questions.

1. Are the following people named in the letter listed among the personnel of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region: S.N. Karpychev, A.A. Yumashkin, E.A. Abovian, L.A. Dmitriev, A.A. Dokukin?

2. It is true that since last year Sergei Petrovich Kublitsky, who has a criminal record and is now the president of the firm Vityaz, which specializes in oil operations, has been using as his personal bodyguards members of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region S.N. Karpychev and S.N. Mekhkov, and that on several occasions they have accompanied him to meetings with the management of the Tuapsi Oil Refinery and representatives of the firm Atlas, which holds a controlling interest in the refinery?

3. Is it true that investigators from the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the city of Krasnodar have made several attempts to interview as a witness to the murder of a director of the Tuapsi Oil Refinery one major A.A. Yumashkin, an employee of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region who also provides personal security services to M. M. Lazovsky, the leader of an inter-regional criminal grouping, but that they been unable to do so? How accurate is information that since 1994 major A.A. Yumashkin has been Lazovsky’s intimate business partner and that they have on several occasions traveled together to Tuapsi and Krasnodar where they have jointly decided matters relating to the oil business?

4. Is it true that on February 17 of this year employees of the UFSB of the Russian Federation for Moscow and the Moscow Region A.A. Yumashkin, S.N. Karpychev and S.N. Mekhkov were detained together with S.P. Kubitsky and M.M. Lazovsky by employees of the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation? If so, then how true is it that after the FSB identity cards presented by Karpychev and Mekhkov had been checked, they were both released? Were the leadership of the FSB of the RF and first deputy Minister of the Interior of the RF lieutenant-general V.I. Kolesnikov informed that employees of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region had been detained? It is true that the prisoner Lazovsky is suspected by agencies of law enforcement and the Office of the Public Prosecutor of the RF of involvement in a number of contract killings? Has the prisoner Kublitsky been questioned at the request of specialists from the law enforcement agencies of the Krasnodar Region who are investigating the murder of the director of the Tuapsi Oil Refinery?

5. Is it true that on October 16 of last year employees of the Moscow RUOP detained A.N. Yanin, born 1958, a resident of Moscow and that the documents confiscated from him included a check for luggage checked in at the left luggage office of the Central Airport Terminal? Is it true that members of the militia discovered in Yanin’s luggage five AKS-74U automatic weapons not registered in the card index of the MVD of the RF, five magazines for the AKSes, 30 5.45 calibre and three 7.62 calibre cartridges? Is it accurate to assert that these arms had been confiscated from criminal groups and according to official documents were kept at the premises of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region? Is the information correct, according to which after investigator Sholokhova initiated criminal proceedings against A.N. Yanin at the “Airport” Criminal Militia Service [SKM] under the number 1646 in accordance with article 218 4.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, two employees of the Service for Combating Illegal Armed Formations and Banditry of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region arrived at RUOP and that one of them,

colonel Edward Artashesovich Abovian, obtained the release of the prisoner Yanin from custody? If this is so, did colonel Abovian, in insisting on Yanin's release, have any basis for asserting, and did he in fact assert that he was carrying out instructions from his immediate superior general Semeniuk and that first deputy director of the FSB of the RF and head of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region, general Trofimov, was aware of this? Does colonel Abovian have free access to the special technology and armaments which the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region has at its disposal (...)? What connection, if any, exists between colonel Abovian and the commercial activities of the Mosinraschyot Bank and the Tver Beer Combine?

6. Is it true that on October 17 of this year employees of the ROOP of the Northern District of the City of Moscow detained a BMW 525 automobile with detachable number plates 41-34 MOK which had previously been used by S.P. Kubitsky, whom I have already mentioned and who is better known in criminal circles as "Vorkuta"? Did the automobile contain a driver who was carrying no documents and three passengers who showed the ROOP employees identity cards for employees of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region in the names of captain L.A. Dmitriev and warrant officer A.A. Dokukin, following which they were released?

Yours sincerely,

Yury Shchekochikhin,

Member of Security Committee of the State Duma of the Russian Federation

Abovian, the FSB colonel working in the section for combating illegal bandit groups who is mentioned in Shchekochikhin's inquiry was Lazovsky's controller at the FSB.

On November 23 1996 first deputy minister of the interior Vladimir Kolesnikov sent Shchekochikhin a reply via the *Duma* committee in which he stated: "Indeed... in the course of operations undertaken in Moscow to capture armed criminals in addition to Lazovsky the persons handed over to the agencies of the Ministry of the Interior included individuals who presented identification from the agencies of law enforcement and other state services... Under the present state of measures taken Lazovsky and the other accomplices stand accused of more than ten premeditated murders in various regions of Russia..."

Kolesnikov avoided giving direct answers to the specific questions raised by Shchekochikhin in his inquiry. There was nothing for it but to wait for the criminals to be brought to trial.

FSB director Kovalyov had two meetings with Shchekochikhin. At the end of the year Shchekochikhin received two replies from him, essentially identical in content. One was secret and has remained in the archives of the State *Duma*. Shchekochikhin made the other, open reply public:

"The Federal Security Service has carried out an internal investigation into facts and circumstances presented in the *Duma* deputy's letter of inquiry in *Novaya gazeta*... Investigations have determined that the actions of the [UFSB employees] involved certain deviations from the requirements of departmental regulations which, in combination with a lack of practical experience and professionalism could well have served as the cause of the incident which has attracted your attention. In this regard particular concern is occasioned by the fact that a conflict occurred between the members of two departments which engage in operational and investigative activity in the criminal environment. Nonetheless, despite this regrettable misunderstanding, the main goal was achieved, since Lazovsky's gang was neutralized..."

Kovalyov's "particular concern" was not occasioned by the collaboration of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region with organized criminal groups, terrorists and underworld "bosses", but by the actions of MUR employees under Tskhai's leadership. As for the actual employees of the UFSB, Kovalyov discerned in their behavior no more than "certain deviations from the requirements of departmental regulations." From his own point of view Kovalyov was right. He saw no difference in principle between members of the special services and Lazovsky's gunmen and so he genuinely could not understand the reasons for Shchekochikhin's indignation. Shchekochikhin believed that the representatives of the people, in the persons of members of the State *Duma*, and the agencies of state security fight together against bandits and terrorists. But Kovalyov knew that the FSB and the extra-departmental agencies of coercion, which the people call bandits and terrorists, actually wage their struggle against the very people represented in the *Duma* by Shchekochikhin and others like him.

Naturally, no internal FSB inquiry was ever held and nobody was dismissed. Abovian was apparently given a new name and retained in service. No records of any investigations were submitted to any court or military tribunal. A reply was received from the first deputy senior military prosecutor, lieutenant-general of justice G.N. Nosin, to the following effect: "On the basis of the results of an investigation concerning the officers of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region mentioned in the letter, the instigation of criminal proceedings has been rejected." In reply to an inquiry from a correspondent of the *Commersant* newspaper concerning Yumashkin, the Moscow UFSB gave the honest answer that Yumashkin had been carrying out a special mission to monitor the activities of Lazovsky's group. In 1997, however, major Yumashkin was finally exposed and became a key figure in criminal proceedings concerning contract killings which were initiated by the *Tagansky* District Public Prosecutor's Office of the City of Moscow. But since even his involvement in organizing contract killings was apparently part of his special mission, Yumashkin continued to serve in the Moscow UFSB and in 1999 he was promoted on schedule to the military rank of lieutenant-colonel.

The only person to suffer as a result of Shchekochikhin's inquiry was the head of the Moscow UFSB and deputy director the FSB of Russia Anatoly Trofimov, who was removed from his post in February 1997. Sergei Yastrzhembsky, press secretary to the president of Russia, declared that Trofimov had been removed "for gross irregularities exposed by an inquiry conducted by the Accounting Chamber (*Schetnaya palata*) of the Russian Federation and dereliction of duty." It is widely believed, however, that Trofimov was simply made a scapegoat.

According to another version of events Trofimov was dismissed because he attempted to do something about the substance of Shchekochikhin's inquiry. Supposedly, having read the letter of inquiry Trofimov summoned one of his deputies and ordered him to draw up the paperwork for the dismissal of all the members of the FSB who were mentioned in it. His deputy refused. Trofimov then suggested that he should submit his resignation. In the end the scandal surrounding the arrest of two of Trofimov's subordinates was exploited to have Trofimov himself dismissed. The two were arrested for dealing in cocaine by MUR and the Central Department for the Illegal Circulation of Narcotics. Trofimov was sacked two days after the media reported the arrest of drug dealers carrying the identity passes of officers in the Moscow UFSB.

It should be emphasized that the question of the involvement of particular FSB officers or of the FSB as a whole in terrorist activity which had been attributed to the Chechens was not raised either in Shchekochikhin's letter inquiry or in the replies given by various officials. The court did not pass

a guilty verdict on any of the members of the coercive departments who were suspected, according to Kolesnikov, of a total of more than ten murders. On January 31 1997 Lazovsky and Kharisov appeared before the *Tver* court in a trial which lasted only three days. They were accused of possessing weapons and drugs and of forging FAPSI and MO documents. Not a single prosecutor or judge so much as hinted at terrorist attacks and contract killings. The accused's lawyers demonstrated quite correctly that no forgery had been committed, since they had carried genuine identity documents for agents of the special services and agencies of coercion, and so the charge of forging documents had to be dropped. The case materials contained no information at all about the use of forgeries by the accused (which was in itself weighty evidence of the interfusion of the structures headed by Barsukov, Kovalyov and Lazovsky). The count of possessing and transporting dangerous drugs was also dropped -- so that Lazovsky and Kharisov would not have to be charged under such a serious article of the Criminal Code.

Lazovsky's lawyer Boris Kozhemyakin also tried to have the charge of possessing weapons set aside. He claimed that when they were arrested Lazovsky and Kharisov were with UFSB employee Yumashkin, with whom they had spent a large part of the day, that both Lazovsky and Kharisov were engaged in carrying out certain tasks for the special services and that was why they had been given weapons and cover documents. (When he was arrested UFSB agent Yumashkin was also found to be in possession of a cover document, a militia identity card.) However, for some reason the question of collaboration between Lazovsky and Kharisov and the special services failed to interest judge Elena Stashina, and representatives of the UFSB refused to appear in court, with the result that the accused were in any case found guilty of the illegal possession of weapons and sentenced by an impartial court to two years' imprisonment and a fine of 40 million rubles each. When he heard the sentence Boris Kozhemiakin said he had been counting on a more lenient verdict.

Lazovsky served his time in one of the prison camps near *Tula* together with his co-defendant and bodyguard Kharisov (which is strictly forbidden by regulations). While in the camp he recruited new members for his group from among the criminal inmates, studied the Bible and even wrote a treatise on the improvement of Russia. He was released in February 1998, since the time he spent in custody while under investigation was counted against his sentence.

Meanwhile in 1996 Russia had lost the war in Chechnya. Military operations had to be halted and political negotiations conducted with the Chechen separatists. There was a real threat that the conflict between two nations which had cost the special services so much effort to provoke might end in a peace agreement and Yeltsin might be able to return to his program of liberal reforms. In order to undermine the peace negotiations the FSB carried out a series of terrorists attacks in Moscow. Since terrorist attacks which didn't kill or maim had failed to make any impression on the inhabitants of the capital, the FSB began carrying out attacks which did. Note once again how well the supporters of war timed their terrorist attacks and how damaging they were to the interests of supporters of peace and the Chechens themselves.

Between nine and 10 in the evening on June 11 1996 there was an explosion in a half-empty carriage in a train at the *Tul'skaya* station of the *Serpukhovskaya* line of the Moscow subway. Four people were killed and 12 were hospitalized. Exactly one month later, on July 11, a terrorist bomb exploded in a number 12 trolley in *Pushkin* Square: six people were injured. The following day, July 12, a number 48 trolley on *Mir* Prospect was destroyed by an explosion: 28 people were injured. Information about the "Chechen connection" of the terrorist attacks was actively

disseminated throughout Moscow (even though no terrorists were caught and it was never actually determined whether they were Chechens or not). Before even a provisional investigation had been conducted the mayor of Moscow Yury Luzhkov declared at the site of the second trolley explosion that he would expel the entire Chechen diaspora from Moscow, even though he had no reason to suspect that the explosions were the work of the diaspora, or even of individual Chechen terrorists.

However, this second wave of terror failed, like the first, to produce any sharp swing in public opinion. In early August 1996 guerrilla fighters battled their way into *Grozny* and in late August the *Khasaviurt* Accords were signed by Security Council secretary A. Lebed and the new president of Chechnya Aslan Maskhadov. The supporters of war in Chechnya had lost and terrorist attacks in Moscow came to a halt -- until the FSB launched a new operation designed to spark off another Chechen war.

It is hard to tell just which of the FSB's operatives organized the explosions in Moscow in the summer of 1996. Lazovsky was under arrest. It is clear, however, that the FSB had a choice of many similar structures, and not just in Moscow. On June 26 1996 the newspaper *Segodnya (Today)* published a commentary on the FSB's criminal organization in Petersburg, which consisted "primarily of former members of the KGB." Having set up several firms, in addition to what might be called "clean" business dealings the ex-KGB men also managed the trade in hand-guns, explosives and drugs, dealt in stolen automobiles and imported stolen Mercedes and BMWs into Russia.

The explosions in Moscow could, however, have been set up by members of Lazovsky's group who were still at large. In fact there is very good reason for believing this to be the case.

In February 1996 MUR agents arrested a certain Vladimir Akimov outside the pawn shop on Moscow's *Bolshaya Spasskaya* Street for trying to sell a "Taurus" revolver. Akimov turned out to be Lazovsky's former chauffeur. Under the influence of reports in the media about the new wave of terrorist attacks on public transport in Moscow in June and July 1996 Akimov began providing testimony about an explosion in a bus on December 27 1994. "Today, here in detention centre 48/1 and seeing the political situation on the television," Akimov wrote, "I consider it my duty to make a statement on the explosion of the bus..." In his statement he claimed that on December 27 he and Vorobyov had set out to "reconnoiter" the *VDNKh-Yuzhnaya* bus-stop in a *Zhiguli* automobile. They noted possible lines of retreat. On the evening of the same day Akimov and Vorobyov left the *Zhiguli* not far from the stop at the end of the bus route and went back to *Mir* Prospect, where they boarded the number 33 bus, a *LiAZ*. When there were just a few passengers left in the bus, Akimov's testimony continued, they planted a bomb with 40 grams of ammonite under a seat by the right rear wheel. When they got out at the last stop Akimov went to warm up the engine of their car and Vorobyov used a remote control unit to set the bomb off.

On the morning of August 28 1996 retired lieutenant-colonel Vorobyov had been arrested by Tskhai as he was on his way to a meeting with an FSB agent and taken to the MUR premises at 38 *Petrovka* Street where, if the judgment of the court is to be believed, he told the entire story to the Moscow detectives without attempting to conceal anything, including the fact that he was a free-lance FSB agent. Shortly thereafter Akimov withdrew his testimony, even though it had been given in writing form. Vorobyov then also withdrew his testimony. The Moscow City Court under presiding judge Irina Kulichkova, evidently acting under pressure from the FSB, dropped the charges against Akimov of complicity in a terrorist bombing and sentenced him to three years

imprisonment for the illegal sale of a revolver. Since the guilty verdict was pronounced in late April 1999 and Akimov had spent three years in custody while under investigation, he left the court a free man.

Vorobyov was sentenced to five years in the prison camps. The case was held in camera and not even Vorobyov's relatives were allowed into the courtroom. As his employer, the FSB gave Vorobyov a positive character reference which was included in the case materials. In his final address Vorobyov declared that the case against him had been fabricated by parties who wished to blacken the name of the FSB and his name as a free-lance agent of the special service. Vorobyov described the sentence as "an insult to the special agencies." Later the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation reduced Vorobyov's sentence to three years (most of which Vorobyov had already served by that time). In late August 1999 Vorobyov was released, despite the fact that Akimov and the investigators believed he had been involved in the terrorist attacks of 1996. The FSB had demonstrated yet again that it would not abandon its own agents and would eventually obtain their release.

Tskhai also learned about the involvement of Lazovsky's group in the summer explosions from one other source, Sergei Pogosov. In the late summer and early fall of 1996 an operational source reported that a certain Sergei Pogosov was living in the center of Moscow on the *Novyi Arbat*, not far from the bookstore *Dom Knigi* and the *October (Oktyabr)* cinema in a huge penthouse apartment with a floor area of 100 or 150 square meters. His firm's office was located in the ground-floor apartment of the same block. According to information received, Pogosov was directly linked with Lazovsky and his gunmen and financed many of Lazovsky's undertakings. Pogosov's telephones (home number 203-1469, work number 203-1632 and mobile number 960-8856) were tapped and monitored for two weeks on the instructions of the First Section of the Antiterrorist Center (ATTs, the former UBT) of the FSB. From conversations overheard it became clear that Pogosov was paying Lazovsky's legal fees and was preparing a large sum of money to pay bribes for his release.

This operational information was relayed to Tskhai, who personally obtained permission from the Public Prosecutor's Office for a search of Pogosov's flat and office as part of the criminal investigation into Lazovsky's case. A few days later the search was carried out jointly by the Twelfth Section of MUR and the First Section of the ATTs of the FSB of the Russian Federation (Platonov's former subordinates), lasting almost right through the night. Under Pogosov's bed a sack was found containing 700 thousand dollars. No one even tried to count the rubles, which were lying everywhere, even in the kitchen in empty jars. Cocaine was also found in the apartment (Pogosov's girlfriend was a drug addict). The search at Pogosov's office on the ground floor turned up several mobile phones, one of which was registered to Lazovsky. Pogosov and his girlfriend were taken to the militia station, but that very day a member of the Moscow UFSB drove round to the station and collected them. The militia did not confiscate the money. The tax police said that it all had nothing to do with them and didn't even bother to turn up. No criminal case was brought in connection with the discovery of cocaine. Apparently nobody was interested in Pogosov or his money.

Knowing the way things were done in the Russian agencies of coercion, Pogosov expected that the people who had come to search his apartment would just take him away and kill him, so he attempted to save himself by giving a written undertaking to co-operate (under the pseudonym of *Grigory*). Pogosov told one of the operatives about Lazovsky's connections in the Moscow UFSB and the kind of activity he was involved in. Pogosov had heard from "Max" that his brigade was not

a group of bandits, but more like a secret military unit, that Lazovsky handled tasks of state importance and there were people like him in every country. Pogosov said Lazovsky was a state assassin who eliminated people according to instructions and organized acts of sabotage and terrorism. Lazovsky himself only carried out instructions, and he got those from the top.

Concerning the money, Pogosov said it was for Lazovsky and he was only an intermediary. Pogosov's legal cover for his activities is importing "Parliament" cigarettes into Russia, which generates quite a good income in itself. Pogosov said he expected Lazovsky to be freed soon, since he hadn't broken down under questioning, he hadn't given anyone away and had behaved "with dignity." Pogosov sincerely recommended not interfering with the activities of Lazovsky's group and said Tskhai would have serious problems if he tried.

A few days after Pogosov was released he had his second and final meeting with the operative who had recruited him. First of all Pogosov offered money for the return of his note about collaboration. He said his controllers in the Moscow UFSB were extremely displeased about his note and had told Pogosov to "ransom" it. His controllers had also made direct threats against Tskhai.

Pogosov's written undertaking was not returned and the offer of a bribe was not accepted. The following day the recruitment of agent *Grigory* was officially reported to the chief. A few days later the phone rang in the office of the operative who had recruited Pogosov. The caller spoke from the Moscow UFSB, on behalf of their own chief, politely recommending that Pogosov should be left in peace and threatening that if he wasn't there would be an investigation into money that had supposedly been stolen during the search at Pogosov's apartment. The operative never saw Pogosov again and never received any secret information from him. On April 12 1997 at the age of 39 Tskhai died suddenly from cirrhosis of the liver, although he didn't drink or smoke. Presumably he was poisoned by the FSB because he had discovered the identities of the true leaders of Lazovsky's group and realized exactly who had organized the explosions in Moscow. Poisons of a type which could have been used to kill Tskhai were made in a special FSB laboratory which according to some sources was located at 42 *Krasnobogatyrskaya* Street in Moscow. The same building is also said to have been used for printing the high-quality counterfeit dollars used by the FSB to pay for contract killings and other counterintelligence operations. The laboratories had been in existence since Soviet times (the dollars were supposed to be printed in case of war).

On April 15 1997 a funeral service was held for Tskhai at the Cathedral of the Epiphany and he was buried at the *Vagankovskoe* Cemetery. After Tskhai's death the investigation into Lazovsky's group deteriorated into a series of sporadic episodes. At MUR Lazovsky's case supposedly became the responsibility by turn of Pyotr Astafiev, Andrei Potekhin, Igor Travin, V. Budkin, A. Bazanov, G. Boguslavsky, V. Bubnov and A. Kalinin, and it was also dealt with by investigator for specially important cases of the Department for the Investigation of Banditry and Murder of the Moscow City Public Prosecutor's Office, Suprunenko, who first interrogated Lazovsky as early as 1996.

When he was released in February 1998 Lazovsky bought himself a luxurious mansion in an elite rural housing estate at *Uspenskoe* in the *Odinovtsovsky* district of *Podmoskovie* (the area round Moscow) which was reached by way of the *Rublyovskoe* Highway, and then set up a fund "for the support of peace in the Caucasus" under the title of *Unification (Edinenie)*, in which he took the position of vice-president. Lazovsky continued his collaboration with the special services. He was kept under observation following his release by an officer of the Criminal Investigation Department

of the Moscow district GUVB, Mikhail Fonaryov, but no details are known of his activities during this period.

Chapter 4

Nikolai Platonovich Patrushev

(a biographical note)

Whereas during the first Chechen war of 1994-1996 the state security forces had simply been attempting to forestall Russia's development towards a liberal-democratic society, the political goals of the second Chechen war were far more serious: besmirched by the genocide of one of the nations of the Caucasus, Russia would be excluded for decades from the community of civilized nations by her own actions. All that was needed was to provoke Russia into committing genocide against the Chechens and exploit the ensuing commotion to seize power in Russia at the forthcoming presidential elections in 2000. The honor of provoking a war with Chechnya fell to the new director of the FSB, colonel-general Patrushev.

Patrushev was born in *Leningrad* on July 11 1951. In 1974 he graduated from the *Leningrad* Shipbuilding Institute and was assigned to the institute's design office, where he worked as an engineer. Just one year later, in 1975, he was invited to join the KGB, completed the one-year course at the Higher School of the KGB of the USSR and joined the KGB's *Leningrad* branch, where he rose from junior operations officer to head of the service for combating smuggling and corruption of the KGB Department for *Leningrad* and the *Leningrad* Region, with the rank of colonel. This was the department which dealt with organized crime in the early 1990s, the period when Vladimir Putin was rumoured to be implicated in underhand dealings involving the export to the West of non-ferrous metals with a value of 93 million dollars. In 1991 Patrushev was simply obliged in the line of duty to keep Putin under observation, since the export of non-ferrous metals and embezzlement of the funds from their sale fell squarely within the terms of reference of the service for combating smuggling and corruption which Patrushev headed. That was how he came to know Putin.

In June 1992 Patrushev was assigned to independent duties in the City of *Petrozavodsk* in *Karelia*, where he became head of the local counterintelligence department. In 1994 when the *Leningrader* Stepashin became director of the FSK he called Patrushev to Moscow to serve as head of one of the key divisions in the *Lubyanka*, the Internal Security Department (USB) of the FSK of the Russian Federation. The USB of the FSK was counterintelligence within counterintelligence, the section which gathered compromising information on the FSK's own personnel. The head of the FSB has always been the FSK/FSB director's most trusted ally, reporting to him directly.

By moving Patrushev to Moscow Stepashin saved him from the consequences of a serious scandal. In *Karelia* Patrushev had got into difficulties over the theft and smuggling of precious *karelian* birch timber, and the Public Prosecutor's Office of *Petrozavodsk* had initiated criminal proceedings against him, although he had initially only been a witness in the case. In the course of the investigation, facts had emerged which proved his guilt as an accomplice. Then suddenly Stepashin transferred Patrushev to a high position in Moscow, well beyond the reach of the Public Prosecutor's Office of *Karelia*. Fortunately for Patrushev, the head of the UFSB for the Republic of *Karelia*, Vasily Ankudinov, who could have told us a great deal about Patrushev and *karelian* birch, died on May 21 2001.

In June 1995 Stepashin was replaced as head of the FSK by Mikhail Barsukov. In the summer of 1996 Barsukov was replaced by Nikolai Kovalyov. Neither Barsukov nor Kovalyov regarded Patrushev as their own man and did nothing to promote him, but then Vladimir Putin became the

head of the president's Central Control Department (GKU) and invited his old acquaintance to become his first deputy. Patrushev moved over to Putin's team.

Patrushev's subsequent rapid professional ascent is linked with Putin's own rise. When Putin became first deputy head of the Kremlin Administration in May 1998 he promoted Patrushev to the vacant position of head of the president's GKU. In October the same year Patrushev returned to the *Lubyanka*, initially as Putin's deputy, a post to which he was appointed by Yeltsin in a decree of July 25 1998, and later as first deputy director of the FSB.

On March 29 1999 Yeltsin appointed Putin secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation while leaving him in position as director of the FSB, and on August 9 the same year Yeltsin appointed Putin prime minister of Russia. In summing up the first few months of his administration *Novaya gazeta* wrote: "Long, long ago in a highly democratic country an old, old president entrusted the post of chancellor and prime minister to a young and energetic successor. And then the Reichstag burned down... Historians have not yet given us an answer to the question of who set fire to it, but history has shown us who benefitted." In Russia, however, "an old, old Guarantor [of the Constitution] entrusted the post of prime minister to a successor who had yet to be democratically elected. And then apartment blocks were blown up, and a new Chechen war started and was glorified by arch-liars."

But these events which shook the entire country were also linked with the ascendancy of one other man: on the day Putin became prime minister of Russia, Patrushev was given the directorship of the FSB. People with inside knowledge claim that Putin had no choice but to promote Patrushev because Patrushev was in possession of compromising material about him. On August 16 1999 Nikolai Platonovich Patrushev was appointed director of the Federal Security Service of Russia. And then it began...

Chapter 5

The FSB fiasco in Ryazan

In September 1999 monstrous acts of terrorism were perpetrated in *Buinaksk*, Moscow and *Volgodonsk*, but we shall begin with the terrorist attack which could have been the most terrible of them all if it had not been foiled: in *Ryazan* FSB operatives were spotted planting sugar sacks containing hexogene in the dormitory district of *Dashkovo-Pesochnya*.

At 9.15 p.m. Alexei Kartofelnikov, a driver for the *Spartak* soccer club who lived in the single-entrance twelve-story block built more than 20 years earlier at number 14/16 *Novosyolov* (*New Residents*) Street, phoned the *Dashkovo-Pesochnya* office of the *Oktyabrsky* (*October*) Region Department of the Interior (ROVD) in *Ryazan* and reported that ten minutes earlier he had seen a white model five or seven *Zhiguli* automobile with the Moscow number plate *T534 VT 77 RUS* outside the entrance to his apartment block, where there was a twenty-four hour “Night and Day” shop on the ground floor. The car had driven into the yard and stopped. A man and a young woman got out, went down into the basement of the building and after a while came back. Then the car was driven right up against the basement door and all three of the people in it began carrying some kind of sacks inside. One of the men had a mustache and the woman was wearing a tracksuit. Then all of them got into the car and drove away.

Note how quickly Kartofelnikov reacted. The militia were less prompt in their response. “I spotted the model seven *Zhiguli* as I was walking home from the garage,” Kartofelnikov recalled, “and I noticed the number out of professional habit. I saw that the regional number had been masked by a piece of paper with the *Ryazan* serial number ‘62’. I ran home to phone the militia. I dialed ‘02’ and got this lazy reply: ‘ring such-and-such a number’. I rang it and it was busy. I had to keep dialing the number for ten minutes before I got through. That gave the terrorists enough time to carry all of the sacks into the basement and set the detonators... If I’d got through to the militia straight away... the terrorists would have been arrested right there in their car.”

When they arrived at 9.58 p.m. Moscow time the militiamen commanded by warrant officer Andrei Chernyshov discovered three fifty-kilogram sugar sacks in the basement of a residential block containing 77 apartments. Chernyshov, who was the first to enter the mined basement, recalled:

“At about ten we got a warning call from the officer on duty: suspicious individuals had been seen coming out of the basement of house number 14/16 *Novosyolov* Street. Near the house we were met by a girl who told us about a man who had come out of the basement and driven away in a car with its number plates masked. I left one officer in front of the entrance and went down into the basement with the other. The basement in that house is deep and completely flooded with water. The only dry spot is a tiny little store-room like a brick shed. We shone the torch in and there were several sugar sacks arranged in a stack. There was a slit in the upper sack and we could see some kind of electronic device: wires wrapped round with insulating tape, a timer... Of course, it was all a bit of a shock for us. We ran out of the basement, I stayed behind to guard the entrance while the lads went to evacuate the inhabitants. After about fifteen minutes reinforcements arrived and the chief of the UVD turned up. The sacks of explosive were removed by men from the Ministry of Emergencies [MChS] in the presence of representatives of the FSB. Of course, after our bomb technicians had rendered them harmless. No one had any doubt that this was a genuine emergency situation.”

One of the sacks had been slit open, and a home-made detonating device had been set inside, consisting of three batteries, an electronic watch and a homemade detonating charge. The detonator was set for 5.30 a.m. on Thursday morning. The bomb technicians from the militia engineering and technology section of the *Ryazan* Region UVD took just eleven minutes to disarm the bomb under the leadership of their section head, militia lieutenant Yury Tkachenko and then immediately, at approximately 11 p.m., they conducted a trial explosion with the mixture. There was no detonation, either because the sample was too small or because the sappers had taken it from the upper layers of the mixture, while the main concentration of hexogene might be in the bottom of the sack. Express analysis of the substance in the sacks with the help of a gas analyzer indicated “fumes of a hexogene-type explosive substance .” It is important at this point to note that there could not have been any mistake. The instruments used were modern and in good condition and the specialists who carried out the analysis were highly qualified.

The contents of the sacks did not outwardly resemble granulated sugar. The witnesses who discovered the suspicious sacks all later confirmed that they contained a yellow substance in the form of granules that resembled small vermicelli, which is exactly what hexogene looks like. On September 23 the press center of the Ministry of the Interior of Russia also announced that “analysis of the substance concerned indicated the presence of hexogene vapor”, and that an explosive device had been disarmed. In other words, on the night preceding September 23 local experts had determined that the detonator was live and the “sugar” was an explosive mixture. “Our initial examination indicated the presence of explosive substances... We believed there was a real danger of explosion,” lieutenant-colonel Sergei Kabashov, head of the *Oktyabrsky* Region OVD, later stated.

House number 14/16 on *Novosyolov* Street was no chance selection on the bombers’ part. It was a standard house in an unprestigious part of town, inhabited by simple people. Set up against the front of the house was a twenty-four hour shop selling groceries. The inhabitants of the house would surely not suspect that people unloading goods by the trap-door of a twenty-four hour food-store might be terrorists. The house stood on the edge of *Ryazan* by an open area which was known to local people as “the Old Circle”, on a low rise. It was built of silicate brick. The sacks of explosive in the basement had been placed beside the building’s main support, so if there had been an explosion the entire building would have collapsed. The next house, built on the soft sandy soil of the slope, could also have been damaged.

And so the alarm was raised and the inhabitants of a house in *Ryazan* were roused from their beds and evacuated into the street in whatever they happened to be wearing at the time. This is how the newspaper *Trud* (*Labor*) described the scene: “In a matter of minutes people were forced to abandon their apartments without being allowed to gather their belongings (a fact which thieves later exploited) and gather in front of the dark, empty house. Women, old men and children shuffled about in front of the entrance, reluctant to set out into the unknown. Some of them were not wearing outer clothing, or were even barefoot... They hopped from one foot to the other in the freezing wind for several hours, and the invalids who had been brought down in their wheelchairs wept and cursed the entire world.”

The house was cordoned off. It was cold. The director of the local cinema, the *Oktyabr* (*October*), took pity on the people and let them into the hall, and she also organized tea for everyone. The only people left in the building were several old invalids who were in no physical condition to leave their

apartments, including one old woman who was paralyzed and whose daughter stayed all night with the militia cordon expecting an explosion. This is how she recalled the event:

“Between 10 and 11 p.m. militia officers went round the apartments asking people to get outside as quickly as possible. I ran out just as I was in my nightshirt with only my raincoat thrown over it. Outside in the yard I learned there was a bomb in our house. I’d left my mother behind in the flat and she can’t even get out of bed on her own. I dashed over to the militiamen in horror: ‘Let me into the house, help me bring my mother out!’ they wouldn’t let me back in. It was half past two before they started going round each of the flats with its occupants and checking them for signs of anything suspicious. They came to me too. I showed the militiaman my sick mother and said I wouldn’t go anywhere without her. He calmly wrote something down on his notepad and disappeared. And I suddenly had this realization that my mother and I were probably the only two people in a house with a bomb in it. I felt quite unbearably afraid... But then suddenly there was a ring at the door. Standing on the doorstep were two senior militia officers. They asked me sternly: ‘Have you decided you want to be buried alive, then, woman?’ I was so scared my legs were giving way under me, but I stood my ground, I wouldn’t go without my mother. And then they suddenly took pity on me: ‘All right then, stay here, your house has already been made safe’. It turned out they’d removed the detonators from the ‘charge’ even before they inspected the flats. Then I just dashed straight outside...”

All kinds of emergency services and managers turned up at the house. And in addition, since analysis had determined the presence of hexogene, the cordon was ordered to expand the exclusion zone in case there was an explosion. The head of the local UFSB major-general Alexander Sergeiev congratulated the inhabitants of the building on being granted a second life. Hero of the hour Kartofelnikov was told he must have been born under a lucky star (and a few days later he was presented with a valuable gift from the municipal authorities for finding the bomb -- a Russian-made color television). One of the Russian telegraph agencies informed the world of his fortunate discovery as follows:

“Terrorist bombing thwarted in Ryazan: sacks containing a mixture of sugar and hexogene found by militia in apartment house basement

First deputy staff officer for civil defense and emergencies in the *Ryazan* Region, colonel Yury Karpeiev, has inform an *ITAR-TASS* correspondent that the substance found in the sacks is undergoing analysis. According to the operations duty officer of the Ministry of Emergencies of the Russian Federation in Moscow the detonating device discovered was set for 5.30 Moscow time on Thursday morning. Acting head of the UVD of the *Ryazan* Region Alexei Savin told the *ITAR-TASS* correspondent that the make, color and number of the car in which the explosive was brought to the scene had been identified. According to Savin, specialists were carrying out a series of tests to determine the composition and explosion hazard posed by the mixture discovered in the sacks... First deputy mayor of the region Vladimir Markov said that the situation in *Ryazan* is calm. The inhabitants of the building, who were rapidly evacuated from their apartments immediately following the discovery of the suspected explosive, have returned to their apartments. All the neighboring houses have been checked. According to Markov it is the inhabitants themselves who must be the main support of agencies of law enforcement in their struggle with ‘this evil which has appeared in our country... The more vigilant we are, the more reliable the defense will be’.”

At five minutes past midnight the sacks were carried out of the basement and loaded into a fire engine. However, it was four in the morning before a decision was taken on where the explosives should be taken. The *OMON*, the FSB and the local military units refused to take in the sacks. In the end they were taken to yard of the Central Office for Civil Defense and Emergencies of *Ryazan*, where they were stacked in a garage and a guard was set over them. The rescuers later recalled that they would have used the sugar in their tea, except that the analysis had shown the presence of hexogene.

The sacks lay at the civil defense base for several days until they were taken away to the MVD's expert center for criminalistic analysis in Moscow. The press office of the UVD of the *Ryazan* Region actually announced that the sacks had been taken to Moscow on September 23. At 8.30 in the morning the work of removing the bomb and checking the building was completed and the residents were allowed to return to their apartments.

Already on the evening of September 22 1,200 militiamen were put on alert and a so-called *Intercept* plan was set in motion. Several eyewitnesses were identified and photofit pictures were produced of three suspects, road blocks were set up on highways in the region and in nearby localities. The witnesses' testimony was quite detailed and there was some hope that the perpetrators would be apprehended.

The governor of the region and the municipal authorities allocated additional funds to the counter-terrorist offensive. Members of the armed forces were used to guard apartment blocks and a night watch was organized among residents in all buildings, while a further search was carried out of the entire residential district, especially of the apartment houses (by Friday 80 percent of the houses in the town had been checked). The city markets were deserted, with traders afraid to bring in their goods and customers afraid to go out shopping. According to deputy mayor of *Ryazan* Anatoly Baranov "Practically no one in the town slept, and not only did the residents of that house spend the night on the street, so did the entire 30,000 population of the suburb of *Dashkovo-Pesochnya* in which it is located." The panic response in the city grew stronger: there were rumors circulating that *Ryazan* had been singled out for terrorist attack because the 137th airborne assault guards regiment which had fought in *Dagestan* was stationed there. In addition the *Dyagilev* military aerodrome, from which military forces had been airlifted to the Caucasus, was located close to *Ryazan*. The main road out of *Ryazan* was jammed solid because the militia were checking all cars leaving the city. However, Operation *Intercept* failed to produce any results, the car used by the terrorists was not found and the terrorists themselves were not arrested.

On the morning of September 23 the Russian news agencies broadcast the sensational news that "a terrorist bombing had been foiled in *Ryazan*." From 8.00 in the morning the television channels started broadcasting details of the failed attempt at mass murder: Every TV and radio broadcasting company in Russia carried the same story: "According to members of the law enforcement agencies of the *Ryazan* UVD, the white crystalline substance in the sacks is hexogene."

At 1 p.m. the TV program *Vesti* (News) on the state's RTR channel carried a live interview with S. Kabashov: "So provisional guidelines have been issued for the detention of an automobile matching the features which residents have described. There are no results so far." *Vesti* announced that "bomb specialists from the municipal militia have carried out an initial analysis and confirmed the presence of hexogene. The contents of the sacks have now been sent to the FSB laboratory in Moscow for definitive analysis. Meanwhile in *Ryazan* the mayor Pavel Dmitrievich Mamatov has

held an extraordinary meeting with his deputies and given instructions for all basements in the city to be sealed off and for rented premises to be checked more thoroughly.”

And so it turned out that the contents of the sacks were sent for analysis not only to the MVD laboratory, but to the FSB laboratory as well.

Mamatov answered questions from journalists: “Whatever agencies we might bring in today, it is only possible to implement all the measures for sealing off attics and basements, repairs, installing gratings and so on in a single week on one condition -- if we all combine our efforts.” In other words, at 1 p.m. on September 23 all of *Ryazan* was in a state of siege. They were searching for the terrorists and their car, checking attics and basements. When *Vesti* went on air again at 5 p.m. it was mostly a repeat of the broadcast at 1 p.m.

At 7 p.m. *Vesti* went on air with its normal news coverage: “Today Russian premier Vladimir Putin spoke about the air-strikes on the airport at *Grozny*.” So while they were looking for terrorists in *Ryazan*, Russian planes had been bombarding *Grozny*. The people of *Ryazan* were avenged! Those who were behind the terrorist attack would pay dearly for their sleepless night and their spoilt day!

Putin answered questions from journalists: “As far as the strike on *Grozny* airport is concerned, I can’t make any comment. I know there is a general directive under which bandits will be pursued wherever they are. I’m simply not in the know, but if they were at the airport, that means at the airport. I can’t really add anything to what has already been said.” Evidently as prime minister Putin had known something the general public hadn’t heard yet, that there were terrorists holed up at *Grozny* airport.

Putin also commented on the latest emergency in *Ryazan*: “As for the events in *Ryazan*, I don’t think there was any kind of failure involved. If the sacks which proved to contain explosive were noticed, that means there is a positive side to it, if only in the fact that the public is reacting correctly to the events taking place in our country today. I’d like to take advantage of your question in order to thank the public of our country for this. (...) This is absolutely the correct response. No panic, no sympathy for the bandits. This is the mood for fighting them to the very end. Until we win. And we shall win.”

Rather vague, but the general meaning is clear enough. The foiling of the attempted bombing in *Ryazan* is not a fumble by the special services who failed to spot the explosive being planted, but a victory for the entire Russian people who are keeping a vigilant look-out for their cruel enemies even in provincial towns like *Ryazan*. And for that the prime minister expresses his gratitude to the public.

This is a good point at which to draw our first conclusions. The FSB subsequently claimed that training exercises were being held in *Ryazan*, but this is contradicted by the following circumstances. On the evening of September 22, after the sacks of explosive had been discovered in the basement of the apartment building, the FSB made no announcement that training exercises were being held in *Ryazan*, that the sacks contained ordinary sugar, or that the detonating device was a mock-up. The FSB had a second opportunity to issue a statement concerning exercises on September 23, when the news agencies of the world carried the story of the failed terrorist attack in *Ryazan*. The FSB did not issue any denial, neither did it announce that training had been taking place in *Ryazan*. As of September 23 the prime minister of Russia and Yeltsin’s successor in the post of president, Vladimir Putin, still supported the FSB version of events and sincerely believed (or at least pretended to believe) that a terrorist attack had been thwarted in *Ryazan*.

Let us imagine just for a moment that training exercises really were taking place in *Ryazan*. Could we possibly expect the FSB to say nothing all day long on September 23, while the whole world was buzzing with news of a failed terrorist attack? It's impossible to imagine it. Is it possible to imagine that the prime minister of Russia and former director of the FSB, who moreover has personal links with Patrushev, was not informed about the "exercises"? It is quite impossible to imagine it, even in your wildest dreams. It would be an open gesture of disloyalty to Putin by Patrushev, after which one or the other of them would have had to quit the political arena. The fact that at seven o'clock in the evening on September 23 1999 Putin did not make any statement about training exercises taking place in *Ryazan* was the weightiest possible argument in favor of interpreting events as a failed attempt by the FSB to blow up an apartment building in *Ryazan*.

The mayor of Moscow Yuri Luzhkov, who has pretty good contacts among the departments of the armed forces and law enforcement, was not informed about any FSB "exercises" in *Ryazan* either. On the contrary, on September 23 the Moscow authorities gave instructions for intensive precautions to be taken to prevent terrorist attacks in the capital primarily because in the opinion of representatives of the agencies of law-enforcement the composition of the explosive found in Moscow and *Ryazan* and the way it was planted were similar. Members of the Moscow militia received instructions to check the attic spaces, basements and non-residential premises of buildings more thoroughly and to submit all goods vehicles entering the city to more serious inspection. In Moscow they regarded the events in *Ryazan* as a foiled terrorist attack.

But the most remarkable thing of all is that not even Rushailo, who headed the commission for combating terrorism and supervised the *Whirlwind Anti-Terror (Vikhr-Antiterror)* operation, knew anything at all about exercises in *Ryazan*. Oleg Aksyonov, head of the information department of the MVD of Russia, later said: "For us, for the people of *Ryazan* and the central administration, this is a total surprise, it was treated as a serious crime." On September 23 in his capacity as press secretary for the MVD Aksyonov met the press several times. To Rushailo's shame, Aksyonov announced that having familiarized himself with the situation the minister had ordered that all the basements and attics in *Ryazan* should be checked once again in the space of a day and that vigilance should be increased. Aksyonov emphasized that the implementation of the order was to be closely monitored, since "people could pay for a minor slip-up with their lives."

Even on September 24 when he addressed the First All-Russian Congress for Combating Organized Crime Rushailo spoke about the terrorist attack that had been thwarted in *Ryazan* and said that "a number of serious miscalculations have been made in the activities of the agencies of the interior" and that "harsh conclusions" had been drawn. Having pointed out the miscalculations of the agencies who had failed to spot the explosives being planted, Rushailo followed Putin in praising the people of *Ryazan* who had managed to foil the terrorist attack. "The struggle against terrorism is not the exclusive prerogative of the agencies of the interior," said Rushailo. A significant role in this matter was allotted to "the local authorities and administrations, whose work however, also contains significant flaws." Rushailo recommended to his audience "the immediate creation of interdepartmental monitoring and inspection groups which would travel to the regions to check the implementation of decisions on site and to provide practical assistance." He pointed out that in the MVD such work was already being carried out and there had been definite improvements, such as the foiling of the attempt to blow up the apartment building in *Ryazan*. "The thwarting of new terrorist attacks and the punishment of the guilty parties in crimes already committed is the main

task facing the MVD of Russia at the present stage,” minister of the interior Vladimir Rushailo emphasized with pride in the one thwarted terrorist attack he already had to his credit -- in *Ryazan*.

If the minister himself regarded the *Ryazan* episode as a foiled terrorist attack, then what can we say about the regional UVD? The appeals composed in revolutionary style simply begged to be set to music:

The war declared by terrorism against the people of Russia continues. And this means that the unification of all the forces of society and the state to repel the treacherous foe is the essential requirement of the present day. The struggle against terrorism cannot remain a matter only for the militia and the special services. The most striking possible confirmation of this is the report of an attempt to blow up an apartment building in Ryazan which was thwarted thanks to the vigilance of the public. On September 23 in Ryazan... while checking the basement of an apartment building a militia detachment discovered an explosive device consisting of three sacks of hexogene and a timing mechanism set for half past five in the morning. The terrorist attack was thwarted thanks to the inhabitants of the building which the criminals had chosen as their target. The evening before they had noticed strangers carrying sacks of some kind into the basement from a Zhiguli automobile with its numbers papered over. The residents immediately contacted the militia. Initial analysis of the contents of the sacks showed that they actually did contain a substance similar to hexogene mixed with granulated sugar. The sacks were immediately dispatched to Moscow under guard. Following expert analysis the staff at the FSB laboratory will give a final answer as to whether this was an attempted terrorist attack or merely a diversionary ploy.

In this connection the department of the interior for the region wishes to remind citizens yet again of the need to remain calm and take an organized, business-like approach to ensuring one's own safety. The best reply to the terrorists will be the vigilance of us all. All this requires is to look a little closer at the people around you, pay attention to strangers noticed in the entrance-way, in the attic or the basement of your building, to abandoned automobiles parked directly beside apartment buildings. At the slightest suspicion phone the militia.

Do not on any account attempt to examine the contents of any suspicious boxes, bags and other unidentified objects which you may find. In such situations you should restrict access to them by other people and call the militia.

The establishment of house committees to organize the protection of buildings and surrounding territory during the night will also serve to reduce significantly the likelihood of terrorist incidents in our city. Remember, today it depends on every one of us just how effective the fight against evil will be.

UVD Information Group.

Unfortunately for him, on September 23 1999 general Alexander Zdanovich, head of the Center For Public Relations of the FSB of Russia, was due to appear in the television program *Hero of the Day* (*Geroi dnya*) on the NTV channel. Thanks to this we have yet another important piece of evidence that the FSB was planning to just sit it out and allow the people of Ryazan and the journalists to swallow the version of events as a failed terrorist attack by Chechens. It is obvious that prior to Zdanovich's appearance the FSB had no intention of making any statement about "exercises." Their calculations were simple enough: the militia had not found any terrorists from the FSB or the car. The story of the thwarted terrorist attack was still working and, best of all, it suited everyone, since even Rushailo could claim a share of the credit for thwarting the bombing.

Zdanovich had, however, been instructed by his bosses to try feeling out the public reaction to the fairy tale about “exercises” in case something went wrong or there was a leak of information about the FSB’s involvement in the terrorist attack in Ryazan. Note how gently Zdanovich began hinting that no actual crime had been committed in the attempt to blow up the house in Ryazan, as if trying to convince people there was nothing to get excited about. The press secretary of the FSB declared that the initial report indicated there was no hexogene in the sacks discovered in the basement of one of the apartment blocks in the city, but that they contained “something like remote-control devices.” Nor were there any detonating mechanisms, although it was now possible to confirm that “certain elements of a detonating mechanism” had been discovered.

At the same time Zdanovich emphasized that the final answer would have to be given by the experts, his colleagues from the FSB laboratory in Moscow, who were Patrushev’s subordinates. Zdanovich knew perfectly well just what “final answer” would be given by the FSB experts: it would be the one their boss ordered them to give (this answer would be communicated to us only after a certain delay, on March 21 2000, a year and a half after the foiled terrorist attack and just five days before the presidential election).

But even so, at the beginning of the program *Hero of the Day* Zdanovich was not in possession of any information to the effect that the FSB had apparently been carrying out “exercises” in *Ryazan*. He did not even hint at the possibility that training exercises might be involved. In his interview Zdanovich did express doubts that the sacks contained explosive and that there was a live detonating device, but there was not a single word about any possible exercises. This discrepancy was yet another indication that the special services had planned a terrorist attack in *Ryazan*. It is simply not possible to imagine that the leadership of the FSB had kept information on exercises already completed in *Ryazan* a secret from Zdanovich.

The evening of September 23 brought yet another absurdity. The *Novosti* news agency broadcast a recording of the NTV interview with general Zdanovich and announced that the *Intercept* search plan for the white VAZ-2107 automobile was still continuing. “A lot of things about this entire story are unclear.” In particular, the witnesses gave different descriptions of the color and make of the automobile. Doubts had even arisen about whether the car’s number had been papered over. At the same time, as the press center remarked, the search for the car was being continued “in order to reconstruct an objective picture.”

And so, despite Zdanovich’s assurances that there had been no explosive or detonating device, the *Ryazan* UFSB was still unable “to reconstruct an objective picture.” On September 24 the morning newspapers carried details of how the terrorist attack in *Ryazan* had been foiled, but still no statement from the FSB about exercises.

Not until September 24 did FSB director Patrushev finally decide to issue a statement about the “exercises” which had been held in *Ryazan*. What could have made Patrushev shift tactics in this way? Firstly, the main clues, three sacks of explosive with a live detonating device, had been delivered into Patrushev’s hands in Moscow, which was good news for Patrushev. Now he could substitute the sacks and confidently assert that the provincials in *Ryazan* had made a mistake and the results of their analysis were wrong. But there was also bad news: the *Ryazan* UFSB had detained two terrorists.

Let's lend the FSB a hand in establishing the "objective picture" which was so zealously concealed from the people. In simplified form this most brilliant part of the joint operation conducted by the *Ryazan* militia and the *Ryazan* Region UFSB went as follows.

Following the discovery in *Ryazan* of the sacks containing explosive and a live detonating device the *Intercept* plan had been announced in the city. The senior officer responsible for public relations (press secretary) of the UFSB of the *Ryazan* Region, Yury Bludov, announced that Patrushev's statement had come as a complete surprise to the local members of the state security services. "Until the last moment we worked across the board in close collaboration with the militia, just as though the threat of a terrorist attack was real, we made up photofit pictures of the suspected terrorists; on the basis of the results of the analysis we initiated criminal proceedings under article 205 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (terrorism); we conducted a search for cars and terrorists."

After the announcement of Operation *Intercept*, when the routes out of town were already closed off, the operational divisions of the *Ryazan* UVD and UFSB attempted to determine the precise location of the terrorists they were seeking. They had a few lucky breaks. Nadezhda Yukhanova, an employee of the *Electrosvyaz* company (the telephone service) recorded a suspicious call to Moscow. "Leave one at a time, there are patrols everywhere", replied the voice at the other end of the line. Yukhanova immediately reported the call to the *Ryazan* UFSB and it was a simple technical matter for the suspicious telephone to be monitored immediately. The operatives had no doubt that they had located the terrorists. However, difficulties arose because when the bugging technology identified the Moscow telephone number the terrorists were ringing, it turned out to be the number of one of the offices of the FSB in Moscow.

After leaving *Novosyolov* Street shortly after 9 p.m. on September 22 the terrorists had not risked driving straight to Moscow because a solitary car is always noticeable on a deserted highway at night and the chances of being stopped at a *GAI* (traffic police) post were too high. Any car stopped at night would be noted in the duty officer's journal, even if the people sitting in it were members of the FSB or other special services, and the next day when the news of the explosion was announced the militiaman would be bound to recall stopping a car with three people. And if there also happened to be reports by witnesses in *Ryazan*, they would pick up the car and its passengers straight away. The terrorists had to wait until the morning, especially since they couldn't leave the target area until after the explosion had taken place and their military mission had been accomplished. In the morning there would be a lot of cars on the highway. For the first few hours after the attack there would be panic. If witnesses had spotted two men and a woman in a car, the militia would be looking for three terrorists, two men and one woman. One person alone in a car could always give any militia cordon the slip.

That this was the way things really were is clear from the report of operation *Intercept* in the newspaper *Trud*: "By now the situation in *Ryazan* had reached red heat. Reinforced patrols of militia and cadets from the local military colleges walked the streets. All road routes out of and into the city were blocked by the patrols and sentries armed to the teeth and road traffic police. Traffic jams kilometers long had built up of cars and trucks moving to and from Moscow. They searched all the passenger cabins and goods compartments. They were looking for three terrorists, two men and a woman, whose descriptions were posted on almost every lamp-post."

Following instructions received, one of the terrorists set out towards Moscow in the car on September 23, abandoned the car in the area of *Kolomna* and made his way to Moscow unhindered by other means. One of the terrorists had now escaped the clutches of the *Ryazan* militia and taken the car with him as well. Late in the day of September 23, less than twenty-four hours later, an empty car was found by the militia on the *Moscow-Ryazan* highway close to *Kolomna*, about halfway to Moscow. It was the same car “with the papered-over number plates which was used to transport the explosive,” Bludov announced. The car turned out to be registered as missing with the police. In other words, the terrorists had carried out their operation in a stolen car (a classical feature of terrorist attacks).

The car had not been dumped near *Kolomna* by chance. If it had been stolen in Moscow or the Moscow Region the militia would have returned it to the owner at his home address and it would probably never have entered anyone’s head to think it might be the car used by unknown terrorists to transport hexogene for blowing up a building in a different region of the country, in *Ryazan*. Accordingly they wouldn’t have bothered to analyze the contents of the car for microparticles of hexogene and other explosive substances. The accomplice could go back for the two terrorists left behind in *Ryazan* the next day in a standard FSB operational vehicle and take them to Moscow without any risk of being caught. On the other hand, if it was discovered that the car found near *Kolomna* was the one used for the terrorist attack, the fact that it was abandoned halfway to Moscow would tell the *Ryazan* militia that the terrorists had got away. The cordon in place around *Ryazan* should then be relaxed, which would make it easier for the remaining two terrorists to leave.

So now there were two terrorists left in *Ryazan*. From information provided by the *Ryazan* UFSB we know that the terrorists stayed overnight somewhere in *Ryazan* and didn’t spend the night of September 22 hanging about in the hallways of buildings in a strange and unfamiliar town. The conclusion must be drawn that the terrorists had arranged places to stay in advance, even if they themselves were not from *Ryazan*. In that case it is clear that they had time to choose their target, which was far from random, and to prepare for their terrorist attack. When they were caught by surprise by operation *Intercept* starting earlier than expected the terrorists decided to wait it out in the town. The arguments in support of this interpretation are as follows.

It is very important to note that the leaders of the *Ryazan* Region were not aware of the explosion planned for *Ryazan* (or the “exercises”, as the events are referred to diplomatically by all the officials involved in them and by employees of the agencies of coercion). The governor of the region, V.N. Liubimov, announced this in an interview broadcast live on September 24, when he said: “Not even I knew about this exercise.” Mamatov, the mayor of *Ryazan*, was frankly annoyed: ‘They’ve used us as guinea-pigs. Tested *Ryazan* for lice. I’m not against exercises, I served in the army myself and I took part in them, but I never saw anything like this.’

The FSB department for the *Ryazan* Region was also not informed about the “exercises.” Bludov stated that “the FSB was not informed in advance that exercises were being conducted in the city.” The head of the *Ryazan* UFSB, major-general A.V. Sergeiev at first stated in an interview with the local television company *Oka* that he knew nothing about any “exercises” being held. It was only later, in response to a question from journalists about whether he had in his possession any official document confirming that exercises were held in *Ryazan*, that he answered through his press secretary that he accepted as proof of the exercises the television interview given by FSB director Patrushev. One of the women living in house 14/16, Marina Severina, recalled how afterwards the local FSB went round the apartments apologizing: “Several people from the FSB came to see us,

led by a colonel. They apologized. They said that they hadn't known anything either." This is one case in which we can believe the members of the FSB and accept their sincerity.

The *Ryazan* UFSB realized that the people of *Ryazan* had been "set up" and that the Public Prosecutor's Office of Russia and the public might accuse the *Ryazan* UFSB of planning the explosion. Shaken by the treachery of their Moscow colleagues, the *Ryazan* UFSB decided to provide themselves with an alibi and announced to the world that the *Ryazan* operation had been planned in Moscow. There could be no other explanation for the statement from the *Ryazan* Region UFSB which appeared shortly after Patrushev's interview about "exercises" in *Ryazan*. We give the text of the statement in full.

"It has become known that the planting on 22.09.99 of a dummy explosive device was part of an ongoing interregional exercise. This announcement came as a surprise to us and appeared at a moment when the department of the FSB had identified the places of residence in *Ryazan* of those involved in planting the explosive device and was preparing to detain them. This had been made possible due to the vigilance and assistance of many of the residents of the city of *Ryazan*, collaboration with the agencies of the Ministry of the Interior and the professionalism of our own staff. We thank everyone who assisted us in this work. We will continue in future to do everything possible to ensure the safety of the people of *Ryazan*."

This unique document provides us with answers to the most important of our questions. Firstly, the *Ryazan* UFSB had nothing to do with the operation to blow up the building in *Ryazan*. Secondly, at least two terrorists were discovered in *Ryazan*. Thirdly, the terrorists lived in *Ryazan*, if only temporarily, and evidently network or at least two secret safe apartments were uncovered. Fourthly, just at the moment when arrangements were in hand to arrest the terrorists, the order came from Moscow not to arrest them, because the terrorist attack in *Ryazan* was only an FSB "exercise."

In order to remove any doubts that the UFSB statement was both deliberate and accurate, the leadership of the *Ryazan* UFSB repeated it almost word-for-word in an interview. On May 21 2000, just five days before the presidential election, when the failed explosion in *Ryazan* had been put back on the public agenda for political reasons by the parties competing for power, the head of the investigative section of the UFSB for the *Ryazan* Region, lieutenant-colonel Yuri Maximov, stated as follows:

"We can only feel sympathy for these people and offer our apologies. We also find the situation difficult. We took all the events of that night seriously, regarding the situation as genuinely dangerous. The announcement about exercises held by the FSB of the Russian Federation came as a complete surprise to us and appeared at a moment when the department of the FSB had identified the places of residence in *Ryazan* of those involved in planting the dummy (as it subsequently emerged) device and was preparing to detain them. This had been made possible due to the vigilance and assistance of the inhabitants of *Ryazan*, collaboration with the agencies of the ministry of the interior and the professionalism of our own staff."

It was thus twice confirmed in documentary form that the terrorists who had mined the building in *Ryazan* were employees of the FSB, that at the time of the operation they were living in *Ryazan*, and that the places where they lived had been identified by employees of the UFSB for the *Ryazan* Region. This being so, we can catch Patrushev out in an obvious lie. On September 25, in an interview with one of the television companies he stated that "those people who should in principle have been found straight away were among the residents who left the building in which an

explosive device was supposedly planted. They took part in the process of producing their own photofit pictures, and held conversations with employees of the agencies of law enforcement.”

The real facts were quite different. The terrorists scattered to different safe apartments. But no sooner had the leadership of the *Ryazan* UFSB reported in the line of duty by phone to Patrushev in Moscow that the arrest of the terrorists was imminent than Patrushev gave the order not to arrest the terrorists and announced that the foiled terrorist attack in *Ryazan* was only an “exercise.” One can imagine the expression on the face of the *Ryazan* UFSB officer concerned: most likely major-general Sergeiev was reporting to Patrushev in person when he was ordered to let the terrorists go!

Immediately after he put down the phone Patrushev gave his first interview in those days to the NTV television company: ‘The incident in *Ryazan* was not a bombing, nor was it a foiled bombing. It was an exercise. It was sugar, there was no explosive substance there. Such exercises do not only take place in *Ryazan*. But to the honor of the agencies of law enforcement and the public in *Ryazan*, they responded promptly. I believe that exercises must be made as close as possible to what happens in real life because otherwise we won’t learn anything and won’t be able to respond to anything anywhere.” A day later Patrushev added that the “exercise” in *Ryazan* was prompted by information about terrorist attacks planned to take place in Russia. In Chechnya several groups of terrorists had already been prepared and were “due to be advanced into Russian territory and carry out a series of terrorist attacks... It was this information which led us to conclude that we needed to carry out training exercise, and not like the ones we’d had before, and to make them hard and strict... Our personnel must be prepared, we must identify the shortcomings in the organization of our work and make corrections to its organization.”

The *Moscow Komsomolets* (MK) newspaper managed to joke about it: “On September 24 1999 the head of the FSB Nikolai Patrushev made the sensational announcement that the attempted bombing in *Ryazan* was nothing of the sort. It was an exercise... The same day minister of the interior Vladimir Rushailo congratulated his men on saving the building in *Ryazan* from certain destruction.”

But in *Ryazan*, of course, no one was laughing. Obviously, even though Patrushev had forbidden it the *Ryazan* UFSB went ahead and arrested the terrorists. Who was arrested where, how many there were of them and what else the *Ryazan* UFSB officers found in those flats we shall probably never know. When they were arrested the terrorists presented their “cover documents” and were detained until the arrival from Moscow of an officer of the central administration with documents which permitted him to take the FSB operatives who had been tracked down so rapidly back to Moscow with him.

Beyond this point our investigation runs up against the old familiar “top secret” classification. The criminal proceedings instigated by the UFSB for the *Ryazan* Region in connection with the discovery of an explosive substance under article 205 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (terrorism) was classified and the case materials are not available to the public. The names of the terrorists (FSB operatives) have been concealed. We don’t even know if they were interrogated and what they said under interrogation. Patrushev certainly had something to hide. “There’s nothing I can do, guys. The analysis shows explosive materials, I’m obliged to initiate criminal proceedings” -- such was the stubborn reply made by the local FSB investigator to his Moscow colleagues when they tried putting pressure on him. So then people from the FSB’s central administration were sent down and simply confiscated the results of the analysis.

On September 29 1999 the newspapers *Cheliabinsky Rabochy* (*Chelyabinsk Worker*) and *Krasnoyarsky Rabochy* (*Krasnoyarsk Worker*), and on October 1 the *Volzhskaya Kommuna* (*Volga Commune*) of *Samara* carried identical articles; “We have learned from well-informed sources in the MVD of Russia that none of the MVD operatives and their colleagues in the UFSB of *Ryazan* believes in any “training” involving the planting of explosive in the town... In the opinion of highly placed employees of the MVD of Russia, the apartment building in *Ryazan* actually was mined by persons unknown using genuine explosive and the same detonators as in Moscow... This theory is indirectly confirmed by the fact that the criminal proceedings under the article on terrorism have still not been closed. Furthermore, the results of the original analysis of the contents of the sacks, carried out at the first stage by local MVD experts, were confiscated by FSB personnel who arrived from Moscow and immediately declared secret. Militiamen who have been in contact with their colleagues in criminalistics who carried out the first investigation of the sacks continue to claim that they really did contain hexogene and there is no possibility of any error.”

Trying to put pressure on the investigation and declaring a criminal case classified were illegal acts. According to article 7 of the law of the Russian Federation “On state secrecy” adopted on July 21 1993 “information... concerning emergencies and catastrophes which threaten the safety and health of members of the public and their consequences; ... concerning instances of the violation of human and civil rights and freedoms; ... concerning instances of the violation of legality by the agencies of state power and their officials ... shall not be declared a matter of state secrecy and classified as secret. The same law goes on to state: “officials who have taken a decision to classify as secret the information listed or to include it for this purpose in media which contain information that constitutes a matter of state secrecy, shall be subject to criminal, administrative or disciplinary sanction in accordance with the material and moral harm inflicted upon society, the state and the public. Members of the public shall be entitled to appeal such decisions to a court of law.”

Unfortunately, it looks as though those responsible for classifying a criminal case will not be held to account under the progressive and democratic law of 1993. As one of the residents of the ill-fated (or fortunate) building in *Ryazan* put it, they have “pulled the wool down hard over our eyes.”

Certainly, in March 2000 (just before the presidential election) the voters were shown one of the three terrorists (a “member of the FSB special center”), who said that all three members of the group had left Moscow for *Ryazan* on the evening of September 22, that they had found a basement which happened by chance not to be locked; they had bought sacks of sugar at the market and a cartridge at the *Kolchuga* gun shop, from which they had constructed “mock-ups of an explosive device” on the spot and “the whole business was concentrated together to implement the measure concerned... It was not sabotage, but an exercise. We didn’t even really try to hide” (we have retained the style of speech of the member of the “FSB special center”).

On March 22 (with four days left to the election) “The Association of Veterans of the Alpha Group” came to the defense of the story about FSB exercises in *Ryazan* in the person of lieutenant-general of the reserve and former commander of the *Vympel* division of the FSB of Russia Dmitry Gerasimov, and retired major-general Gennady Zaitsev, the former commander of the *Alpha* group and a “Hero of the Soviet Union.” Gerasimov declared that live detonating devices were not used in the exercises in *Ryazan*, and what was used instead was “a cartridge containing round shot”, which was meant to produce “a shock effect.” Since the impression produced by the detonating device really was shocking, from that point of view the “exercise” had been a success.

In Zaitsev's opinion the story that live detonating devices had been involved in the exercise came about because the instruments used by the UFSB for the *Ryazan* Region were faulty. He announced that members of *Vympel* had also been involved in the exercise in *Ryazan* and that a special group had left for *Ryazan* in a private car on the eve of the events concerned and had actually deliberately drawn attention to itself. A cartridge containing round shot was bought in the *Kolchuga* shop; "The ill-fated sugar, which some later called hexogene, was bought by the special group at the local bazaar. And therefore it could not possibly have been explosive. The experts simply ignored basic rules and used dirty instruments on which there were traces of explosives from previous analyses. The experts concerned have already been punished for their negligence. Criminal proceedings have been initiated in connection with this instance."

The naiveté of the interview given by the "member of the special center" and the simple-mindedness of the statements made by Gerasimov and Zaitsev are genuinely astounding. First and foremost, it could well be true that three *Vympel* officers did set out for *Ryazan* in a private car on the evening of September 22, that they did buy three sacks of sugar and a cartridge from the *Kolchuga* shop. But exactly how did they try to attract attention to themselves? After all, it was sugar they were sold at the market, not hexogene. What was there to attract attention? A single shotgun cartridge bought in a shop?"

Patrushev evidently also believed that in a country where sensational murders take place every day and houses with hundreds of inhabitants are blown up suspicion should be aroused by people buying sugar at the market and a shotgun cartridge in a shop. "Everything that the supposed terrorists planted was bought in *Ryazan*, the sacks of sugar and the cartridges, which they bought without anyone asking them whether they had any right to do so." A minor point, of course, but now we have a mystery: just how many cartridges did the FSB operatives buy, one or several? (The purchases could have been an operation to cover for the real terrorists, who planted quite different sacks containing explosive in the basement of the building in *Ryazan*, sacks that had nothing to do with the *Vympel* group. In that case the *Vympel* operatives themselves might not have known the purpose of the task they had been set of buying one cartridge and three bags of sugar.)

Finally, Zaitsev deliberately misled his readers by claiming that criminal proceedings had been initiated against senior lieutenant Yury Tkachenko, the explosives technician at the engineering and technical section, for conducting the analysis incorrectly, when they had actually been initiated against the terrorists who had turned out to be FSB operatives. On September 30 Tkachenko and another *Ryazan* militia explosives specialist, Pyotr Zhitnikov, had in fact been awarded a bonus for their courage in disarming the explosive device. And incidentally, Nadezhda Yukhanova, the telephone operator who intercepted the terrorists' telephone conversation with Moscow, was also paid a bonus for her assistance in capturing them.

The only thing that can be said in Zaitsev's defense is that a technical expert does bear criminal responsibility for the quality and objectivity of the results of his analysis, and if Tkachenko had carried out a flawed analysis and issued an incorrect result, then criminal proceedings would indeed have been taken against him. But as we know, this was not done, precisely because the result provided by the analysis was accurate: the sacks contained an explosive substance.

The testimony of the "member of the special center" and Zaitsev also suffers from serious inconsistencies of time-scale. The terrorists were spotted near the building in *Ryazan* only shortly after 9 p.m. On a weekday they could not possibly have covered the 180 kilometers from Moscow

to *Ryazan* in less than three hours, and then they still had to select a building in an unfamiliar town, buy the sacks of sugar, buy the cartridge at the *Kolchuga* shop and put together the mock-up. On a weekday the market in *Ryazan* closes at 6 p.m. at the latest. The *Kolchuga* shop closes at 7 p.m. So just when and how was the sugar bought? When was the cartridge bought? When did the terrorists leave Moscow? How long did the journey take? When did they arrive in *Ryazan*?

It is obvious that the entire story about the evening trip from Moscow by *Vympel* operatives is an invention from start to finish. Zaitsev himself provided legally valid proof of this. On September 28 1999 a press conference was held by members of the departments of law enforcement and the armed forces in the office of the *Kolomna* security firm *Oskord*, at which the representative of the *Alpha* Group veterans' association G.N. Zaitsev explained his position with regard to the "incident" in *Ryazan*: "Training exercises of this kind make me really angry. It's not right to practice on real people!" On October 7 a report on the press conference was published by the local *Kolomna* newspaper *Yat*. The only conclusion which can be drawn from Zaitsev's statement is that he had taken no part in the *Ryazan* escapade. But with only four days to go to the presidential election, when all forces were mobilized for Putin's victory and the end justified any means, Zaitsev was forced to appear at a press conference and acknowledge his own blame and the involvement of *Vympel* operatives in the *Ryazan* "exercise." Naturally, those who involved Zaitsev in this propaganda show were not aware of his press conference in *Kolomna*.

Zaitsev's false testimony of March 22 2000 served to emphasize an extremely important point: the employees of the special services will lie if it is required by the interests of the agencies of state security, if they have been ordered to lie.

Half of the criminals in Russia make themselves out to be lunatics or total idiots. It's better that way, you get a shorter sentence or even simply get off ("What can you expect from a fool?" as the Russian saying has it). Patrushev calculated correctly that for terrorism against the citizens of one's own country you could get life, but in Russia you wouldn't even get sacked for being an idiot. (And in any case, just who could have sacked Patrushev? No one but Putin!) Not a single employee of the FSB was sacked as a result of the *Ryazan* escapade. Indeed, according to Schekochikhin, Patrushev was made a "Hero of Russia", and he has recently been promoted to four-star general!

Patrushev's psychological calculations proved correct. It was more convenient for the political elite of Russia to regard Patrushev as an idiot than as a villain. Commenting on Patrushev's statement about "exercises" in a live broadcast on the radio station *Ekho Moskvy* (*Moscow Echo*) chairman of the State *Duma* deputies' grouping "The Russian Regions" Oleg Morozov said: "It seems monstrous to me. I understand that the special services have the right to check up on what's being done, but not so much by us as by themselves." In addition he said it was "difficult to imagine yourself in these people's places" (in *Ryazan*) and therefore "it wasn't worth it, there was no way such a price should have been paid for a check" on the activities of the FSB and the vigilance of the public.

Morozov declared that it might be possible to forgive the actions of the FSB if the FSB promised there would be no more terrorist attacks. That was in fact the main point which he made: Russians had to be saved from the FSB terror. The subtle diplomat Morozov offered the terrorist Patrushev a deal: we don't punish you and we close our eyes to all the explosions that have taken place in Russia, and you halt all operations in Russia for blowing up people's homes. Patrushev heard what Morozov was saying and the explosions ceased. Patrushev was branded an idiot and allowed to

remain at his desk. But then perhaps the question of just who turned out to be the idiot in this situation should be regarded as undecided.

There were some people who were of the opinion that Patrushev was not an idiot but insane. On September 25 1999 the newspaper *New Izvestiya* (*Novye izvestiya*) carried an article by Sergei Agafonov which, in view of the circumstances, failed even to offend Patrushev: "I wonder just how accurate an idea the head of the FSB actually has of what is going on? Does the head of the special services have an adequate perception of surrounding reality? Does he not perhaps confuse colors, does he recognize his relatives? My soul is tormented by these alarming questions since there seems to be no possible rational explanation for the FSB's all-Russian special training exercise using real people." Agafonov assumed that "general Patrushev is seriously unwell" and "he should be released from the excessive burdens of duty and given urgent treatment."

And of course, the FSB itself could not be unanimous in its attitude to Patrushev's operation. After the fiasco in Ryazan even his own subordinates were prepared to criticize the head of the FSB (and Patrushev was prepared to tolerate this criticism abjectly). For instance, the press secretary (the head of the public relations center or TsOS) of the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region Sergei Bogdanov called the "exercise" in *Ryazan* "crude and poorly planned work" (if they were caught, their work must have been crude). The head of the UFSB for the *Yaroslavl* Region major-general A.A. Kotelnikov replied as follows to a question about the "exercise": "I have my own point of view concerning the *Ryazan* exercises, but I would not wish to comment on the actions of my colleagues" (as if there any way that he could!).

Note that not a single acting or retired senior member of the FSB made any attempt at a serious analysis of the actions of his "colleagues." The professionals of the armed services departments left that honorable task to the journalists, who did the best they could in the face of the attacks made on them by the FSB. They began, naturally enough, with the sugar.

The three sacks of sugar bothered everybody. Supposedly the terrorists from the FSB (but probably it was a quite different group of FSB operatives) bought the sugar at the local market. They said that it was produced by the *Kolpyansk* Sugar Plant in the *Orlov* Region. But if it was just plain ordinary sugar from the *Orlov* Region, why was it sent off to Moscow for analysis? And more importantly, why did the laboratory accept it for analysis? Not just one laboratory, but two in different state departments (the MVD and the FSB). And why was an additional analysis carried out later? Surely it should have been possible to recognize sugar the first time around? And why did it all take several months? It only made sense for Patrushev to have the sugar brought to Moscow for analysis if he wanted to take the material evidence away from his colleagues in *Ryazan*, and only if the sacks did contain explosive. Why would Patrushev insist on sacks of sugar being sent to Moscow? His own men would have made him a laughing stock!

In the meantime the FSB press office issued a statement saying that in order for the contents of the sacks from *Ryazan* to be checked they were taken to an artillery range where attempts were made to explode them. The detonation failed because it was ordinary sugar, the FSB reported triumphantly. "One wonders what sort of idiot would try to explode three sacks of ordinary sugar at an artillery range," the newspaper *Versiya* commented ironically. Why, indeed, did the FSB send the sacks to the artillery range if it knew that "exercises" were being conducted in *Ryazan* and the sacks contained sugar bought at the local bazaar by *Vympel* operatives?

And then other sacks which did contain hexogene were discovered not far from *Ryazan*. There were a lot of them and there was just a hint of a connection with the GRU. In the military depot of the 137th *Ryazan* regiment of the VDV, located on the territory of a special base for training intelligence and sabotage units close to *Ryazan* hexogene was stored packed in 50-kilogram sugar sacks like those discovered on *Novosyolov* Street. In the fall of 1999 airborne assault forces private (military unit 59236) Alexei Pinyaev and his fellow soldiers from Moscow were assigned to this very regiment. While they were guarding “a storehouse with weapons and ammunition” Pinyaev and a friend went inside, most probably out of simple curiosity, and saw sacks with the word “Sugar” on them.

The two paratroopers cut a hole in one of the sacks with a bayonet and tipped some of the state’s sugar into a plastic bag. Unfortunately the tea made with the stolen sugar had a strange taste and wasn’t sweet at all. The frightened soldiers took their bag to their platoon commander. He suspected something wasn’t right, since everyone was talking about the story of the explosions, and he decided to have the “sugar” checked out by an explosives specialist. The substance proved to be hexogene. The officer reported to his superiors. Members of the FSB from Moscow and *Tula* (where an airborne assault division was stationed, just like in *Ryazan*) descended on the unit. The regimental special services were excluded from the investigation. The paratroopers who had discovered the hexogene were interrogated “for revealing a state secret.” “You guys can’t even imagine what serious business you’ve got tangled up in,” one officer told them. The press was informed that there was no soldier in the unit with the name of Pinyaev and that information about sacks containing hexogene being found in the military depot had simply been invented by Pavel Voloshin, a journalist from *Novaya gazeta* (*New Newspaper*). The matter of the explosive was successfully hushed up and Pinyaev’s commander and fellow soldiers were sent off to serve in Chechnya.

For Pinyaev himself they devised a more painful punishment. First he was forced to retract what he had said (it’s not too hard to imagine the kind of pressure the FSB could bring to bear on him!). Then the head of the Investigative Department of the FSB announced that “the soldier will be questioned in the course of the criminal proceedings initiated against him.” A female employee of TsOS FSB summed it all up: “The kid’s had it...” In March 2000 criminal proceedings were initiated against Pinyaev for the theft of army property from a military warehouse containing ammunition... the theft of a bagful of sugar! One must at least grant the FSB a sense of humor. But even so it’s hard to understand why the Investigative Department of the FSB of Russia should have been concerned with the petty theft of food products.

According to the sappers in *Ryazan*, explosive is not packed, stored or transported in 50-kilogram sacks, it’s just too dangerous. Five hundred grams of mixture is sufficient to blow up a small building. Fifty kilogram sacks disguised as sugar could only be required for acts of terrorism. Evidently this was the warehouse which provided the three sacks which were later planted under the loadbearing support of the building in *Ryazan*. The instruments of the *Ryazan* experts had not lied.

There was a sequel to the story of the 137th regiment of the VDV. In March 2000, just before the election, the paratroop regiment sued *Novaya gazeta*, the newspaper which had published the interview with Pinyaev. The writ, which dealt with “the protection of honor, dignity and business reputation” was submitted to the *Basman*sky Intermunicipal Court by the regimental command. The commander himself, Oleg Churilov, declared that the article in question had insulted the honor not only of the regiment, but of the entire Russian army, since in September 1999 there had not been

any such private in the regiment. “And it is not true that a soldier can gain entry to a warehouse where weapons and explosives are stored, because he has no right to enter it while he is on guard duty.”

And so Pinyaev did not exist, but he was still handed over for trial. The sacks contained sugar, but “a state secret had been breached.” And the 137th regiment had not taken *Novaya gazeta* to court over the article about hexogene, but because a private on guard duty has no right to enter the warehouse he is guarding and any claims to the contrary were an insult to the Russian army.

The question of the detonating devices wasn’t handled so smoothly either. Despite all of Zdanovich’s efforts to persuade people to the contrary, the device was genuine and live, as the chairman of the *Ryazan* regional *Duma*, Vladimir Fedotkin, firmly asserted in an interview with the *Interfax* news agency on September 24: “It was an absolutely genuine explosive device, nothing to do with any exercises.”

The detonating device is a very important formal point. Instructions forbid the use of a live detonating device for exercises involving civilian structures and the civilian population. The device might obviously be stolen (and somebody would have to be held responsible), or it might be triggered by children or tramps if they found it in the sack of sugar. If the detonating device was not live, then no criminal case could have been brought under article 205 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (terrorism), the case would have been based on the discovery of the explosive and turned over to the MVD, not the FSB. In the final analysis, if we are talking about an “exercise”, then the vigilance of the people of *Ryazan* was checked to see how promptly they would discover sacks containing explosive, not what they would do with a detonating device. The FSB could not have carried out such a check using a live device.

In order to find out whether this was really true, *Novaya gazeta* turned for assistance to one of its military specialists, a colonel, and asked him the questions: “Are exercises conducted using real explosive substances” and “Are there any instructions and regulations which govern this kind of activity?” Here is the colonel’s answer:

“Powerful explosive devices are not used even in exercises involving live shelling. Only blanks are used. If it is required to check the ability to locate and disarm an explosive device, a mine for instance, models are used which contain no detonator and no TNT. Exercises on the use of explosives, of course, involve the real detonation of quite powerful explosive devices (the specialists have to know how to disarm them). But... such exercises are conducted in restricted areas without any outsiders. Only trained personnel are present. There is no question of involving civilians. The whole business is strictly regulated. There are instructions covering the equipment required, instructions for clearing mines, appropriate instructions and orders. Undoubtedly these are similar for the army and the special services.”

It is difficult for the uninitiated to appreciate the significance of the innocent phrase: “the initiation of criminal proceedings under article 205.” Most importantly of all, it means that the investigation will not be conducted by the MVD, but by the FSB, since terrorist activity falls into the FSB’s area of investigative competence. The FSB has more than enough cases to deal with and it won’t take on any unnecessary ones. In order to take on a case, it has to have very cogent reasons indeed (in this case the cogent reasons were provided by the results of the analysis). The FSB investigation is supervised by the Public Prosecutor’s Office, and the search for the perpetrators is conducted by the FSB jointly with the MVD. A crime concerning which criminal proceedings have been initiated is

reported within twenty-four hours to the FSB of Russia duty officer at phone numbers (095) 224-3858 or 224-1869; or at the emergency line numbers 890-726 and 890-818; or by high-frequency phone at 52816. Every morning the duty officer submits a report on all messages received to the director of the FSB himself. If something serious is going on, such as the foiling of a terrorist attack in *Ryazan*, the duty officer is entitled to phone the director of the FSB at home, even at night. Reports in the media about the FSB and its members are also presented every day in a separate report.

Within a few days of the instigation of criminal proceedings requiring investigation by the FSB an analytical note is compiled on possible lines of action. For instance, the head of the section for combating terrorism at the *Ryazan* UFSB draws up a note for the head of the Department for Combating Terrorism of the FSB of Russia. This note is then submitted via the secretariat of the deputy director of the FSB with responsibility for monitoring the corresponding department, and from there the note goes to the director of the FSB. All of which means that Patrushev knew about the discovery in the basement of a building in *Ryazan* of sacks containing explosive and a live detonating device no later than seven o'clock on the morning of September 23. When there are explosions happening everywhere, for a subordinate not to report to the top that a terrorist attack has been thwarted would be tantamount to suicide. The foiling of a terrorist attack is an occasion for rejoicing. It means medals and promotion and bonuses. And also, of course, public recognition.

But this time the apparent cause for celebration created a tricky situation. In connection with the incident in *Ryazan* Zdanovich announced on September 24 that the FSB offered its apologies to the people of the city for the inconvenience and psychological stress they had suffered as a result of antiterrorist exercises. Note that a day earlier, in his interview with NTV, Zdanovich had not apologized, which means that on September 24 Patrushev must have sent Zdanovich the directive to write everything off to sheer stupidity in order to avoid being accused of terrorism.

“General Alexander Zdanovich today apologized to the inhabitants of *Ryazan* on behalf of the Federal Security Service of Russia for the inconvenience they had suffered in the course of antiterrorist exercises and also for the psychological stress caused to them. He emphasized that ‘the special services thank the people of *Ryazan* for the vigilance, restraint and patience they have shown’. At the same time Zdanovich called on Russians to take a tolerant view of the need to hold ‘hard-line’ checks on the preparedness, in the first instance, of the agencies of law enforcement to ensure public safety, and also on the vigilance of the public in conditions of heightened terrorist activity. The general told us that this week, as part of the *Whirlwind Anti-Terror* operation the FSB had implemented measures in several Russian cities designed to check the response of the agencies of law enforcement, including the territorial divisions of the FSB itself, and of the population to ‘modeled’ terrorist activity involving the planting of explosive devices. The representative of the special services observed that ‘serious shortcomings had been uncovered’. ‘Unfortunately in some of the cities tested there was no response at all from the agencies of law enforcement to the potential planting of bombs’. According to Zdanovich the FSB conducted its operation in conditions as close as possible to a real terrorist threat, otherwise there would have been no point to these checks. Naturally neither the local authorities nor the local law enforcement agencies were informed. Precisely for this reason the results of the check provide an accurate picture of the degree to which the security of the Russian public is guaranteed in various cities in the country. The general emphasized that the last of these cities to be checked, *Ryazan*, proved to be by no means the last in terms of the vigilance of the public, but was unfortunately less successful in terms of the actions of

the agencies of law enforcement. The FSB RF is currently analyzing the results of the checks carried out in order urgently to introduce the necessary correctives to the work of the agencies of law enforcement in ensuring the safety of the Russian public. Alexander Zdanovich assured us that once the results had been summed up and the reasons for the ‘failures’ in the operation itself explained, appropriate measures would be taken immediately.”

In this way the FSB issued an unambiguous statement that *Ryazan* was the last city in which exercises had been conducted. In actual fact September 23 marked the beginning of the urgent organization by the FSB (despite Zdanovich’s assurances) of an absolutely idiotically conceived exercise to check the vigilance of the public and the agencies of coercion. The press was full of reports of “practice bombings” which were quite impossible to distinguish from the hooligan escapades of telephone terrorists: mock-ups of bombs were planted in one crowded place after another, in post offices, in public institutions, in shops, and the following day the media reported in graphic detail how the exhausted public had failed to pay any attention to them. This was Patrushev providing himself with an alibi, attempting to prove that the *Ryazan* “exercises” had been only one episode in a series of checks organized across the whole of Russia by the idiotic FSB.

The journalists had a field day, showering colorful epithets on the dimwitted FSB operatives who hadn’t caught a single real terrorist, but kept thinking up stupid war games in a country where real terrorism was rampant. Headlines such as “FSB baseness and stupidity”, “The Federal Sabotage Service”, “Land of frightened idiots”, “Man is Pavlov’s dog to man. Let them hold these exercises in the Kremlin” or “The special services have screwed the people of *Ryazan*” hardly even stood out against the general background. But the “base and stupid” leadership of the FSB demonstrated remarkable stubbornness, carrying out more and more “practice bombings” and for some reason failed to take serious offense at the journalists’ new-found boldness -- with only one exception, which was when they wrote about *Ryazan*.

Here are a few typical “training exercises” from late September and October 1999.

In Moscow FSB operatives checking on militia readiness arrived at a militia station with a box on which the word ‘bomb’ was written. They were allowed inside, where they left their package in one of the offices and then left. The box was only discovered two days later.

A mock-up of an explosive device was planted in a pizzeria on *Volkhonka* Street in Moscow (it was not discovered).

In *Balashikha* outside Moscow an abandoned building was selected and exercises were conducted in and around it on rescuing the victims of an explosion that had supposedly already taken place in the building, with the involvement of the militia, the FSB and the MChS.

In *Tula* and *Chelyabinsk* there were repeated instances of mock bombs being planted, perhaps as an exercise, perhaps out of simple hooliganism.

In late October in *Omsk* employees of the *Omsk* Region department of the FSB for counterfeit documents drove a vehicle on to the grounds of the *Omskvodokanal* company without encountering any obstacles, broke through the company’s triple-level defenses and “exploded” containers of liquid chlorine.

In *Ivanovo* FSB operatives planted sacks containing sugar in the basement of a five-story apartment building (they were not discovered).

Also in *Ivanovo* a mock-up of an explosive device was left in a trolley. Vigilant passengers immediately spotted the box with wires and handed it over to the driver, who put it in his cabin and drove around with it all night. Afterwards he took the box to the terminus and dismantled it himself.

On another occasion in *Ivanovo* a box containing a mock-up of a bomb was left in a taxi. The driver rode around with it all day long and then threw it out on to the edge of the road, where it lay for several more hours unnoticed by passing pedestrians.

On September 22 an explosive device was discovered in the toilet at the Central Market in *Ivanovo*. The market was cordoned off and all the sales personnel and customers urgently evacuated. The military personnel who arrived at the market took an hour to work out what kind of bomb they were supposed to be dealing with. It turned out to be a mock-up. The law enforcement agencies began trying to identify who was responsible for such a professional “joke”, especially since the bomb was located in a locked toilet reserved for the use of a small number of people working at the market. The entire personnel of the *Ivanovo* militia was thrown into the search for the culprits. At the height of the operation spokesmen for the FSB of Moscow officially announced that an exercise had been conducted at the market. The mock-up had been planted by Moscow FSB operatives.

In *Toliatti* the *Volga* Automobile Plant (VAZ) was “mined.” A mock-up of an explosive device was discovered and disarmed. Also in *Toliatti* one of the hotels with about 50 people inside was “blown up.” One and a half hours was allowed for the “rescue.” The exercise involved militiamen, firemen, the MChS, the emergency ambulance service and the gas company. A practise bombing was also held at the *Chapaev* Meat Combine. The employee who found the “explosive device” took it apart and kept the timing mechanism used in the mock-up for himself.

In *Novomoskovsk* in the *Tula* Region an FSB operative disguised as a saboteur gained entry to the *Azot* Chemical Combine, wrote the word “mined” on a tank of ammonia and left without being observed. Two weeks before the exercise a spokesman for *Azot* had told a session of the regional antiterrorist commission that *Azot* did not have the capability required to guard the plant and also had no money for external security provision.

Exercises conducted in *St. Petersburg* entailed consequences. A truck with a number from another town, filled with sacks of supposed explosive, was parked in the special parking lot on *Zakharevskaya* Street in front of the premises of the investigative department of the GUVd and UFSB of *St. Petersburg* and the *Leningrad* Region. The “terrorist” vehicle stood there for days without attracting any attention, although no one had ever seen a truck in the official parking lot before. The outcome of the exercise was the sacking of the head of the GUVd of *St. Petersburg* and the *Leningrad* Region major-general of the militia Victor Vlasov (which was in fact the real reason for leaving the truck in the GUVd parking lot).

Any abortive terrorist attack or straightforward incident of banditry could now easily be written off to possible FSB exercises. In early October the residents were hastily evacuated from a nine-story house at number 4, Third *Grazhdanskaya* Street in Moscow. Someone had found four crates containing 288 mine detonators on the stone steps leading down into the basement. That was enough explosive to blow up the building.

According to the residents, two *Zhiguli* automobiles had stopped in the yard of their house and several hefty men had taken four massive iron-bound wooden crates out of the boots of the cars and left them on the basement steps before leaving again. Less than two minutes later the first militia units were already working at the scene. Another fifteen minutes later the crates were being

examined by explosives specialists from the FSB and an “exclusion zone” had been established around the building.

The militia were unable to establish who owned the cars from which the munitions had been unloaded, and they were not able to create photofit portraits of the sturdy fit-looking terrorists either. But in addition to the traditional explanation of the “Chechen connection” the militia officers conducting the investigation came up with the alternative of a test of vigilance conducted by the special services.

The work-rate of the law enforcement agencies in *Ryazan* was truly impressive during the days when Patrushev decided to hold his “exercises” there. From September 13 to September 22 the *Ryazan* special units responded to more than forty reports from local residents of sightings of explosive devices. On September 13 all the inhabitants of house number 18 on *Kostiushko* Street and the houses adjacent to it were evacuated in only twenty minutes. In only one and a half hours the building was searched from the basements to the attics. The operation involved VDV cadets, militia units, ambulance brigades, employees of the MChS and *OMON* sappers. A similar evacuation also took place from a house on *Internatsionalnaya* Street. During this period the editorial staff of the newspaper *Vechernyaya Ryazan* (*Evening Ryazan*) and the pupils of school No. 45 had to be evacuated. Every case proved to be a false alarm. Schoolchildren tossed a live *RGD-22* shell into one of the entranceways of house No. 32 on *Stankozavodskaya* Street out of sheer mischief. There was also a bomb-clearance operation in the center of the city, on Victory Square. The suspicious object there proved to be a gas cylinder half-buried in the ground. In addition to all this the “Dynamite” and “Foreigner” stages of the *Whirlwind Anti-Terror* operation were taking place in the city, with special detachments checking 3,812 city basements and 4,430 attics three times every day.

In the afternoon of September 22 *Ryazan* received a message from the Moscow FSB that according to information received in Moscow one of the houses on *Biriuzov* Street was mined, but which one was not known. In *Ryazan* they immediately began checking all the houses along the street. Thousands of people were temporarily evacuated and all the apartments were checked. Nothing was found. It was later established that it had been a false alarm from a telephone terrorist. And then at this point Patrushev decided to check the vigilance of the people of *Ryazan* during the night hours.

For a number of formal reasons the planting of the sacks in the apartment building in *Ryazan* could not have been an exercise. When a training exercise is held there has to be a previously determined plan to work to. The plan must specify the manager of the exercise, his deputy, the observers and the parties being tested (the inhabitants of *Ryazan*, the employees of the UFSB for the *Ryazan* Region, and so on). The plan must list the items which are to be checked. The plan must have a so-called “plot”, a specific scenario for the performance to be given. In the *Ryazan* incident the scenario was the planting of sacks of sugar in the basement of an apartment building. The plan must define the material requirements of the exercise: vehicles, money (for instance, to buy three 50-kilogram sacks of sugar), food (if a large number of people are taking part in the exercise), weapons, communications equipment, coding systems (code tables), etc.

After all this has been included the plan is approved by senior command and only then, on the basis of the approved plan, is a written instruction (it must be written) issued for the exercise to be held. Immediately before the start of the exercise the individual who approved the plan for the exercise and issued the order for it to be held reports that it is beginning. After the completion of the exercise

he reports that it is over. Then a compulsory report is drawn up on the results of the exercise, identifying the positive outcomes and the shortcomings, individuals who have distinguished themselves are praised and miscreants are identified. This same order lists the material resources consumed or destroyed in the course of the exercise (in the case of the *Ryazan* incident, at least three sacks of sugar and a cartridge for the detonator).

It is compulsory for the head of the local UFSB to be notified of a planned exercise. He is directly subordinate to the director of the FSB and no one has the right, for instance, to check on Sergeiev's performance without Patrushev's permission. Likewise no one has the right to check up on Sergeiev's subordinates, the employees of the *Ryazan* UFSB, without Sergeiev's permission. This means that Patrushev and Sergeiev must already have known on September 22 about any "exercises" which were due to be conducted. But Patrushev did not issue a statement to that effect until September 24, and Sergeiev has never issued one, because he knew nothing at all about the "exercises."

Under the terms of its statute the FSB is only entitled to check on itself. It is not allowed to check the performance of other organizations or of private individuals. If the FSB carries out a check on the MVD (the *Ryazan* militia, for instance), that has to be a joint exercise with the MVD, and the appropriate officials of the MVD in the center and the provinces have to be notified. If the exercise affects the civilian population (as was the case in *Ryazan*), then the civil defense service and the MChS are also involved. In all cases a joint plan of the exercise has to be drawn up and signed by the heads of all the relevant departments. The plan is approved by the individual who coordinates all the various agencies of coercion which are involved in the exercise. Exercises may be made as close as possible to real situations, such as exercises involving live shelling. However, it is absolutely forbidden to conduct exercises in which people might be hurt or which might pose a threat of damage to the environment. There is a specific prohibition on holding exercises which involve members of the armed forces and military units on active service or ships standing at battle station. If a frontier guard is on duty at his post it is forbidden to imitate a breach of the frontier in order to test his vigilance. If a facility is under guard, it is forbidden to attack that facility as part of an exercise.

Active service differs from an exercise in that during periods of duty military goals are pursued with the use of live weapons. Each branch of the forces (and the militia) has an active service charter which lays everything out in detail. On September 22-23 1999 the militia patrols on the streets of *Ryazan* were on active service, carrying weapons and special equipment which they were entitled to use to detain FSB operatives planting mysterious sacks in the basement of an apartment building. Following the series of explosions in *Ryazan* the entire militia force of the city was operating in an intensive regime in response to the real threat of terrorist attacks, which meant that unfortunate FSB operatives involved in unannounced exercises could quite simply have been shot.

That brings us to the initiation of criminal proceedings under article 205, which means that an investigator had issued a warrant for the location and arrest of the suspects and that they could have been killed in the process of arrest. The basis for the instigation of criminal proceedings is clearly defined in the Criminal Procedural Code of the Russian Federation, which does not contain any points concerning the instigation of criminal proceedings during exercises or in connection with exercises. The unfounded or illegal instigation of criminal proceedings is in itself a criminal offense, as is their illegal termination.

And finally, exercises cannot be held without observers, who objectively assess the results of an exercise and then draw up reports on its successes and failures, apportion praise and blame and draw conclusions. There were no observers in *Ryazan*.

If Patrushev were to have defied the existing regulations, charters and statutes and dared to order secret exercises, then his action would have had to be regarded as a crime. Let us start from the fact that Patrushev would have violated the Federal Law on the agencies of the Federal Security Service in the Russian Federation as adopted by the State *Duma* on February 22 1995 and ratified by the president. Article No. 8 of this law states that “the activities of the agencies of the Federal Security Service and the methods and the means they employ must not cause harm to people’s lives and health or cause damage to the environment.” Article No. 6 of the law describes the responsibilities of the FSB and the rights of private individuals at length:

“The state guarantees the observance of human and civil rights and freedoms in the performance of their duty by the agencies of the Federal Security Service. No limitation of human and civil rights and freedoms shall be permitted with the exception of those cases specified by federal constitutional laws and federal laws.

“An individual who believes that the agencies of the Federal Security Service or their officers have infringed his rights and freedoms shall be entitled to make appeal against the actions of the aforementioned agencies and their officers to a superior agency of the Federal Security Service, the Public Prosecutor’s Office or a court.

“Agencies of the state, enterprises, institutions and organizations, regardless of their form of ownership, and also public organizations and individuals shall be entitled in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation to receive an explanation and information from the agencies of the Federal Security Service in cases where their rights and freedoms have been restricted...

“In a case of the infringement of human and civil rights by employees of the agencies of the Federal Security Service the head of the respective agency of the Federal Security Service, public prosecutor or judge is obliged to take measures to restore such rights and freedoms, make good any damage caused and call the guilty parties to account as specified under the legislation of the Russian Federation.

“Officers of the agencies of the Federal Security Service who have committed an abuse of power or exceeded the bounds of their official authority shall be held responsible as specified under the legislation of the Russian Federation.”

The criminal acts described in article 6 of the Federal Law on the FSB fall under the following articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation:

Article 286. Exceeding the bounds of official authority

Acts committed by an officer which clearly exceed the bounds of his authority and have resulted in violation of the rights and legitimate interests of individuals or organizations... The same action committed by an individual occupying an official state post of the Russian Federation... with the use of force or threat of its use; with the use of a weapon or special means; resulting in grave consequences... shall be punishable by a term of imprisonment of from three to ten years and deprivation of the right to hold specified posts or engage in specified forms of activity for a period of up to three years.

Article 207. Deliberate provision of false information concerning an act of terrorism.

The deliberate provision of false information concerning a planned explosion, act of arson or other actions which constitute a threat to the lives of individuals and a danger of substantial damage to property... shall be punishable by a fine... or by imprisonment for a term of up to three years.

And finally, article 213. "Hooliganism, a gross violation of public order clearly expressive of disrespect for society... shall be punishable... by imprisonment for a term of up to two years."

An officer occupying an official state post, FSB director Patrushev, issued orders for the use of special means (sacks with unidentified contents and a shotgun cartridge) for the forcible exclusion of residents from a building in *Ryazan* for the entire night. This absolutely illegal action, which has no basis in any military or civil charters or statutes, and certainly not in any laws, entailed grave consequences in the form of damage to health and severe psychological stress suffered by individuals, specifically the serious cold contracted by one child whose mother was ordered by the militia to take him outside straight from his bath without any chance to dress him properly as well as heart attacks and hypertensive crises suffered by several of the residents.

At least two medical experts provided opinions concerning the psychological consequences of the "exercise" for the people who were driven out of their homes. In the opinion of Nikolai Kyrov, head of administration of the psychotherapeutical support service of the Moscow Public Health Committee, the residents of the building in *Ryazan* were subjected to serious psychological trauma: "It is comparable with what people would have suffered during a genuine terrorist attack. And people who have survived an explosion are changed for ever, they've been taken right up to the boundary between life and death. The mind never lets go of such significant moments. At least some time in the middle of the experiment the inhabitants of the house should have been informed that it was not a real emergency but only an exercise." Yury Boiko, Moscow's senior psychotherapist, drew an even more gloomy picture: "The result of uncertainty and fear will be a sharp increase in the consumption of nicotine, alcohol and simply food. Part of the public is already turning for help to non-professionals: people's interest in all sorts of sects, magicians and fortune-tellers is on the increase." (The penalty on this charge is from three to ten years with exclusion from holding office for three years.)

Although supposedly aware that an exercise was being conducted in *Ryazan*, Patrushev failed to inform the public and the inhabitants of the building in *Ryazan* for one and a half days, which is tantamount to deliberately providing false information concerning an act of terrorism. (We can settle for the fine on this charge -- and then, under the terms of article 213 add in two years for flagrant disrespect for society.)

Let us also note that under the terms of part IV of the Statute on the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation of July 6 1998 "the director of the FSB of Russia bears personal responsibility for the achievement of the objectives set for the FSB of Russia and the agencies of the Federal Security Service." Perhaps the General Public Prosecutor of Russia will take up the case? He has already rejected the instigation of criminal proceedings for terrorism.

An exercise could not legally have been conducted using a stolen car. According to the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation the theft of an automobile is a crime and a person who has committed such a crime bears criminal responsibility. Under the terms of the law on the FSB the service's operatives have no right to commit a crime even when in pursuit of military objectives. Only the FSB's own vehicles are used in operational exercises involving agents (including

operational passenger automobiles, of which the FSB has two full parking lots for its central administration alone). If one of these cars is stopped by the GAI, for instance for speeding on the *Moscow-Ryazan* highway, or detained by the *Ryazan* militia because paper has been pasted over the Moscow number-plate, obscuring it in a suspicious manner, the car can immediately be identified as one that is specially registered. Any militiaman will recognize this as indicating that the car is one of the operational vehicles belonging to the agencies of law enforcement or the special services.

Exercises would have been conducted using operational vehicles. But the FSB could not use operational vehicles to commit an act of terrorism. The car might be noticed (as it was) and identified (as it was). It would look really bad if terrorists blew up a building in *Ryazan* using a car registered to the FSB transport fleet, but if terrorists blew up the building using a stolen car that would only be normal and natural. On the other hand, if FSB operatives driving in a stolen car by day (not by night) were stopped for a routine check or for speeding, they would simply present their official identity cards or “cover documents” and after that no militiaman would bother to check the documents for the car, so he would never know it was wanted by the militia.

FSB agents on operational duty often carry a MUR identity card printed in the special FSB laboratory as a “cover document.” On the occasion of his arrest Khinshtein, a *Moscow Komsomolets* journalist famed for his remarkable and far from accidental knowledge concerning cases residing in the safes of the special services presented MUR identity card No. 03726 of a certain Alexander Yevgenievich Matveiev, a captain in the criminal investigation department, issued by the Moscow GUVd. In addition Khinshtein was carrying a special pass forbidding the militia to search his car. When the militia asked him where the documents came from, he replied honestly that they belonged to him and were his “cover documents.”

If official identity cards of that kind were found on someone like Khinshtein, one can imagine what an array of “cover documents” was carried by the FSB operatives setting out to blow up the building in *Ryazan*. And if the car’s document were checked and it was discovered to be stolen, they could always say they’d just found it and were returning it to its owner.

The car in which the terrorists arrived was the only clue left after the attempt to blow up the apartment building, the beginning of the only trail that might lead back to the perpetrators. The car is the weakest link in the planning and implementation of any act of terrorism. It was only possible to blow up the building in *Ryazan* if a stolen car was used.

In conclusion we would like to quote the opinion expressed by former Public Prosecutor General of Russia Yu.I. Skuratov in an interview with the Russian-language Paris newspaper *Russkaya mysl* (*Russian Thought*) for October 29 1999: “I was very much disturbed and alarmed by what happened in *Ryazan*. In this case it certainly is possible to construct a scenario with the special services themselves involved in planning an explosion in *Ryazan* and making very clumsy excuses when they were caught out. I am amazed that the public prosecutor’s office never did get to the bottom of the business. That’s its job.”

And so we are left with no indication that an exercise was being carried out in *Ryazan* except the oral statements of FSB chief Patrushev, his subordinate Zdanovich, who is bound in the line of duty to support everything Patrushev says, and several other FSB officers. All the facts, however, indicate that a terrorist attack was indeed thwarted in *Ryazan*. Those who commissioned, planned, carried out and abetted this crime have yet to be tried and convicted. But since we know the

suspects' names, positions, work and home addresses, even their telephone numbers, arresting them should not be too difficult.

Chapter 6

The FSB resorts to mass terror: *Buinaksk, Moscow, Volgodonsk*

The perpetrators of the terrorist attacks in *Buinaksk*, Moscow and *Volgodonsk* were never found, and we can only guess at who was behind the attacks by analogy with the events in *Ryazan*. In these three towns the *Ryazan*-style “exercises” were carried through to their intended conclusion, and the lives of several hundred people were abruptly cut short or totally ruined.

In August 1999 all the members of Lazovsky’s group were at large in society, including even Vorobyov. At that time yet another military operation was just approaching its conclusion in *Dagestan*, into which the Chechen separatists had made an incursion. A lot has been said and written since that time about this Chechen encroachment into *Dagestan* territory. It has been claimed that the invasion was planned in the Kremlin and deliberately provoked by the Russian special services. The Russian media were full of articles about a conspiratorial meeting in France between Shamil Basaev and the head of the president’s office Alexander Voloshin, organized by the Russian intelligence agent A. Surikov in France. We are not in possession of enough facts to draw absolutely definite conclusions. The logical conclusion, however, is that no such meeting took place and someone deliberately misinformed the Russian media.

Since the Russian government’s position on the Chechen incursion into *Dagestan* is well known, we present here the opinion of the Chechen side, specifically that of Ilyas Akhmadov, the Chechen minister of foreign affairs in the government of Aslan Maskhadov:

“The leadership of Chechnya has condemned the *Dagestan* campaign. For us this is really a big problem. But remember what happened in July when the Russian army destroyed our fortified position and then an entire battalion of Russian soldiers invaded our territory. Surely that is provocation? Pilgrims from *Dagestan* came to Basaev and asked him to free them from ‘the Russian yoke’, then when he began the campaign, they began saying on television that they didn’t want it and they wanted to live in Russia. It’s an obvious set-up.”

According to Abdurashid Saidov, founder and former chairman of the Islamic Democratic Party of *Dagestan*, from 1997 onwards, following the adoption by the *Dagestan* Parliament of its famous law “On the struggle against Islamic fundamentalism”, members of the religious minority (the *Vahhabites*) were deliberately forced out of *Dagestan* into Chechnya. Persecution and threats of physical violence simply made it impossible for *Vahhabites* to live in *Dagestan*. At the same time the *Dagestan* leadership was well aware that the *Vahhabites* would be greeted with open arms in Chechnya. Once forced out of *Dagestan* into Chechnya the *Dagestan* Islamists joined the opposition and were prepared in time to return to *Dagestan* in the new capacity of rulers of the state. Rumors of a forthcoming invasion from Chechnya had circulated in *Dagestan* in 1997 and 1998, at a time when Russia had left the borders with Chechnya in the *Tsumadin*, *Botlikha* and *Kazbek* districts of *Dagestan* exposed. Active members of the radical *Dagestan* opposition moved freely between the territories of the two republics, but there was no reaction from the FSB, which at that time was headed by Putin. It is possible that the retinue of the leader of the *Dagestan* Islamist radicals, Bagaudin, who had sought refuge from pursuit in Chechnya, included provocateurs operating on the orders of certain Russian departments of coercion, and they were the ones who when the right moment came pushed Bagaudin, and through him Basaev and Khattab, into the invasion of *Dagestan*.

From May to June 1999 every market trader in *Grozny* already knew that an invasion of *Dagestan* was inevitable. For some reason only the Russian special services knew nothing about it. From July there were several hundred armed *Dagestan Vahhabites* in the *Dagestan* village of *Echeda* in Russia, where they had dug themselves in and reinforced their positions in the inaccessible ravines on the Russian border with Chechnya and Georgia. Long before the arrival in the *Tsumadin* Region of the *Islamist* rebels the area was bristling with weapons. In late July, at the height of a fuel crisis in the region, heavy tankers delivered fuel tonnes at a time to the guerrilla camps in the hills above the very windows of the UVD and UFSB of the *Tsumada* district. The FSB failed to react because the prospective armed conflict between the Chechens and the Dagestanis would be to the Kremlin's advantage.

At the same time Bagaudin was receiving encouraging reports from his agents: "There's no one in *Tsumada* apart from militiamen, and they won't go against their own. We'll be in the regional center in no time at all. This is your home region, the people are waiting for you, support is guaranteed, so push on!" And Bagaudin fell into the trap. On the eve of the invasion Basaev actually suggested joint operations with Bagaudin, but the offer of help was refused, so that Basaev and Khattabi were forced to act separately, advancing in the direction of *Botlikha*, which was most opportune for the Russian leadership, indeed perfectly timed for the organizers of Putin's election campaign. At this precise point in time Russia was hit by an unprecedented series of terrorist attacks.

The motivation behind the September attacks was provided by the FSB itself. An official information release from the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow region formulated the goals of the terrorists who blew up apartment houses in Moscow in September 1999 as follows: "One of the main explanations under consideration by the investigators was the perpetration of a terrorist attack intended to destabilize the situation in Moscow, intimidate the public and influence the authorities into taking certain decisions which are in the interests of the organizers of the attack." The very same idea was formulated in the language of satirical polemic by the newspaper *Vechernyaya Moskva* (*Evening Moscow*): "The terrorists' main aim is to create a heinously oppressive atmosphere in society. To make me turn coward so that I slap my neighbor from the Caucasus across the face and he pulls out his dagger and then it all starts... So that the party of idiots can emerge from underground and the mass arrests can start -- only don't ask what party this is and where this underground is located."

It's clear enough which kind of "particular decisions" the authorities could be influenced into taking by the bombings, and which kind they could not. The explosions could easily result in a decision to introduce troops into Chechnya. But there was absolutely no way terrorist attacks could produce the decision the Chechens wanted on granting Chechnya formal independence (by this time it had already achieved informal independence). In other words, the bombings were needed by the Russian special services in order to start a war with Chechnya, but not by the insurgents in Chechnya to encourage the legal recognition of their independent republic. Future events confirmed that this was indeed the case: the war began, the special services came to power in Russia and Chechen independence came to an end. And all as a result of the terrorist attacks carried out in September.

On August 31 a trial bombing took place in the *Okhotnyi Ryad* (*Hunters' Row*) shopping center on *Manege* Square in the center of Moscow. One person was killed and forty were injured. The government immediately put forward the "Chechen connection" as an explanation, although it was hard to imagine that the Chechen terrorists would attack a shopping complex where the director was

the well-known Chechen Umar Djabrailov. The person later arrested for planning and carrying out the terrorist attack was “a certain Ryzhenkov”, who according to the FSB “impersonated an FSB general.” In fact however, as early as 1996 Nikolai Vasilievich Zelenko, head of military intelligence in general Rokhlin’s 8th Army Corps, had reported to the FSB that FSB general Ryzhenkov was “definitely working” for terrorists.

Military intelligence engages in operational activity, both inside and outside Russia, and it has its own staff of secret agents. The 8th Army Corps was stationed at *Volgograd*, had fought in Chechnya and was especially active in recruiting agents among the Chechens. Shamil Basaev underwent training at the GRU firing range in *Volgograd* before the conflict between Georgia and *Abkhazia*, and it was military intelligence that trained him. If Zelenkov had learned something about who was behind the bombing at the *Okhotnyi ryad* shopping complex and about Ryzhenkov, he certainly must have reported it to general Rokhlin, who was chairman of the Defense Committee of the State *Duma*. At the time, however, Ryzhenkov was not detained. On the contrary, it was Zelenko who was arrested.

Zelenko had served almost all of his time in the army in the Caucasus. He’d been in all the hot spots: *Karabakh*, *Baku*, *Tbilisi*, *Abkhazia*, *Dagestan* and Chechnya. He only missed out on *Grozny* itself because he had been seriously wounded. FSB employees turned up to see Zelenko twenty days after he’d had a heart operation at the *Burdenko* Hospital in Moscow. They accused him of possessing an unregistered pistol and planning to kill a certain businessman, and they took him as far away from Moscow as possible, to the prison in *Chelyabinsk*.

So what was Zelenko arrested for? Rokhlin was on good terms with the head of the FSB’s military intelligence at the time, Vladimir Ivanovich Petrishchev, and would have been obliged to report to him any information received from Zelenko. That was when strange things started to happen: first Zelenko was arrested, and then on July 3 1998 general Rokhlin was murdered.

The FSB itself effectively confirmed that the arrest of Zelenko, the murder of Rokhlin and the terrorist attacks in Russia were all interconnected. All of the cases were handled by the same investigator from the office of the Public Prosecutor General, N.P. Indiukov, who had a great deal of experience in the investigation of fitted-up cases in which it was important to make sure the investigation was directed along a false trail. Indiukov was appointed to conduct the investigation into the case of Tamara Pavlovna Rokhlina, who was accused of murdering her husband. The various stages of this great masterpiece of Russian jurisprudence are well known. Tamara Rokhlina was arrested after the general’s murder and in November 2000 she was sentenced to eight years’ imprisonment. In December the length of her sentence was halved. On June 7 2001 the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation quashed Rokhlina’s conviction and on June 8 she was released from custody. Indiukov made no attempt whatever to investigate claims that the general had been killed by three unknown men wearing masks.

However, the most remarkable thing in all of this is that Zelenko’s case, following his arrest on completely unrelated charges of common criminal activity, was also investigated by Indiukov, and that the case never even reached the courts. Zelenko was quietly released without any publicity following general Rokhlin’s death.

These strange killings, dubious investigations and deliberately provoked incursions into foreign territory provided the background to the blowing-up of a residential building in the cantonment of *Buinaksk* in *Dagestan*. Sixty-four of the building’s residents were killed. This terrorist attack was

deliberately linked with the defeat of the Chechen rebel detachments in *Dagestan*, even though there were no Chechens among the perpetrators of the attack and those accused of planning the bombing claimed that they were innocent. On the same day a *ZIL-130* automobile loaded with 2,706 kilograms of explosive was found in *Buinaksk*. The car was in a parking lot in a region containing residential buildings and a military hospital. An explosion was only averted thanks to the vigilance of local people. In other words, a second terrorist bombing in *Buinaksk* was foiled by members of the public, not the special services.

During the night of September 8-9 the nine-story apartment house at number 19 *Guryanov* Street in Moscow was torn apart by an explosion. The blast killed 94 people and injured 164 more. The first account put forward was an explosion due to a gas leak. But the following day the UFSB for Moscow and the Moscow Region announced that “the collapse of the third and fourth entranceways was induced by the detonation of about 350 kilograms of a high-explosive mixture. The explosive device was located at ground-floor level. Physical and chemical investigation of items removed from the site of the occurrence revealed traces... of hexogene and TNT on their surfaces.”

It was apparent immediately after the first bombing of an apartment block that the attack was the work of professionals, not so much from the actual implementation of the terrorist attack itself as from its planning and preparation. A massive terrorist bombing which involves the use of hundreds of kilograms of explosive, several vehicles and a number of people is hard to put together in a hurry. Many former and serving members of the special services including a former GRU employee, retired colonel Robert Bykov, believe that the terrorists must have shipped the explosives into Moscow in several batches over a period of four to six months. Modeling of terrorist attacks has shown that it would have been impossible to prepare for an explosion of this type any quicker. The model was constructed to take account of all the stages of the operation: finalization of the contract, making initial calculations based on the plan of the building, visiting the site, adjusting the initial calculations, determining the optimal composition of the explosive, ordering its manufacture, making final calculations adjusted according to the actual composition of the explosive, renting premises, shipping in the explosive, etc. This meant that the preparations would have had to begin in the spring of 1999. During that period the Chechens could not have been preparing terrorist attacks in response to the counter-offensive by Russian forces in *Dagestan*, since the Chechens had not yet made their own incursion into *Dagestan* territory.

Rumors about imminent terrorist attacks had been circulating long before the first explosions occurred. On July 2 1999 the journalist Alexander Zhilin obtained possession of a certain document dated June 29 1999. He believed that it originated from the Kremlin and that the leak had been arranged by Sergei Zverev, deputy head of the president's office, which was why he was removed from his post.

The contents of the document were baffling, but even so Zhilin passed it on to Sergei Yastrzhembsky, vice-premier in the government of Moscow. Yastrzhembsky, however, failed to react to it (some time later Yastrzhembsky left Luzhkov's administration, which is hardly surprising; however, he was then taken on by Putin, which really is surprising). If the document had been published after the explosions, everyone would have believed it was a fake produced after the fact. But the newspaper *Moskovskaya pravda* went ahead with the publication of the document under the headline *Storm in Moscow (Burya v Moskve)* on July 22, before the explosions had occurred:

“Confidential

Certain information concerning plans with regard to Yu. M. Luzhkov and the situation in Moscow.

The following information has been received from reliable sources. One of the analytical groups working for the president's office has developed a plan for discrediting Luzhkov by means of acts of sabotage intended to destabilize the public mood in Moscow. The plan is known by the planners as 'Storm in Moscow'.

According to our sources the city can expect serious upheavals. For instance, it is planned to carry out sensational terrorist attacks (or attempted terrorist attacks) against a number of state institutions: buildings of the FSB and MVD, the Council of the Federation, the Moscow Municipal Court, the Moscow Arbitration Court and a number of buildings. The abduction of well-known people and ordinary citizens by 'Chechen guerrillas' is envisaged.

A separate chapter is devoted to 'armed criminal' activities directed against commercial organizations and businessmen who support Luzhkov. The order has been given to dig up and also manufacture 'operational' material on Kobzon, Gusinsky and the Most-Media group, Djabrailov, Luchansky, Tarpishchev, Tarantsev, Ordjonikidze, Baturina (Luzhkov's wife), Gromov, Yevtushenkov, P. Gusev and others. In particular, incidents in the close vicinity of Kobzon's office and [the company] 'Russian Gold' have supposedly gone off according to the plan in question. The purpose is to create the firm conviction that the businesses of those who support Luzhkov will be destroyed and that the safety of his confederates themselves is not guaranteed.

"A separate program has been developed in order to set the organized criminal groups active in Moscow against each other and provoke war between them, which the authors of the report believe will, on the one hand, create an intolerable crime wave in the capital and, on the other hand, provide a screen for the planned terrorist attacks against state institutions in the form of a settling of accounts between criminals and general chaos.

"These 'measures' pursue several goals: creating an atmosphere of fear in Moscow and the illusion of entirely unfettered criminal activity; initiating the process of removing the present head of the UVD of Moscow from his post; instilling in Muscovites the conviction that Luzhkov has lost control of the situation in the city.

"In addition, according to information from our sources, while all of this is going on the press will be swamped with information about who in the government of Moscow has links with the mafia and organized crime. The particular individual represented as the major controller for organized criminal groups will be Mr. Ordjonikidze, who will be linked in the press, amongst others, with Chechen criminals 'who have been granted use of the Kiev railway station, the Radisson-Slavyanskaya Hotel, the shopping complex on Manezhnaya Square', etc. Material will be placed in the 'red' and 'patriotic' press about the domination of Moscow by peoples from the Caucasus, about their wild excesses in the capital and the damage done to the security and material welfare of Muscovites. The statistics on this are already being put together in the MVD. In addition, the same channel will be exploited for materials already fabricated concerning 'Luzhkov's links with international Zionist and sectarian organizations'."

Several days before the explosions took place State Duma deputy Konstantin Borovoi had a meeting with a GRU officer who gave him a list of the names of participants in a terrorist attack. Borovoi immediately passed on the list to the FSB, but his warning met with absolutely no response. Borovoi believes that he was not the only channel through which the special services received warnings about an imminent terrorist attacks, but no measures were taken to prevent them.

It would be possible to dismiss Borovoi's opinion if it only it did not coincide with the opinion of one of the most famous Russian specialists in sabotage and terrorist activity, retired colonel and former GRU officer Ilya Starinov. He declared that it was simply impossible for his department not to have known about the planned explosions. This fatal disregard by the FSB of warnings of imminent terrorist attacks can only be explained by the fact that the FSB itself was planning the attacks.

One of the organizers of the explosions in Moscow was FSB major Vladimir Kondratiev. On March 11 2000 he sent a letter of penitential confession entitled "I bombed Moscow!" via the internet to the electronic publication *Federal Investigations Agency (FLB -- "Free Lance Bureau")*. It should emphasized at this point that, as patriotic citizens should, the employees of the *FLB* site immediately informed the FSB about the letter and its contents were reported to Patrushev. Two computer specialists from the FSB promptly arrived, downloaded the letter and promised to get to the bottom of the whole business. No one ever saw them again. Here is an extract from that letter:

"Yes, I was the one who blew up the house on *Guryanov* Street in Moscow. I am not a Chechen or an Arab or a Dagestani, I am a genuine Russian, Vladimir Kondratiev, a major in the FSB, a member of the top secret Department *K-20*. Our department was set up immediately after the signing of the *Khasaviurt* Accords. We were set the task of planning and carrying out operations to discredit the Chechen Republic so that it would not receive international recognition. For this purpose we were granted very extensive powers and access to virtually unlimited financial and technical resources.

"One of the first operations we planned and carried out successfully was called *Kovpak*. It essentially consisted in our travelling round all of Russia's [penal] colonies and recruiting criminals (preference was given to individuals from the Caucasian nationalities) assembling them into groups, giving them weapons and money and then transporting them to Chechnya and setting them free with a single specific goal, to abduct people, in particular foreigners. And it should be said that our pupils handled it very well.

"Maskhadov and his people were travelling all round the world, trying in vain to obtain foreign support, and at the same time foreigners were disappearing in their republic. The most effective points of this operation were the abduction and murder of British and Dutch engineers, carried out on our orders.

"In June last year our section was set a new task, provoking general hatred in Russia for Chechnya and the Chechens. We worked up some ideas through the effective use of brainstorming. One of our brainstorming sessions produced several ideas, including distributing leaflets with threats from the Chechens throughout the country, murdering the country's favorite singer Alla Pugachova, blowing up apartment buildings and then throwing all the blame on to the Chechens. All of these suggestions were reported to the leadership of the FSB, which selected the final one as the most effective and gave the 'go-ahead' for its implementation.

"We planned bombings in Moscow, *Volgodonsk*, *Ryazan*, *Samara* as well as in *Dagestan* and *Ingushetia*. Specific buildings were picked, the explosive was selected and the amount calculated. The operation was given the code name 'Hiroshima'. I was made directly responsible for its implementation, since I was the only explosives expert in our section and I also had quite a lot of experience. Although in my heart I did not agree with the idea of blowing up apartment blocks, I could not refuse to carry out the order, because ever since our section was set up every member of it

has been put in a situation which means he has had to obey any order. Otherwise he was simply silenced for all eternity. So I carried out the order!

“The day after the bombing I went to the site of the operation intending to assess its implementation and analyze the results. I was shaken by what I saw there. I have already mentioned that I had blown up buildings before, but they were not people’s houses, and they were not in Russia. But here I’d blown up a Russian house and killed Russian people and the Russian woman weeping over Russian corpses were cursing the one who’d done this in my own native language. And standing beside them I could physically feel the curses enveloping me, sinking into my head and my chest, filling my body, infusing every cell. And I realized that I WAS CURSED!

“Going back to the section, instead of reporting on the implementation of the operation I wrote out a statement requesting to be transferred to another section on grounds of mental and physical exhaustion. In view of the state I was in, I was temporarily suspended from all operations and the second bombing, which was planned for Monday, was entrusted to my partner. To make sure I couldn’t do anything to prevent it, they decided quite simply to eliminate me.

“On Saturday, in order to be alone and think over what I should do and gather my thoughts, I went out of town to my dacha. On the way I felt the brakes fail in my car, which I had always taken good care of and which had never let me down.

“I realized they had decided to get rid of me in the classic way used in my department, and I did exactly what we’d been taught to do in such situations and drove the car into water, since there happened to be a small river on my route, and that very day I used operational channels to get out of Russia.

“Now I live thousands of kilometers away from my homeland. My documents are in order -- I am now a citizen of this small country. I have a non-Russian name and no one here has any idea who I really am. I know that the FSB is capable of anything, but I hope my colleagues will not find me here.

“I my new country I have set up a small business, I have money and now I can live here in peace for the rest of my days. So why am I writing all of this to you and risking exposure? (Even though I have taken precautions by having the letter sent from a third country by a third party.)

“... I have already mentioned Samara as one of the towns planned for a bombing. The victims there were to have been the residents of a house on *Novovokzalnaya* Street. Although I think it is possible that after the failed attempt to blow up the building in *Ryazan* our section might have

completely given up operations like this, even so I consider it my duty to warn you about it.”

Following the publication of Kondratiev’s letter in the internet, the Association of *Alpha* Veterans issued a denial just a few days before the presidential elections, stating among other claims that there was no section *K-20* in the special services. It is therefore worth our while to take a moment to trace the history of Department *K*’s creation.

Back in 1996 an Anti-Terrorist Center (ATTs) was established in the FSB on the basis of the Department for Combating Terrorism. The ATTs included an operations department (OU), which built up information on terrorists and tracked them down and a Department for the Defense of the Constitutional Order (Department K), the former Fifth Department of the KGB, which built up information on political and religious groups, organizations and dissidents. Later the ATTs was

transformed (or rather simply renamed) into the Department for Combating Terrorism and the Department of Constitutional Security (Department K). On August 28 1999, before the September wave of bombings began, it went through yet another transformation, becoming the Department for the Protection of Constitutional Order and Combating Terrorism.

These numerous reorganizations should not be regarded as simple coincidence. In restructuring various “departments” and “offices” the FSB was simply attempting in the most primitive manner to cover its tracks. In the face of such frequent transformations it seemed absolutely impossible for any outsider to figure out who was in charge of what, who gave the orders and who was subordinate to whom. These complicated and confusing titles so similar to each other were created quite deliberately. All this also served to throw journalists off the scent.. In reality everybody stayed in his own job and to this day officers of the state security service sit in their offices on the seventh and ninth floors of the building at number 1 *Bolshaya Lubyanka* Street, just as Sudoplatov sat there in Stalin’s time. Nothing has changed.

The head of the new Department was vice-admiral Herman Alexeievich Ugriumov, who died in his office in *Khankala* in Chechnya on May 31 2001. Immediately after his death information began to circulate that Ugriumov had committed suicide. It was reported that a man dressed in civilian clothes had entered Ugriumov’s office at 1 p.m. and left half an hour later. The vice-admiral supposedly shot himself 15 to 20 minutes after that.

If former members of the Fifth Department of the KGB were entrusted with the task of combating terrorism and defending the constitutional order of democratic Russia, we may be sure that the only business conducted by Department K was organizing terrorist attacks and opposing democracy. As Sobchak (the mayor of *St. Petersburg*) said, these were people for whom the words “legality” and “democracy” simply had no meaning. “Nothing exists for them except orders and for them laws and rights are a mere hindrance.” Does this mean that apart from the secret section *K-20* mentioned by major Kondratiev, there were at least another 19 special groups?

Remarkably enough, even state security agents believed the terrorist attacks were the work of the FSB. Erik Kotlyar, a journalist at the newspaper *Moskovskaya pravda* described one particular instance in an article of February 10 2000: “Last fall I happened to have a meeting with a member of a super-secret service... And this is what he told me: ‘That evening I got back late. There was no one at home. My wife, daughter and mother-in-law were at the dacha. I’d just cracked some eggs into the frying-pan, when there was a deafening explosion outside the window. Lumps of glass came flying straight into the room together with clouds of fumes and dust! I dashed out onto the landing, my neighbours were out there in a panic. For some reason they were trying to call the lift. I shouted at them: ‘Go down the stairs, the lift might fall... I dashed out on to the street, and there was almost nothing left of the middle section of the house opposite!.. The next day I got answers to a few questions and made a firm decision: I’m taking my family out of Russia, it’s dangerous to live here and I’ve only got one daughter!’ ‘But it was the Chechens who planted the bombs in Moscow...’ ‘The Chechens had nothing to do with it,’ he said gesturing his hand angrily.” Kotlyar drew the conclusion that his acquaintance knew something.

On September 10 the governor of the *Altai* Territory Alexander Surikov announced that “the explosions in Moscow were due to echoes from *Dagestan*” but that the people who were interested in terrorist attacks were in Russia and in Moscow. Surikov proposed holding an extraordinary

session of the Council of the Federation (SF) to discuss the declaration of a state of emergency in the country.

During the night of September 12-13 the newspaper *Moskovsky komsomolets* set up for printing an article entitled “The secret account of a bombing.” It attempted to analyze what had happened.

“Chechen guerrillas took no direct part in the preparations for the terrorist attack. To judge from the general picture of the explosion the bomb was planted by specialists who had been trained in Russian secret service departments. It also happens that all the previous terrorist attacks with trails generally supposed to lead back to Chechnya were carried out according to exactly the same scenario: a car bomb exploding close to a building. The car is usually parked in front of the intended target only a few hours in advance. The detonator is equipped with a timing mechanism. Even if the car bomb is discovered explosives experts have only a matter of minutes to disarm it (as they did last Sunday outside the military hospital in *Buinaksk*)... This love of car bombs is very easy to explain. Explosives are very expensive nowadays, and terrorists pay for every kilogram of TNT or any other substance in cash. And planting the bomb at the target even one day before the deadline is fraught with the danger of failure, the risk of the bomb being discovered is too great... However, the general picture of the explosion on *Guryanov* Street suggests that it was planned by people who are not used to economizing, i.e. members of the special services... Experts have determined that the main charge in the house on *Guryanov* Street was planted in the rented premises of a shop on the ground floor. And moreover, the explosive was there a long time before the explosion took place. The criminals were evidently wasting no time on trifles, and if the explosive were discovered the attack would simply have been transferred to another district of the capital. This tactic is similar to the use of the secret addresses so beloved of special services the whole world over. When one of them is exposed the operation simply takes place in a different area. During the days of the USSR specialists capable of carrying out such a terrorist attack served in both the KGB and the Second Central Department of the General Staff (better known as the GRU).”

In other words *Moskovsky komsomolets* was hinting, ever so gently, that the FSB was behind the bombings.

On September 12 the Moscow militia received a phone call from the inhabitants of house number 6/3 on the *Kashirskoe Chaussee* (*Shosse*): “Something’s not right in our basement,” the concerned members of the public reported. A squad of militiamen arrived. At the entrance to the basement they were met by a person they took to be an employee of the district housing management office (*REU*) who told them everything was in order in the basement and “our people” were in there. The militiamen lingered at the door to the basement for a while without going in and then went away again.

Early next morning, just as the edition of *Moskovsky komsomolets* with the article “The secret account of a bombing” was being delivered to Moscow’s news kiosks, the eight-story building at number 6/3 *Kashirskoe Chaussee* was blown into the air, the same building where the polite “*REU* employee” had spoken with the militiamen outside the entrance. He had been right, everything in the basement was in order -- for a terrorist bombing.

A few days later *Moskovsky komsomolets* attempted to track down the resourceful “*REU* employee”: “I had a meeting with the housing managers of the *Kashirskoe Chaussee* district,” the newspaper’s correspondent related. “As yet we are unable to work out which *REU* employee had covered for the man who sub-leased the premises in the basement of house number 6 ‘on the sly’.

No one admits to it. It's either an engineer or foreman or a district manager." Neither the "REU employee" nor those who sub-let the basement were ever found.

By 2 p.m. on September 13 the rubble of the house which was bombed on the *Kashirskoe Chaussee* had yielded up 119 dead bodies and 13 fragments of bodies. The dead included 12 children. The experts quickly established that the two Moscow explosions were absolute identical in nature, and the composition of the explosive was the same in both cases. A thoroughgoing check of buildings, attics and basements was launched. At one address, number 16/2 on *Borisovskie Prudy* Street a cache of explosive was discovered. Together with the hexogene mixture and eight kilograms of plastic explosive which was used as a detonator, they also found six electronic timers made from *Casio* wrist watches. Five of them were already programmed for specific times. All the terrorists had to do was take the timers to their sites and attach them to the detonators. One of the mined houses was on *Krasnodorskaya* Street. The last house they were planning to destroy was the one on *Borisovskie Prudy* Street, at five minutes past four in the morning of September 21.

The information about the explosive discovered after the terrorist attacks and the quantity discovered was not consistent. In Moscow they found 13 tonnes of explosive. There were three or four tonnes in the house on *Borisovskie Prudy* Street, even more at a cache in the district of *Liublino* and four tonnes in a car shelter in *Kapotnya*. Some time later it was discovered that six tonnes of heptyl (a rocket fuel of which hexogene is one of the components) had been taken from the *Nevinnomyssk* Chemical Combine in the *Stavropol* Territory. Six tonnes of heptyl could have been used to produce 10 tonnes of explosive. But there's no way to process six tonnes of heptyl into 10 tonnes of explosive in a kitchen, a garage or an underground laboratory. The heptyl was evidently processed at an army depot. Then the sacks had to be loaded into a vehicle and driven out under the eyes of the guards, with some kind of documents being presented. So transporting the material required drivers and trucks. Overall, an entire group of people must have been involved in the operation, and if that's the case, information must have been received through the FSB's secret agents and the agents of military counter-intelligence.

The explosive was packed in sugar sacks bearing the words "Cherkessk Sugar Plant," but no such plant exists. If "sugar" had been carried throughout the whole of Russia in sacks like that, especially with counterfeit documentation, the chances of discovery would have been too great. It would have been simpler to draw up documentation for the "sugar" from a plant that actually exists. Several conclusions can immediately be drawn from this fact, for instance that the terrorists wanted to point the investigation in the direction of the Republic of *Karachaevo-Cherkessia*, since it was obvious that sooner or later at least one sack from the "Cherkessk Sugar Plant" would fall into the hands of the investigators; also that the terrorists were not afraid of transporting sacks with a false name and documents into Moscow, since they were clearly quite certain both they themselves and their goods were safe.

It would have been hard to finance the terrorist attacks without leaving any tracks. The intelligence services must have heard something at least about a large sale of heptyl or hexogene from the depots, since no one would have given terrorists explosive for free. The going rate for explosive, for instance TNT, could be as high as 1,000 dollars for a kilogram, which means that officials and military officers who sold raw materials or hexogene must have received large sums of money. There was no way that both the FSB and the GRU could not have known about that. Wherever there's big money, there's always someone providing protection, a "roof." Only the agencies of state security or military officers could have got hexogene from a factory or a store without paying for it.

Meanwhile the checks on housing in the capital continued. In a single day the Moscow militia checked 26,561 apartments. Special attention was paid to non-residential premises on the ground floors of buildings, basements and semi-basements, in other words to places that are often used for storage. The number of such premises checked was 7,908. Public buildings were also checked: 180 hotels, 415 hostels, 548 places of entertainment (casinos, bars, cafes). The work was conducted under the pretext of a search for those suspected of involvement in the terrorist attacks in Moscow. Taking part in the checks were 14,500 employees of the GUV D and 9,500 members of the interior ministry's armed forces, including a separate operational division (the former *F. E. Dzershinsky* Division). Employees of the MVD and GUV D worked twelve hours a day with no days off.

Premises in which the terrorists had planted bombs were identified. According to the official version of the investigation (which may have absolutely nothing in common with the truth) they had been rented by Achimez (Mukhit) Shagabanovich Gochiyaev (Laipanov). The genuine Laipanov was a native of the Republic of *Karachaevo-Cherkessia* who had been killed in a road accident in the *Krasnodar* Territory in 1999. The dead Laipanov's documents become "cover documents" for the real terrorist. A former GRU employee who spent all his life building up a network of secret agents abroad commented: "This kind of practise is the usual approach employed to legalizing agents in all the special services in the world. It's a classic, described in all the textbooks. It's as though the dead man is granted a second life."

As early as July 1999 Gochiyaev-Laipanov had inquired at one of the Moscow renting agencies on *Begovaya* Street and received information about 41 premises. After the first explosion 38 of the premises were checked by investigators to see if they contained explosive.

"Laipanov's" young partner was also identified. The FSB claimed that he was Denis Saitakov, a 21-year old forced emigrant from Uzbekistan and former novice at the *Yoldyz Madrasah* (Islamic Seminary) in *Naberezhnye Chelny* in *Tatarstan* who had a Russian mother and a Bashkiri father. The FSB believed that during the preparations for the terrorist attack he and "Laipanov" rented a room in the Altai Hotel and rang round firms that rent out trucks. But although on the second day after the attack the KGB of *Tatarstan*, at Moscow's insistent request, began looking for Saitakov, no one in the KGB of *Tatarstan* was convinced that Saitakov was involved in the bombings. In any case deputy chairman of the KGB of *Tatarstan* Ilgiz Minullin emphasized that "no one can declare Saitakov a terrorist until his guilt has been proved... At the present time the agencies of state security are not in possession of any facts which indicate the involvement in terrorist attacks in Moscow... of students of the *Yoldyz Madrasah*. The KGB of *Naberezhnye Chelny* also issued a statement indicating that accusations against inhabitants of *Tatarstan* of complicity with terrorists were groundless and that the *Tatarstan* KGB had no information indicating the involvement of residents of the republic in the bombings.

The terrorists who set up the September explosions followed the line of least resistance. First they used their "cover documents" to rent several basement and semi-basement premises, including the ones on *Guryanov* Street and the *Kashirskoye Chaussee*. Then they moved in the explosive, stacking sacks of sugar and tea and packages of plumbing supplies around the crates of hexogene (at least that's the way they did it on *Guryanov* Street). The targets for sabotage were ideally selected. The chances of encountering the militia in front of buildings in the unfashionable dormitory districts are not usually very high, and usually there are no caretakers in the entranceways. Starinov announced that "the location of these buildings and the environment around them met the two conditions most essential for terrorist bombers -- vulnerability and accessibility."

The terrorists planted the right amount of explosive required for the total demolition of their targets. The saboteur Starinov believed that the bombings could have been carried out by three men. The terrorists seemed to have been well trained, not just in sabotage, but also in intelligence work: they knew how to avoid surveillance and live under assumed identities. Even a year's course at the very best special training center is not long enough to learn all of this. And so it seemed that Muscovites had fallen victim to professional terrorists. And the only professional terrorists working in Russia were in the structures of the FSB and GRU.

Petra Prohazkova, a Czech journalist who was interviewing Khattab at the time of the bombings, remembered Khattab's astounding reaction to the announcement of the terrorist attacks in Moscow. His face suddenly assumed an expression of genuine fright. It was the sincere fright of a front-line soldier who realizes that now he's going to get the blame for everything. Everybody who knows Khattab agrees that he is no actor and could not possibly have feigned astonishment and fear.

The Chechens knew it was not in their interests to carry any out terrorist attacks. Public opinion was on their side and public opinion, both Russian and international, was more valuable to them than two or three hundred lives abruptly cut short. That was why the Chechens could not have been behind the terrorist attacks of September 1999. And the Chechens must be given credit for always denying their involvement in these bombings. Here is what Ilyas Akhmadov, minister of foreign affairs in Aslan Maskhadov's government, had to say on that point:

Question: In France you talk as though everybody knows that the terrorists attacks in Moscow and *Volgodonsk* were set up by the Russian special services... Do you have any proof?

Answer: Of course. Throughout the last war we never showed the slightest inclination for that sort of thing. But if it had been organized by Basaev or Khattab, I can assure you that they wouldn't have been shy about admitting it to Russia. What's more, everybody knows that the failed bombing in *Ryazan* was organized by the FSB... I myself served in the army as a demolition officer at a military proving ground and I know perfectly well what a great difference there is between an explosive and sugar."

Here is the opinion of another interested party with whom it is hard to disagree, the Chechen minister of defense and commander of the presidential guard Magomed Khambiev:

"Now for the explosions in Moscow. Why are the Chechens not committing acts of terrorism now, when our people are being annihilated? Why did the Russian authorities pay no attention to the hexogene incident in *Ryazan*, when the militia had detained a member of the special services with this explosive? There's not a single piece of evidence for the so-called Chechen connection in these bombings. And the bombings were least of all in the interest of the Chechens. But what is hidden will certainly be revealed. I assure you that the perpetrators and planners of the bombings in Moscow will become known when there's a change of political regime in the Kremlin. Because those who ordered the bombings should be sought in the corridors of the Kremlin. These bombings were necessary in order to start the war, in order to distract the attention of Russians and the whole world from the scandals and dirty intrigues going on in the Kremlin."

Suspicions arose that the bombings were being carried out by people attempting to force the government to declare a state of emergency and cancel the elections. A number of politicians rejected the idea: "I don't agree with the statements of certain analysts who connect this series of terrorist attacks with somebody's intentions to declare a state of emergency in Russia and cancel the elections to the State *Duma*," declared former Russian minister of the interior Kulikov in an

interview with *Nezavisimaya gazeta* on 11 September. The Chechens could not have had any interest in presidential elections or the declaration of a state of emergency in Russia. In 1996 it was the Korzhakov-Barsukov-Soskovets group and the special services standing behind them that supported the cancellation of the election. So who was attempting to provoke the declaration of a state of emergency in 1999?

Minister of defense Igor Sergeiev thought it possible that military patrols might appear on the streets of Moscow. "Soldiers could take part in patrolling the city together with the MVD's forces," he declared to journalists after a meeting with Boris Yeltsin. The military had been "set the task" of participating in the protection of the public against terrorist activity, Sergeiev stated. He also said that the GRU was "working intensively" to identify all possible contacts between those who had planned the explosions in Russian towns and international terrorists (a hint at foreign saboteurs!). The use of soldiers to protect peaceful citizens against terrorists looked rather like the introduction of military law. Igor Sergeiev spoke out "for the introduction of wide-reaching anti-terrorist measures and anti-terrorist operations." In other words, the Russian Ministry of Defense was calling for war against an unnamed enemy, but in fact it was clear to everyone that he was calling for a war against Chechnya.

The final decision on all of these questions remained with president Yeltsin. The special services, however, had practically unlimited opportunities for filtering or falsifying the information presented to the president. This was confirmed in an interview given on November 12 1999 by Edward Shevardnadze, the president of Georgia and former head of the Georgian KGB, when he spoke about the Chechen problem: "Reference is usually made to the fact that the GRU has information of this kind. I know what information the GRU has historically used, how it is assembled, how it is reported at first to the General Staff, then to the minister of defense, then to the Supreme Commander. I know that there is large-scale falsification."

Former prime minister Yevgeny Primakov, another well-informed contemporary politician who was a presidential candidate in the 2000 election, formulated his doubts differently. When Primakov was asked for his comments on the terrorist attacks in Moscow, he said he thought the Moscow bombings would not be the end of the matter, there could be more explosions right across Russia and one of the reasons for the situation that had arisen lay in the links between people in the agencies of law enforcement and the criminal underworld.

In effect, Primakov admitted that bombings in every part of Russia were the work of people connected with the special services. This was also confirmed by Georgian president Edward Shevardnadze in an address broadcast on national television on November 15 1999: "Already at the meeting in *Kishinev* I informed Boris Yeltsin that his special services had contacts with Chechen terrorists. But Russia does not listen to its friends." Diplomatic etiquette did not permit a more forthright statement. The president of Georgia could not say that by "Chechen terrorists" he simply meant terrorists.

It is obvious however, that Shevardnadze suspected the Russian special services of committing the bombings. Information in his possession even suggested that the Russian special services had been involved in two attempts on Shevardnadze's own life. In order to avoid making unsubstantiated claims, we can quote the former director of the USA National Security Service, retired lieutenant-general William Odom. In October 1999 he stated that Prime minister Putin and his entourage from the military were using this Chechen campaign to put Shevardnadze under severe pressure. They

had already made one attempt to dismember Georgia by taking *Abkhazia* and Southern *Ossetia* away from it and now, Odom said, they wanted to exploit the Chechen events to position their forces there, which was opposed by current president of Georgia. Beginning with Primakov's term as prime minister the Russian government had made at least two attempts on Shevardnadze's life. The Georgian leadership had provided the governments of a number of foreign countries with convincing evidence of this. Primakov himself was personally involved. He had used secret agents of the Russian foreign intelligence service in Belorussia and in May an attempt was made with his knowledge on the life of Shevardnadze and several members of his entourage. The American government is in possession of tape-recordings of conversations made by the actual killers involved in the attempt. And a year before that a first attempt to kill Shevardnadze was made not by amateurs but by genuine professionals, well-prepared military groups who could only have been trained in Russia. There is in addition a mass of material evidence collected at the scene of the crime which confirms all of this.

What Shevardnadze hesitated to say about the bombings in Moscow was openly stated by Lebed, in answer to a question from the French newspaper *Le Figaro*: "Do you mean to say that the present regime is behind the bombings?" the general replied: "I'm almost convinced of it." Lebed pointed out that the force that could be discerned behind the bombings of residential buildings in Moscow and *Volgodonsk* was not the Chechen terrorists, but "the hand of power", that is the Kremlin and the president, who were "up to their necks in shit", totally isolated and together with Yeltsin's "family" had "only one goal, to destabilize the position in order to avoid elections."

On September 14 the FSB and MVD issued the statement for which the FSB had carried out the bombings: Zdanovich announced that the agencies of law enforcement had no doubt that the series of explosions from *Buinaksk* to a house on the *Kassirskoe Chausse* in Moscow represented "a large-scale terrorist operation launched by Basaev and Khattab's guerrillas in support of their military action in *Dagestan*." Igor Zubov, the deputy minister of foreign affairs, confirmed the suggestion: "We can now state without the slightest doubt that Basaev and Khattab are behind these bombings."

The statements by Zdanovich and Zubov did not reflect the true situation. A day later the head of GUBOP MVD of Russia, Vladimir Kozlov, announced that "a number of people involved in these terrorist attacks have been identified" and explained that he meant a group of terrorists with connections in Moscow and the regions and towns surrounding the capital. Kozlov did not even mention Chechnya or *Dagestan*. Zdanovich was openly disseminating false information.

The FSB's conclusions did not sound convincing, and the attempts of the security forces to capture the culprits looked farcical. In the atmosphere of anti-Chechen hysteria in Moscow a few days after the second explosion members of the FSB and GUBOP arrested two suspects for the terrorist attacks and their names were immediately made public, without any concern for possible prejudice to the investigation: they were 32-year Timur Dakhkilgov and his father-in-law, 40-year old Bekmars Sauntiev.

Timur Dakhkilgov was an Ingushetian who was born in *Grozny*, the capital of Chechnya and lived there in the city's *Tram Park* District before he moved to Moscow. He was a dyer in the *Krasny Sukonshchik* Textile Combine. On September 10, immediately after the terrorist attack on *Guryanov* Street, Sauntiev called round to see the Dakhkilgovs and said that they all had to go to the Northern *Butovo* militia station for re-registration.

At the station Timur Dakhkilgov and his wife Lida were photographed, their fingerprints were taken, swabs were taken from the palms of their hands and they were released. Soon after the second bombing MVD operatives turned up at Sauntiev and the Dakhkilgovs' apartments, said that there were traces of hexogene on Timur Dakhkilgov's hands (he was a dyer, after all!) and arrested him. There was no hexogene on Sauntiev's hands, so instead they found a revolver under his bath, and discovered traces of hexogene on the handle of the door to his flat (on the outside, that is, in the stairwell).

The suspects were questioned for three days. Sauntiev was later released and the pistol found in his apartment was apparently forgotten, Timur Dakhkilgov was taken to the MUR premises on *Petrovka Street*, where he was accused of possessing explosives and terrorism. The entire process was reported openly on television and Rushailo even reported to the Council of the Federation that a terrorist had been caught.

According to Dakhkilgov three investigators worked with him, but they were never introduced to him and they never called each other by name. To himself the suspect called them Old Man, Ginger and Nice Guy. The latter earned his nickname by never actually hitting Dakhkilgov. The interrogation lasted for three days, after which Dakhkilgov was transferred to the FSB detention center at *Lefortovo*.

It was very important for the FSB to keep Dakhkilgov in prison for as long as possible, since the Ingushetian was their only justification for the "Chechen connection." They began working on Dakhkilgov in his cell, in ways which he knew nothing about. An inside agent who was supposedly an "authoritative" criminal was planted in the cell with him. The agent won the Ingushetian's confidence and Dakhkilgov told him the circumstances of his case, saying that he had nothing to do with the bombings. Some time later Dakhkilgov was released. An analysis of the swab taken from his hand had confirmed the presence of hexane, a solvent used at the fabric combine for cleaning wool. There was no hexogene on his hands. The "Chechen connection" had been broken. But the war with Chechnya was now already in full swing, so Dakhkilgov had not spent his time in prison in vain.

On March 16 2000, when the leadership of the FSB was giving an account to the public of progress made in investigating the September bombings, one of the journalists asked the deputy head of the investigative department of the FSB, Nikolai Georgievich Sapozhkov: "Can you please tell me why Timur Dakhkilgov spent three months in prison as a terrorist?" The reply given by Sapozhkov, who had already spent several months investigating the terrorist attacks as a member of a group of many dozens of investigators, depressed the journalists, since it made it clear that the investigation was following a false trail:

"I can explain. There was direct testimony against him from the people who brought the sugar and the explosive to Moscow..."

"So they gave his name?"

"No they... I mean it was direct testimony, they identified him by sight as a man who had helped to unload those sacks. Afterwards, you know, when we did a more thorough... Well, you know that he had hexogene on his hands and then the other details which at the time unambiguously provided a basis for treating him as a suspect. Later we did a very thorough job on the Dakhkilgov connection. We had to check everything out again and present him for identification in a calm situation. And we were convinced that the features by which he'd been identified, they were for Slavic persons

identifying so-called Caucasians, but they raised doubts for those who had identified him and by thorough investigation and establishing his alibi, we reached the conclusion that he was not involved in this crime. The case was considered jointly with employees of the Public Prosecutor's Office, and they agreed with our conclusions."

We must apologize to our readers for the quality of Sapozhkov's language. What Sapozhkov had planned to say was as follows. When the investigators arrested Dakhkilgov and began showing him to the residents of the bombed houses so that they could decide whether he was the one who had planted the sacks of explosive with the timers and detonating devices, the residents, to whom all Caucasians look the same, identified him as a man involved in the terrorist attacks. They "did a thorough job" on Dakhkilgov (we know that they interrogated him, beat him, tortured him, put polythene bags over his head, choked him and planted an agent in his cell). But the most important thing for them was to drag out the whole process as long as possible. After three months Dakhkilgov was not needed any longer and with the consent of the Public Prosecutor's Office he was released and the case against him was closed.

So Dakhkilgov spent his time inside for two reasons. Firstly, the crowd identified him as one of the culprits, and secondly hexogene was supposedly found on his hands. But the FSB managed to get its explosives confused. Soon after the bombings reports began appearing in the media that "according to the FSB the hexogene story is a diversionary ploy. In actual fact in all of the bombings the terrorists used a different explosive substance." Western commentators pointed out that the rubble of the houses bombed in Moscow was cleared and removed with lightning speed for Russia, in only three days. These suspicious-minded foreigners thought that anyone in Russia working as diligently as that must be covering up their tracks. In any case the FSB's ploy was merely for public consumption. The terrorists themselves knew perfectly well what explosive they used and there was no point in concealing the components of the explosive from them.

The question of exactly what was used as an explosive in the September bombings should not be regarded as still unanswered. Hexogene was produced in Russia at restricted military plants. "Hexogene is carefully guarded and its use is carefully controlled" was the assurance given in September 1999 at the Russian research and production enterprise *Region*, where they worked with hexogene. At the plant they were convinced that any leak of hexogene from secret defense plants known only by their numbers was virtually impossible.

Since hexogene was used by the terrorists in large quantities, it would have been easy to determine just who had bought or been given the substance, especially as the experts could always determine exactly where any particular batch had been produced. It was impossible for tens of tonnes of hexogene to have been stolen. Thousands of tonnes of TNT-hexogene mixture were kept at military depots and in the warehouses of munitions factories for inclusion in rocket warheads, mines, torpedoes and shells. But hexogene extracted from finished munitions had a distinctive appearance, and extracting it was difficult and risky. Here are a few examples.

On October 8 1999 one of the Russian information agencies announced that the Central Military Prosecutor's Office had instigated proceeding against a number of officials in the central administration of the anti-aircraft defense forces (PVO). The senior military prosecutor, Yu. Demin stated that over a period of several years high-ranking military officers had abused their official positions by forging and falsifying documents in order to steal spares for a range of antiaircraft rocket-launchers, which were sold to commercial companies and private entrepreneurs. Just a few

of this group's many criminal escapades had cost the state a total of more than two million dollars. It is easy to imagine what kind of "commercial organizations and private entrepreneurs" bought stolen spare parts for rocket-launchers. And it is quite obvious that without the involvement of the FSB and the GRU it would not have been possible to continue stealing the PVO's technology over a period of several years.

On September 28 1999 employees of the *Ryazan* Department for Combating Organized Crime (UBOP) arrested the head of an automobile repair shop in an air-strike technology depot, 25-year old warrant officer Vyacheslav Korniev, who served at the military aerodrome in *Dyagilev*, where bombers were based. At the time of his arrest he was discovered to be in possession of 11 kilograms of TNT. Korniev confessed that the TNT had been stolen from a military depot and that a group of employees to which he belonged had extracted it from *FAB-300* high-explosive bombs that were stored outdoors at the depot.

The same day the military court of the *Ryazan* garrison pronounced sentence on the head of the field supplies depot of the *Ryazan* Institute of the VDV, A. Ashbarin, for stealing more than three kilograms of TNT with the intention of selling it for three thousand dollars. Although the appropriate article of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation stipulated a sentence of from three to seven years' imprisonment, the soldier was fined 20,000 rubles.

Clearly, stealing TNT-hexogene mixture in small amounts was difficult. In contrast, removing it by the truckload was easy, but only with the appropriate permits, which meant you were bound to leave a trail, and a trail like that might lead back to the FSB. After the bombings numerous representatives of the Russian military-industrial complex stated that such a large amount of explosives could only be stolen with the connivance of highly placed officials. On September 15 the head of the MVD's Central Office for Combating Organized Crime (GUBOP), Vladimir Kozlov, confirmed that the explosion on *Guryanov* Street had not been caused by a home-made pyrotechnic mixture, but by industrial explosives.

So in order to throw pushy journalists and conscientious criminal investigation officers off the scent, the FSB had fed the media its story about hexogene as a diversionary ploy: in actual fact, they said, the explosive used was ammonium nitrate, a fertilizer. The point was that ammonium nitrate could have been bought, transported and stored quite openly. It made good bombs and if hexogene, TNT or aluminum powder was added it became a really powerful explosive. It was true, however, that it required a complicated detonating device, a device not every terrorist would be able to work with.

Why was the hexogene story used initially? Because the houses were blown up by one group of FSB officers, the explosive was analyzed by a second and the propaganda (or public relations, to use the current term) surrounding the event was handled by a third. The first group carried out the terrorist attacks successfully (with the exception of *Ryazan*). The second easily determined that they had used hexogene. The third suddenly realized that hexogene is produced in Russia at restricted military plants and it was a simple job to determine exactly who had bought the hexogene which had been used to blow up the houses and when it was bought. At this point panic set in. In three days all the material evidence (the bombed houses) was removed and stories were urgently planted in the media about ammonium nitrate. On March 16 2000 the first deputy head of the Second Department (for the Protection of the Constitutional Order and Combating Terrorism, i.e. Department K) and the operations and investigation department of the FSB, Alexander Dmitrievich

Shagako, told a press conference that the explosive used in absolutely all the bombings in Russia had been identified and that explosive was nitrate:

“I’d like to observe that as a result of criminalistic investigations carried out by FSB experts Russia has received confirmation that the composition of the explosives used in Moscow and the composition of the explosives which were discovered in the basement premises of the house on *Borisovskie Prudy* Street in Moscow, and also the composition of the explosive substances which were discovered in the town of *Buinaksk* on September 4 in an unexploded *ZIL-130* automobile, they are identical, i.e. the composition of all of these substances includes ammonium nitrate and aluminum powder, in some cases hexogene has been added and in some cases TNT has been added...”

All that remained was to determine where the nitrate in Moscow and the other Russian cities had come from. Shagako and Zdanovich, who was also at the press conference, dealt successfully with that problem. “Were there any cases of theft of these explosives from state plants where they are produced using specific technologies?” Zdanovich asked and then answered himself: “I can say straight away that there were not, or at least the investigation is not in possession of any such information.”

It is impossible to determine who has bought and sold nitrate for nefarious purposes. There is just too much of it all over the country, including in Chechnya. Small amounts of TNT, hexogene and aluminum powder could have been stolen by anybody from any military depot (a matter on which, with the assistance of the FSB and the Central Military Prosecutor’s Office, several reports appeared in the media). In misinforming public opinion concerning the composition of the explosive, the FSB was trying to deflect suspicions that it had planned and carried out the terrorist attacks. All that still needed to be done was to find a warehouse of chemical fertilizers somewhere in Chechnya. It turned out that had also already been dealt with, which was very timely, since it allowed the investigation to be completed a few days before the presidential election:

“In this connection I would also like to point out to you,” said Shagako, “that two months ago employees of the Federal Security Service in *Urus Martan* discovered a center for training demolition operatives. On the territory of this center five tonnes of ammonium nitrate were discovered. At the same site trigger mechanisms identical to the mechanisms which were used in the explosions I listed earlier were also discovered... The trigger devices discovered in the *ZIL-130* automobile in the town of *Buinaksk* and also the trigger devices discovered basement premises on *Borisovskie Prudy* Street in Moscow, in the course of criminalistic analysis they were proved to be identical. In all of these trigger devices a *Casio* electronic watch was used as a delay mechanism. In all of these trigger devices light diodes of identical design were used, the electronic circuit boards, even the colors of the wires which were used for welding, they’re the same color in all the mechanisms. In this connection I wish to point out that several days ago employees of the Federal Security Service in Chechnya discovered several trigger mechanisms among the possessions of guerrillas who had been killed while attempting to break out of the encirclement of the city of *Grozny*. Investigations carried out by specialists of the Federal Security Service demonstrated that the trigger mechanisms removed from the *ZIL-130* automobile in *Buinaksk* and the trigger mechanisms removed from *Borisovskie Prudy* Street in Moscow, the design of them all is the same. They are all identical with each other... In March in the settlement of *Duba-Yurt* an isolated building was discovered in which literature in Arabic on mine-laying and demolition and military training instructions were discovered and in addition in the same premises instructions for the use of a *Casio*

watch were discovered. This kind of watch, as I told you earlier, was used by the criminals in all of the bombings listed above. In March in the settlement of *Chiri-Yurt* an isolated building was discovered which was surrounded by an iron fence inside which 50 sacks of ammonium nitrate were sighted, identified and discovered, that's something in the region of two and a half tonnes."

If the terrorists had really used ammonium nitrate the RUOP investigators would not have looked for hexogene on Dakhkilgov and Sauntiev's hands, they would have focused on nitrate. The militia looked for hexogene on the hands of their detainees precisely because the official conclusion which the experts had provided to the investigation was that hexogene was used to blow up the houses. No subsequent expert analysis could have been more accurate, including the repeat analysis which was later carried out by the investigative agencies of the FSB and made public in March 2000, just a few days before the presidential election. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that in March 2000, a few days before the presidential election, the FSB was deliberately dispensing misinformation.

On September 13 1999 in Moscow Luzhkov signed three sets of regulations which contravened the Constitution and the laws of the Russian Federation. The first of them proclaimed the re-registration of refugees and migrants in Moscow. The second document demanded the expulsion from the capital of people who violated the regulations on registration. The third put a halt to the registration in Moscow of refugees and migrants. On the same day the governor of the Moscow Region, Anatoly Tyazhlov, signed instructions for the arrest of individuals who were not registered as residents of Moscow or the Moscow Region. Of course, none of these regulations made any mention of Chechens, or even of Caucasians

On September 15 joint militia and military patrols were introduced in Moscow and the *Whirlwind Anti-Terror* operation was launched throughout Russia with the participation of the forces of the Ministry of the Interior. Muscovites were not yet aware that the wave of terror in the capital had ended at this point. Now it was the turn of the provinces. Early in the morning of September 16 an apartment block was blown up in *Volgodonsk* in the *Rostov* Region. Seventeen people were killed.

At an extraordinary session of the Council of the Federation held in camera on September 17 with the participation of the prime minister and the armed forces and law enforcement ministries, the Council approved a proposal for the creation of "civil security councils" in the Russian regions. Chairman of the Council of the Federation Yegor Stroev remarked that the senators intended "to offer a political assessment of events and put forward concrete economic and social measures in the conflict zone, including measures in support of the civilian population and the army." The speaker of the house remarked that "the explosion in *Volgodonsk* strengthened the senators' mood on the need for more decisive and hard-line action for the struggle against terrorism." Stroev did not accuse the Chechens of the terrorist attacks, but he quite obviously drew a connection between the "conflict zone" in *Dagestan* and the "struggle against terrorism."

Prime minister Vladimir Putin delivered a report to the extraordinary session of the Council of the Federation. As "measures of defense against terrorism" he proposed establishing a *cordon sanitaire* along the entire Russian-Chechen border and also intensifying the aerial and artillery bombardment of Chechen territory. In this way Putin declared the Chechen Republic responsible for the terrorist attacks and called for military action to be taken against Chechnya.

At the conclusion of the session Putin declared that the members of the Council of the Federation had supported action "of the most hard-line character" by the government for resolving the situation

in the Northern Caucasus, including the “proposal to introduce a quarantine around Chechnya.” Answering questions from journalists, Putin emphasized that that pre-emptive strikes “have been delivered and will be delivered” against bandit bases in Chechnya, but that the possibility of introducing Russian forces into the territory of the Chechen Republic had not been discussed.

Putin emphasized that “the bandits must be exterminated, no other action is possible here.” By bandits Putin meant the Chechen army, not terrorists. In other words, the government had settled for a single account of the bombings, the Chechen version, and was willing to use the bombings as an excuse for war.

The leaders of the various regions of the North Caucasus understood that Russia was setting up a new war against the Chechen Republic. On September 20 at a meeting in *Magas* in *Ingushetia* the president of *Ingushetia* A. Dzasokhov and the president of Northern *Ossetia* R. Aushev supported A. Maskhadov’s suggestion that talks were needed between Maskhadov and Yeltsin. Dzasokhov and Aushev also intended to arrange a meeting between the president of Chechnya and Russian prime minister Putin in *Nalchik* or *Pyatigorsk* no later than the end of September 1999. All of the leaders from the North Caucasus were supposed to attend the meeting.

Clearly, political negotiations might have prevented the war and cast light on the terrorist attacks that had taken place in Russia. For this very reason the FSB did everything in its power to prevent the meeting of leaders from the North Caucasus regions taking place. Before the end of September it was intended to blow up residential buildings in *Ryazan*, *Tula*, *Pskov* and *Samara*. As always happens when a large terrorist attack involving groups of terrorists is being planned, there was a leak of information. “According to the information we received it was *Ryazan* which had been singled out by the terrorists for the next bombing, because of the *Ryazan* VDV training college”, said the mayor of *Ryazan*, Mamatov. This “next bombing” would be the failed attempt to blow up the house on *Novosyolov* Street on September 22.

On September 23 Zdanovich announced that the FSB had identified all the participants in the terrorist attacks in *Buinaksk*, *Moscow* and *Volgodonsk*. “There is not a single ethnic Chechen among them.” Not a single one. Following which, of course the FSB general apologized to the Chechen people and the Chechen diaspora in Russia?.. No, nothing of the sort! Instead, with the stubbornness of a classroom dunce, Zdanovich set himself to discover a “Chechen connection.” And to give him his due, he managed to find one. He thought it possible that after carrying out the bombings the terrorists, who had after all been planning their attacks since mid-August, might have had escape routes. They could possibly have taken refuge in the CIS countries, but it was most probable that they had withdrawn to Chechnya. In short, the Chechens were being bombed because in Zdanovich’s opinion the terrorists (among whom there were no ethnic Chechens) had probably retreated to Chechnya. But then why didn’t they bomb the countries of the CIS?

“We have definite sources of information inside Chechnya and we know what is going on there,” Zdanovich emphasized. From 1991 to 1994 the FSK conducted hardly any operational work at all in this republic, but later “we did certain work. We know about those people who develop terrorist operations, make the financial input, recruit the mercenaries and prepare the explosives. Nowadays in our country it’s easy to obtain information on how to produce an explosive device and apart from that there are many people who have fought in the hot spots who have the necessary knowledge and skills. Many of them have fought in *Karabakh*, *Tadjikistan* and *Chechnya*. This does not mean that any one is accusing the population of Chechnya or Aslan Maskhadov. We accuse specific criminals,

terrorists who are located in Chechnya. That's where the name 'the Chechen connection' came from."

To use the "probable" withdrawal of the terrorists to Chechnya as an excuse for launching a war against the Chechen people while acknowledging that the bombings were not carried out by Chechens is the height of cynicism. If Putin's government considered it possible to start the second Chechen war because of such a "probability", we must conclude that the bombings were no more than an excuse and the war was an operation planned long in advance at General Staff HQ. Stepashin threw some light on this question in January 2000 when he announced that the political "decision to invade Chechnya was taken as early as March 1999", that the intervention had been "planned for August-September" and that "it would have happened even if there had been no explosions in Moscow." "I was preparing for active intervention," Stepashin said. "We were planning to be north of *Terek* in August-September." Putin, "who at that time was director of the FSB, was in possession of this information."

The testimony of former head of the FSK and former prime minister Stepashin does not match the testimony of former head of the FSB and former prime minister Putin:

"Last summer we launched a campaign not against the independence of Chechnya but against the aggressive impulses which have begun to manifest themselves on its territory. We are not attacking. We are defending ourselves. And we have pushed them out of *Dagestan*... And when we gave them a good hiding they blew up houses in Moscow, *Buinaksk* and *Volgodonsk*."

Question: Did you take the decision to continue the operation in Chechnya before the houses were bombed or after?

Answer: After.

Question: Do you know that according to one account the houses were deliberately blown up in order to justify the start of military operations in Chechnya? That is, it was supposedly done by the Russian special services?

Answer: What? We blew up our own houses? You know... Rubbish! It's raving nonsense! There are no people in the Russian special services who would be capable of such a crime against their own people. The very suggestion is immoral and essentially it's nothing more than an instance of the war of information against Russia."

At some stage, when the archives of the Ministry of Defense are opened up, we shall see these military documents: maps, plans, directives, orders of the day for air-strikes and the deployment of land forces. They will have dates on them. We shall discover for certain just how spontaneous was the Russian government's decision to start land operations in Chechnya and whether the General Staff had finished planning the military operations before the first September bombing. We shall ask ourselves why bombings took place before the election campaign and before the incursion into Chechnya (when they were not in the Chechens' interests) and ceased following Putin's election as president and the beginning of all-out war against the Chechen Republic (the very time when the Chechens ought to have taken revenge against their invaders). But we shall only receive the final and complete answers to these questions and many more after power has changed hands in Russia.

Chapter 7

The FSB against the people

So far the terrorists have not been identified, or rather they have been identified as not being Chechens. The failed bombing attempt in *Ryazan* prompts the public to think that the FSB might be behind the bombings. For the “party of war” this is just one more indication that a full-scale war in Chechnya has to be started as soon as possible. The date of September 24 is no coincidence, for if the bombing in *Ryazan* had succeeded, Putin and the heads of all the military and law enforcement ministries were scheduled to make hard-line speeches in response.

And so on September 24, like a chorus in some well-planned stage performance, Russian politicians begin demanding war. Patrushev announces that the terrorists who blew up the apartment houses in Moscow are in Chechnya. We know this is a lie. Patrushev does not identify his sources, since he has none. Patrushev does not offer any proof. His press secretary Zdanovich has spoken only of the possible or probable withdrawal of the terrorists to Chechnya (or to the countries of the CIS). But Patrushev needs to start a war, and so he claims that Chechnya has been transformed into a hotbed of terrorism.

Rushailo claims that organized crime inside and outside Russia has used the “Chechen bridgehead to unleash a wide-reaching campaign of subversion against Russia... The agencies of law enforcement and the armed forces have adequate potential to defend the interests of Russia in the Northern Caucasus... The federal forces are prepared to mount armed operations.” In other words, the MVD was preparing to wage war against Chechnya as part of the effort to combat organized crime, including criminal groups. As though the fight against crime was going perfectly well on all the rest of Russia’s territory!

The situation in the Northern Caucasus and the possible consequences for Russia were outlined by the chairman of the SF’s security and defense committee Alexander Ryabov in an interview he gave to the newspaper *Segodnia (Today)*. In his opinion the world was undergoing a new geopolitical division under the cover of Muslim slogans. For Russia’s enemies the most important thing was to create a weak zone in Russia’s “soft underbelly.” This theory is reminiscent of the conspiracy of the Elders of Zion, except that this time the elders are Muslim, not Jewish. “A new geopolitical division of the world” is serious business. It will take a serious war to sort it out.

The newspaper *Vek (The Age)* published an interview with the vice-president of a collegium of military experts Alexander Vladimirov, who expressed the belief that the best solution right now would be a small victorious war in Chechnya. In his opinion the *cordon sanitaire* around Chechnya proposed by Putin was a good idea, but it should be only the first step, since a cordon for its own sake is a pointless exercise. (Vladimirov’s opinion must certainly have been noted, since they actually started with the second step, full-scale war.)

The final, decisive word in support of war was spoken by prime minister Putin in *Astan*: “The Russian state does not intend to keep things on hold... The recent unprovoked attacks which have taken place against territories contiguous with Chechnya, the barbarous acts which have resulted in casualties among the peaceful population have set the terrorists not only outside the law but outside the framework of human society and modern civilization.” Air-strikes were taking place “exclusively against the guerrillas’ bases, and this will continue wherever the terrorists may be located... We shall pursue the terrorists everywhere. And if, pardon my language, we catch up with them in the toilet, then we’ll squelch them in the johns.”

The mood of the public in those days can best be characterized by the fact that after his inspired phrase about “squelching them in the jacks” Putin’s ratings actually improved. The propaganda campaign mounted by the supporters of war had produced the desired result. According to an opinion poll conducted by the All-Russian Central Public Opinion Institute (VTsIOM) almost 50 per cent of Russians were convinced that the explosions in Russian cities had been carried out by Basaev’s guerrillas and another 33 per cent blamed the *Vahhabites* and their leader Khattab. Eighty-eight per cent of the people questioned were afraid of falling victim to a terrorist attack. Sixty-four per cent were in agreement that all Chechens should be deported, and the same proportion were in favour of the mass bombing of Chechnya.

The bombings of the houses had broken down the resistance of public opinion. A small victorious war now seemed like the only natural response in the fight against terrorism. The stupefied country was not yet aware that the terrorists were not Chechens and the war would be neither small nor victorious.

Note the absolutely glaring lack of logic here. The Chechen leadership denies it was involved in the terrorist attacks. Zdanovich confirms that there are no Chechens among the culprits, but states that the terrorists have “probably” gone into hiding in Chechnya. This “probably” is enough to fit the terrorists up with a “Chechen trail” which in turn provides a pretext for starting to bomb Chechnya. Aslan Maskhadov declares that he is willing to hold negotiations. But he is not heard. It is important for the FSB to drag Russia into a war as quickly as possible, so that the presidential election can be held against the background of a major armed conflict and so that after the new president comes to power he can inherit the war together with all the political consequences which it implies, i.e. the president’s dependence on the structures of coercion. Only through war can the FSB finally seize power in the country. It is a simple little matter of a conspiracy with the goal of allowing the former KGB to seize power under the banner of the fight against Chechen terrorism. On October 4 the coup ended in victory for the conspirators. That was the day when Russian forces crossed the border of Chechnya. Most of the population of Russia supported the decision taken by former director of the FSB and now prime minister Vladimir Putin, director of the FSB Patrushev, and FSB general and head of the SB Sergei Ivanov.

During this difficult period for the Russian political elite those who spoke out decisively against war defined their position. *Novaya gazeta* should be named as one of the most principled opponents of war against the Chechen Republic: “The KGB lieutenant-colonel mouthing criminal jargon who finds himself by some miracle at the head of a great country, is losing no time in exploiting the effect produced. Any general or politician planning a military campaign always attempts to minimize the number of his enemies and maximize the number of his allies. Putin is deliberately bombing *Grozny* in order to make negotiations with Maskhadov impossible, in order to bury all of the regime’s previous crimes under the bloody slaughter. The outgoing regime is attempting to use the crime currently in preparation -- the genocide of the Chechen people -- to bind the entire Russian people in blood, to make it the regime’s accomplice and hostage. It is still not too late to call a halt on the road to Russia’s destruction.”

Konstantin Titov, the governor of the *Samara* Region, believed that land operations in Chechnya were a catastrophe for Russia. “I am no believer in purely coercive methods of resolving global problems. And in Samara I shall never allow the kind of ethnic purges they have in Moscow.” (Konstantin Titov, of course, was not aware that during those days full preparations had been set in

place for the bombing of an apartment house on Novovokzalnaya Street in Samara, but the FSB had halted the terrorist attacks after the fiasco in Ryazan).

The mood of the apprehensive section of the democratic public at this time was described by the well-known Russian lawyer Anatoly Kucheren:

When the guns roar, the public prosecutors fall silent

The clearest possible illustration is provided by the “exercises” conducted by the FSB in Ryazan. This act bears witness to the most profound degradation, primarily moral, of the Russian special services. The special services continue to think of themselves as “a state within a state.” Their leaders seem to think that they are not subject to any laws and act exclusively on the basis of political expediency, as they did in those glorious times when the agencies organized abductions and political assassinations in foreign states, created the “legends” for non-existent anti-Soviet organizations and wrote the scripts for show trials.

The numerous “spy cases” of recent years (Platon Obukhov, Grigory Pasko, captain Nikitin), operation “Face in the Snow”, various unlawful acts committed on the eve of the presidential elections of 1996 such as the attempt to “seal up” the State Duma, the escapade in which members of the Russian army were recruited for the storming of Grozny by the forces of the so-called anti-Dudaev opposition in 1994 -- all of this bears witness to the fact that unlawful tendencies have remained a part of the activity of the special services to this very day.

One gets the impression that both the present party of power and the so-called opposition believe that Russia’s democratic project is dead and buried. The authorities are not capable of imposing order founded in the law, it is beyond their ability to build a society governed by law. The alternative to a society governed by law is a bandit-and-police state, a situation, that is, in which the actions of terrorists and bandits on the one hand and the agencies of law enforcement on the other are indistinguishable either in terms of their objectives or the methods they employ. Among the public the mass conviction is gaining ground that democracy has failed to deliver as a form of government.

And since nothing has come of the democratic project, many political players are tempted to have done with it once and for all. So each of them pursues his own goals, but in objective terms the vectors of their efforts coincide. Some are frightened by the impending redistribution of property, some wish to avoid responsibility for committing unlawful acts, some see themselves as the new Bonaparte or Pinochet and are impatient to grasp the “rudder” with an iron hand.

Government through democratic institutions has failed yet again in Russia. A time of rule by means of fear is beginning. A time of terror by both bandits and the state. Could this perhaps be the present regime’s “political project” for Russia?

While Kucheren formulated the apprehensions of the democratic section of the population, the goals and plans of the conspirators who successfully canvassed for the invasion of Chechnya were revealed on March 8 2000 in the article “The country needs a new KGB” by State Duma deputy and former head of the SBP Korzhakov:

There is one feature of the preparations for the presidential elections which is of fundamental importance. In characterizing the number one candidate for the highest state position Vladimir Putin, virtually no one expresses dissatisfaction at the fact that his background is in the special services, more specifically, from deep within the KGB. Only a few years ago it was impossible to

imagine such a thing, but now public opinion is openly sympathetic to a politician who began his career in one of the special services. Vladimir Putin's high rating is testimony first of all to the fact that people see him, a product of the KGB, as a politician capable of straightening the country out and organizing the work of all the power structures so that at long last we can really start to pull out of social and political crisis. The nomination of a former KGB officer for the highest state position gives me a reason once again to draw attention to certain aspects of the activities of the special services and the roles they play in general at the present stage of our economic and political development..

The well-known bombing incidents in houses in Moscow and other towns in the country which have resulted in the death of dozens of peaceful and entirely innocent people, the continuing export of the nation's wealth, the flourishing corruption in state structures, cases of slave-dealing and trading in children -- all of this provokes the legitimate anger of our citizens. People ask in bewilderment: where are our special services, which exist in order to fight this kind of phenomenon? We have enough manpower and special services: the FSB, the MVD, GRU, SVR, FAPSI -- all of these are capable of solving the most complex problems. The real problem is that the special services act separately, like an open hand, not a clenched fist.

There was a time when our democratic society was terribly frightened by the existence of the KGB. Then they decided to destroy the "monster" so that it would not be capable of any surprises. It seemed to some that it would be easier to control the activity of the special services that way. However, the control did not turn out quite as they had intended and the co-ordination of action by the special services didn't get very far. This is confirmed by the textbook mistakes and failures suffered in the fight against Chechen and international terrorists. Now even the most vehement opponents of the KGB are beginning to realize that the destruction of that structure has not produced anything useful. Alexander Solzhenitsyn was right when he remarked to a small circle of acquaintances that what we need now is the KGB.

There is also another real factor. Nobody will ever voluntarily return our national wealth which has been stolen and exported to other countries. Not a single foreign special service will pass up a chance to acquire important secrets in science or other important areas if we do not block off their access to these secrets. Corruption will continue to exist just as long as the relevant services, whose job it is to expose bribe-takers, continue to act separately, each for itself. Stealing from the treasury will continue just as long as our laws remain humane towards those who love to stick their fingers into the state purse.

In supporting Vladimir Putin's candidacy for the post of president our people are sending the authorities a signal, the meaning of which is perfectly clear: it is high time to gather the special services together into a single fist and strike out with it at those who prevent us from building a normal life. Russia needs its own KGB! The time has come to speak of this without inhibition! Sharing this opinion, I believe that the first step on the path to the creation of a new Committee of State Security must be the formation of a Special Services Co-ordination Committee attached to the Security Council and subordinated directly to the head of state. This will make it possible to formulate the structure of the future KGB and define its functions and objectives. If the Coordinating Committee were to be set up in the immediate future it would make possible a more effective solution to the problem of bringing illegally exported capital back into the country. I say this with confidence, since at one time the President's Security Service did start working along these

lines and produced concrete results. The Service demonstrated in practise that bringing capital back into the country is not only necessary, but possible if the job is taken seriously.

A second high-priority task is the fight against terrorism using specific methods and means, excluding the use of large-scale armed forces and deaths among the peaceful population. Nobody doubts that the Chechen and international terrorists will be destroyed. However, the terrorist threat will not disappear then. It should not be forgotten that in Chechnya a generation of young people has already grown up in conditions of war and hatred of Russians. The aspiration of today's young Chechen boys to avenge themselves on the "offenders" any way they can will find outlets not just inside Chechnya. It is no longer possible to use the army to combat local manifestations of terrorism, such possibilities have been exhausted. The special services will be dealing with it.

A third task is to expose cases of the illegal privatization of facilities of strategic importance and the contrived bankruptcy of factories, plants and mines so that they could be grabbed as private property. Experience has shown that we cannot manage without the participation of the special services in this work either.

Kucheren believes that Russia's woes are caused by a bandit-and-police state. Korzhakov claims that all of the misfortunes are due to the lack of a strong hand of power, since the special services act "like an open hand, not a fist." Korzhakov suggests clenching the hand into a fist, setting up a Special Services Coordinating Committee and subordinating it to the secretary of the SB (FSB general Sergei Ivanov). We can assume that at the head of this new agency Korzhakov sees himself, since he emphasizes that the SBP which he used to head had been working along exactly these lines and had achieved concrete results. In other words, Korzhakov acknowledges that he abused his power and exceeded his official authority, which is regarded as a crime under Russian law and is punishable by imprisonment (Korzhakov's formal functions consisted of guarding the president and members of this family).

This statement by Korzhakov alone makes it clear what the SBP was doing for all those years under Korzhakov's leadership and what Korzhakov himself was doing afterwards as a private individual with contacts in the structures of coercion. Let us call things by their real names. Having found themselves outside the structures of power and discharged from the special services, Soskovets and the retired generals Korzhakov and Barsukov, with help from organized criminal structures which they had formerly used themselves, such as *Stealth*, attempted to become involved in the redistribution of property in Russia and establish control over businesses for purposes of personal gain. Their activities were funded by the *Izmailovo* organized criminal group. Underground and operational work was carried out by various different ChOPs. Information and propaganda back-up were provided by a number of media outlets, either controlled or bought. Combat support was provided by organized criminal groups and individual fighters from the ranks of former employees of the special sections of the MO, FSB and MVD.

Bringing back capital from abroad "à la Korzhakov" is nothing more than the extortion of money from businessmen living in Russia. In practise this meant that having obtained financial information via the special services, Korzhakov summoned businessmen to see him, told them he knew about the money they had exported and demanded that they return the money to Russia. Only it is very important to understand that the businessman did not return the money to the state's coffers, but to accounts named by Korzhakov.

Korzhakov has also revealed the political goals of his structure. The first is to subordinate all the special services to the President's Security Service (or his new structure, the Coordinating Committee). The second is to allow *carte blanche* for punitive acts throughout the country, i.e. dictatorial powers. In addition, Korzhakov has openly declared that the genocide of the Chechen people should be Russian state policy. Let us take another look at what he said: "It should not be forgotten that in Chechnya a generation of young people has already grown up in conditions of war and hatred of Russians. The aspiration of today's young Chechen boys to avenge themselves on the "offenders" in any way they can will find outlets not only inside Chechnya." It seems that Korzhakov wants to shoot all the "young Chechen boys" everywhere in Russia so that they will never reach an age when they are capable of avenging their murdered fathers and ruined homeland.

That Korzhakov's appeal "The country needs a new KGB" was not an isolated chance gesture, but a symptom of a genuine trend was demonstrated in July 2001 by FSB staff member and director of the Institute for Problems of Economic Security Yu. Ovchenko. In a meeting with a small group of journalists he informed them that a number of officials "with access to the president" and connections with the structures of coercion, including deputy director of the FSB Yu. Zaoztovtsev, intended to change the government's economic policy fundamentally and move "from an oligarchic system to a national one." According to the newspaper "Arguments and Facts", Ovchenko literally said the following:

"The special services have a particularly important role in the process of de-privatization and the investigation of illegally exported capital. Control over the process of the change of ownership must be transferred to the FSB system. The functions of monitoring the results of privatization must be transferred to Security Counsel (*Sovet Bezopasnosti*), where the secretary must be a man from the FSB system... In order to halt any further leakage of capital, the systems of the Central Bank and the State Customs Committee must be transferred into effective control... Representatives of the economic security service must be introduced into the management staff of these agencies and must be in possession of complete information on resources already exported and capable of talking to the oligarchs in a language they understand... Even though the proposed measures... will be extremely popular with the public, their implementation will require the establishment of state control over the main electronic media. It would be appropriate to make it illegal for private capital to own controlling blocks of shares in broadcasting channels and newspapers with a print-run of over 200,000 copies."

When asked how long the plan would take to implement Ovchenko replied: "Changes will be made by the end of the year. But it could be sooner if conditions are ripe."

Society was divided. Some demanded the construction of new special services. Others believed that the old ones were worse than any terrorists. The public was crazed and stupefied by the Moscow bombings and the escapade in Ryazan. In a country where there are no laws it was impossible to do anything anyway. The whole business got no further than acrimonious newspaper articles. Lawyer Pavel Astakhov tried to submit a question to the FSB about which operational activities had been the reason for the infringement of liberty suffered by the citizens of *Ryazan* who were sent out into the street on that cold autumn evening. The FSB referred him to its own law "On operational and investigative activity." It turned out that according to this law the FSB had the right to conduct exercises wherever it wanted whenever it wanted. And that the people have no recourse against this FSB law.

However, the incident in *Ryazan* did not in fact comply with the requirements of federal legislation and exceeded the competence of the FSB. “The Federal Law on the Federal Security Service” stated that the activity of the agencies of the FSB “shall be conducted in accordance with the law of the Russian Federation ‘On operational and investigative activity in the Russian Federation’, the criminal and criminal procedural legislation of the Russian Federation and also in accordance with the present federal law.” Not one of these documents, including the law “On operational and investigative activity” indicated that exercises could be carried out to the detriment and in violation of the civil rights of the population at large. And in addition article 5 of the law “On operational and investigative activity” formally guaranteed members of the public against possible abuse by the agencies of law enforcement:

“Agencies (officials) who engage in operational and investigative activity must, when carrying out operational and investigative measures, ensure the observance of the human and civil rights to the inviolability of private life... the inviolability of the home... It is not permitted to carry out public operational and investigative activity for the achievement of goals and implementation of tasks which are not specified in the present Federal Law. An individual who believes that the actions of agencies engaging in operational and investigative activity have resulted in the infringement of his rights and freedoms shall be entitled to make appeal regarding such actions to a superior agency engaging in operational and investigative activity, a public prosecutor’s office or a court of law... If the agency (or official) engaging in operational and investigative activity has infringed the rights and legitimate interests of individuals and legal entities, the superior agency, prosecutor or judge is obliged under the terms of the legislation of the Russian Federation to take measures for the restitution of such rights and legitimate interests and the provision of compensation for damage inflicted. Violations of the present Federal Law committed in the course of operational and investigative activity shall be punishable as prescribed by the legislation of the Russian Federation.”

Zdanovich and Patrushev had therefore both lied openly when referring to Russian law.

Putin and Patrushev were not allowed to forget the *Ryazan* incident right up to the presidential elections. During the night of October 3 1999 three GRU officers disappeared without trace in the *Nadterek* district of Chechnya: colonel Zuriko Ivanov, major Victor Pakhomov and senior lieutenant Alexei Galkin, together with a GRU employee of Chechen nationality, Vesami Abdulaev. The leader of the group, Zuriko Ivanov, had graduated from the *Ryazan* VDV college and gone into special missions intelligence, serving in the Fifteenth Special Missions Brigade, which was famous from the Afghan war, and then in the Northern Caucasus military district. He managed the personal bodyguard of Doku Zavgaev, who had connections in Moscow. Shortly before the beginning of the second Chechen war Ivanov was transferred to the central administration in Moscow. His new duties did not include raids behind enemy lines, but as soon as preparations for ground operations in Chechnya began, Ivanov was needed in the zone of conflict.

On October 19 in *Grozny* the head of the press center of the armed forces of Chechnya Vakha Ibragimov informed the assembled journalists on behalf of the military command that GRU officers who had gone over to the Chechens had “established contact with Chechen soldiers of their own initiative” and had expressed the wish to co-operate with the Chechen authorities. Ibragimov stated that the GRU officers and their agent were prepared to supply information about the organizers of the bombings in Moscow, *Buinaksk* and *Volgodonsk*. The Russian Ministry of Defense called this statement from the Chechen side a provocation intended to discredit the internal policy of the Russian leadership and the actions of the federal forces in the Northern Caucasus. However, in late

December 1999 the GRU officially acknowledged the death of the leader of the group Ivanov: the federal forces were given the headless corpse of a man and the bloodsoaked identity pass of colonel Zuriko Amiranovich Ivanov (the officer's severed head was discovered later). On March 24 2000 Zdanovich announced that the entire group of GRU operatives had been executed by the Chechens.

On January 6 2000 the London newspaper *The Independent* published an article by its correspondent Helen Womack entitled "**Russian agents behind Moscow flat bombings**":

The Independent has obtained a videotape on which a Russian officer, captured by the Chechens, "confesses" that Russian special services committed the Moscow apartment-block bombings that ignited the latest war in Chechnya and propelled Vladimir Putin into the Kremlin. On the video, shot by a Turkish journalist last month before Grozny was finally cut off by Russian forces, the captured Russian identifies himself as Alexei Galtin of the GRU (Russian military intelligence service). The bearded captive acknowledges as his own papers displayed by the Chechens that identify him as a "Senior Lieutenant, Armed Special Services, General Headquarters for Special Forces of the Russian Federation." The Ministry of Defence was checking yesterday whether there was indeed such a GRU officer. "Even if he exists, you understand what methods could have been used on him in captivity," said a junior officer, who asked not to be named. Colonel Yakov Firsov of the Ministry of Defence said on the record: "The (Chechen) bandits feel their end is near and so they are using all manner of dirty tricks in the information war. This is a provocation. This is rubbish. The Russian armed forces protect the people. It is impossible that they would attack their own people." On the video, Lieutenant Galtin said he was captured at the border between Dagestan and Chechnya while on a mine-laying mission. "I did not take part in the explosions of the buildings in Moscow and Dagestan but I have information about it. I know who is responsible for the bombings in Moscow (and Dagestan). It is the FSB (Russian security service), in cooperation with the GRU, that is responsible for the explosions in Volgodonsk and Moscow." He then named other GRU officers. Nearly 300 people died when four multi-storey apartment blocks were destroyed by terrorist bombs in September. The attacks provoked Mr. Putin, appointed prime minister the month before, to launch a new war in Chechnya. Sedat Aral, a photographer with ISF News Pictures, said he shot the video in a bunker in Grozny, where he met Abu Musayev, head of Chechen rebel intelligence. Mr Musayev said the Chechens could prove they were not responsible for the apartment-block bombings. The Russian public backs the "anti-terrorist campaign" in Chechnya, which has so boosted the popularity of its author, Mr Putin, that Boris Yeltsin has retired early to make way for his chosen successor. However the war started, the beneficiary is clearly Mr Putin. The former head of Russia's domestic intelligence service is now poised to realise his presidential ambitions.

Commenting on the article a BBC correspondent Hazlet confirmed that the hypothesis of a special services conspiracy had existed since the time when the explosions had occurred, since the FSB could have planted the bomb in order to justify the military operation in Chechnya. In this context Hazlet remarked that the authorities had still not provided convincing proof of Chechen involvement in the bombings and Shamil Basaev, one of the people accused of these heinous crimes, categorically denied having anything to do with them. Hazlet supposed that on the eve of the presidential elections Putin could be badly damaged by the scandal over Galkin's video-taped testimony, since the popularity of this little-known officer of the FSB had improved considerably after military operations began in Chechnya.

The French newspaper *Le Monde* also wrote about the danger to Putin of exposes of the special services' involvement in the September bombings: "having reinforced his popularity and emerged victorious in the elections to the State *Duma* as a result of the war unleashed against the Chechen people, Vladimir Putin understands that there are only two things capable of preventing him from becoming president in the elections in March. These are major military failures and losses of personnel in Chechnya and the recognition that the Russian special services might have been involved in the bombing of residential buildings which cost about 300 people their lives in September of last year and served as the official pretext for the beginning of the 'anti-terrorist operation' in Chechnya."

It is interesting that in connection with the bombings in Moscow neither Lazovsky nor any of his people were questioned, although it would have been reasonable to assume that the people behind these terrorist attacks were the same as those behind the attacks of 1994-1996. Not until spring 2000 did the public prosecutor consent to Lazovsky's arrest. The people behind Lazovsky -- and it is obvious that the most important people standing behind Lazovsky were the Moscow UFSB -- decided not to allow Lazovsky to be arrested. According to operational information Lazovsky was killed immediately after the order for his arrest was issued. He was shot on April 28 2000 on the threshold of the Cathedral of the Assumption from a *Kalashnikov* automatic rifle with a silencer and an optical sight. The four bullets, one of which struck him in the throat, proved fatal. They were fired from a clump of shrubs about 150 meters away. For some reason the jeep in which Lazovsky's bodyguards constantly followed him around was nowhere nearby. The killer abandoned his weapon and went into hiding. Someone took the bloody corpse to the nearby hospital and put it on a bench. The local militia used a doctor from the *Odintsovo* polyclinic to identify the body. The records of the examination of the murder victim and the inspection of the scene of the incident were drawn up in an extremely sloppy and unprofessional manner, which provided a pretext for claiming that it was not Lazovsky who had been killed but his double.

On the evening of May 22 2000 a small detachment of guerrillas fell into a trap set by GRU special missions in the region between the villages of *Serzhen-Yurt* and *Shali*. The brief battle left ten guerrillas dead and the others were scattered. The dead included 38 year-old field commander and head of Chechen military counterintelligence Abu Movsaev, who had interrogated senior lieutenant Galkin and probably also possessed other information about the bombings. Local residents said that in May Movsaev had several times secretly come to spend the night with relatives who lived in *Shali*. One member of the local authorities had reported this to the UFSB representative, who did nothing about it. When a GRU special missions group had attempted to seize the field commander, the FSB had opposed them. A scandal blew up and the case was transferred to Moscow, where it was decided to bring Movsaev in. However, he was not brought in alive.

On March 9 2000 an airplane with nine people on board crashed on takeoff in Moscow. The nine were Artym Borovik, president of the holding company *Sovershenno sekretno* (*Top Secret*), Ziya Bazhaev, a Chechen national who was head of the holding company *Alliance Group*, two of the latter's bodyguards and five members of the crew. The *Yak-40* plane, rented by the holding company *Sovershenno sekretno* about a year earlier from the *Vologda* Aviation Company via the Moscow aviation company *Aerotex* should have flown on to *Kiev*. The report from the commission for the investigation of incidents in air transport stated that the *Vologda* aviation technicians had not sprayed the plane with special de-icing liquid before take-off and its wing-flaps had only been extended by 10 degrees, whereas for take-off 20 degrees was required. However, on the morning of

March 9 it was only four degrees below zero at *Sheremetievo* Airport and there had not been any precipitation. There was no need to spray the plane with the *Arktika* de-icing fluid. Furthermore, the *Yak-40* could have taken off and flown with its wing-flaps extended by only 10 degrees; the run-up would simply have been longer and it would have handled a bit sluggishly. Judging from the fact that the plane crashed at about the center of the runway, which at *Sheremetievo* is 3.6 kilometers long, the plane's run-up was the standard length of about 800 meters. On learning of the tragedy Grigory Yavlinsky, leader of the *Yabloko* (*Apple*) political party and State *Duma* deputy stated that recently Borovik and his team had been conducting an independent investigation into the bombings in Moscow. We can only guess at what conclusions Borovik would have reached.

Former KGB general Oleg Kalugin had his own opinion on the matter. He believed that the FSB, as an organization, was not directly involved in organizing the terrorist attacks and that the bombings had been ordered by one of the "Russian power blocs" which was interested in improving Putin's rating. Those who ordered the acts of terror might well have made use of individual specialists from the FSB or the old KGB, but the FSB itself only became involved in the operation after the fiasco in *Ryazan*, and it provided a cover story for the failed operation and its organizers.

Of course, this version raises the question of what sort of "bloc" it was and who was its leader, if after the failure in *Ryazan* the entire FSB, and other state departments too, were thrown into the "cover story for the failed operation and its organizers." It is clear that only Putin could have been in control of such a "bloc" and that the "Russian power bloc" attempting to improve Putin's rating consisted primarily of Putin himself, Patrushev, everyone who had striven to unleash war in Chechnya and those who wished to clench the special services into a solid fist.

Several unidentified FSB employees expressed their opinions on the failed bombing in *Ryazan* in an interview with journalists from *Novaya gazeta*: "If the bombing in *Ryazan* really was planned by the special services, then a highly clandestine group (5-6 people) must have been put together for it, including fanatical officers of two categories. The first, the front-line operatives, would have had to be eliminated immediately. And of course, the bosses wouldn't have given them any instructions directly." In addition "there is also a certain unlikely but in our conditions entirely possible account of the events in *Ryazan*. The decay within the special services led to the formation within, say, the FSB of a group of 'patriotic' officers which got out of control. (The present degree of co-ordination of action within this structure makes such a supposition possible.) Let us assume the group was sufficiently clandestine and autonomous, that it carried out specific secret tasks, but in addition to its main activities it became involved in work of its own. For instance, certain similar 'autonomous groups' may operate as elusive criminal groups in their free time. But out of certain political considerations these wanted to blow up a house in order to improve the nation's fighting spirit etc. Even if the leadership of the FSB does discover the unsanctioned activities of such a breakaway group, it will never acknowledge the fact of its existence. Of course, the schismatics will be declared wanted men and in the end they'll be liquidated, but without any unnecessary fuss. This secret, if it existed, would have been kept with special zeal. And they would have reacted to attempts to expose it just like they're acting now."

But even so the theory of a conspiracy within the FSB cannot account for the obvious patronage from the very top of the FSB and the state. And it is not right to assume that the FSB would have failed to spot such a major conspiracy within. To reach the rank of FSB general means going through hell and high water and developing an intuition so subtle that you can spot any conspiracy among subordinates from a mile away. And apart from that, internal informing is established on a

very wide scale within the FSB. A group of five or six men cannot possibly conspire to commit a terrorist act, and carrying out bombings in four cities requires far more than that number.

State *Duma* deputy Vladimir Volkov also believed that the September bombings were the work of the special services: “This is the second time in a row that presidential elections have apparently by accident coincided with a change for the worse in Chechnya. This time the Chechnya campaign was preceded by terrorist attacks in Moscow, *Buinaksk*, *Volgodonsk*, *Rostov*... But for some reason the bombing of a residential building in *Ryazan* failed and is now being described as an exercise. As a military man I know that no exercise is ever carried out using genuine explosive devices, that the local militia and FSB must have known about any exercise. Unfortunately, what happened in *Ryazan* was something else and the press is already openly saying that all the “Chechen” terrorist attacks in Russian cities were committed by the special services, who were preparing a ‘small war’ to suit Putin. The search for an answer to these suspicions has not yet begun, but it is already clear even today that instead of a white charger Putin has been handed a steed stained red with the spilt blood of the people.”

In their own distinctive celebration of the anniversary of the bombings in *Buinaksk*, Moscow and *Volgodonsk*, on August 8 2000 two FSB employees named in their “cover documents” as major Ismailov and captain Fyodorov carried out a terrorist attack on the pedestrian subway at *Pushkin* Square in Moscow. Thirteen people were killed and more than a hundred received injuries of varying degrees of severity. Not far from the site of the explosion specialists from the Moscow UFSB discovered another two explosive devices and fired on them from a water canon.

Yury Luzhkov was quick to attempt to pin this bombing on the Chechens as well: “This is Chechnya, no doubt about it.” This time, weary of the constant accusations, the Chechens decided to call the mayor to order. The head of the Chechen administration Akhmad Kadyrov expressed his indignation that the Chechens were once again being accused of a bombing without any proof. Kadyrov’s representative to the Russian government, the former minister of foreign affairs in the government of Djokhar Dudaev, Shamil Beno, threatened that Chechens would demonstrate in Moscow, and chairman of the State Council of Chechnya Malik Saidulaev promised an impressive reward for information about the real organizers of the bombing. Aslan Maskhadov also disassociated himself from the terrorist attack and offered Russians his condolences.

On August 12 2000, a group of twelve members of Andrei Alexandrovich Morev’s special group, having just arrived at 38 *Petrovka* Street for a briefing before another operation, had witnessed a conversation between Ismailov and Fyodorov about a job on *Pushkin* Square. The terrorist attack took place just three days later, and Morev recognized two FSB officers from the photofits.

Years will go by, maybe even decades. Russia will change, of course. It will have a different political elite, a different political leadership. And if we’re still alive, our children will ask us: why didn’t you say anything? When they were bombing you in Moscow, *Volgodonsk*, *Buinaksk*, *Ryazan*, why didn’t you say anything? Why did you behave like guinea-pigs in a laboratory?

We did say something. We screamed and yelled, we wrote... The inhabitants of house number 14/16 on *Novosyolov* Street tried to take the FSB to court. A letter sent to the General Public Prosecutor of Russia said: “We have been used for a monstrous experiment in which two hundred and forty entirely innocent people were cast in the role of extras. All of us suffered not only severe psychological trauma, but also irreversible damage to our health.” The people of *Ryazan* were

supported by the *Ryazan* regional authorities, but despite that the case never got beyond empty words and the collective application to the prosecutor's office was mislaid.

On March 18 Sergei Ivanenko and Yury Shchekochikhin, both *Duma* deputies belonging to the *Yabloko* faction, drafted the text of a *Duma* resolution for a parliamentary question to the acting General Public Prosecutor Vladimir Ustinov entitled "On the discovery in the city of *Ryazan* on September 22 1999 of an explosive substance and the circumstances of its investigation." Ivanenko and Shchekochikhin proposed that the deputies of the State *Duma* should be given answers to the following questions: What stage has been reached in the criminal case of the discovery of an explosive substance in *Ryazan* on September 22 1999? Has an analysis been carried out of the substance that was discovered? Who gave the order to hold an exercise and when, what were the aims and objectives of the exercise? What equipment and substances -- explosives or imitations thereof -- were used in the course of the exercise? Check material published in *Novaya gazeta* No. 10 2000 about hexogene packed in sugar sacks being stored at the weapons and munitions depot of a VDV training unit."

The draft question also mentioned the fact that during the first two days after the incident the FSB changed its official position. According to its first account, issued on September 22 1999, a terrorist attack had been foiled. According to the second, exercises designed to check the readiness of the agencies of law enforcement had been taking place in *Ryazan*. "A number of the facts adduced cast doubt on the official version of the events that took place in *Ryazan*" the text of the question stated. Information related to the exercise is restricted. The materials of the criminal case initiated by the UFSB of the *Ryazan* Region in connection with the discovery of explosive substance are inaccessible. The individuals who planted the imitation explosive substance have not been named, nor have the persons who issued the order to hold the exercise. "The statement by the leadership of the FSB that the substance found in *Ryazan* consisted of granulated sugar does not stand up to examination." In particular, the instrument used to analyze the substance that was found indicated the presence of hexogene and was in perfect working order and the detonator of the explosive device was not an imitation.

Unfortunately a majority of the members of the *Duma* voted not to put the question. Those who opposed the putting of the question included the pro-governmental party *Edinstvo (Unity)*, the *People's Deputies (Narodnykh deputatov)* group, part of the *Regions of Russia (Regiony Rossii)* faction and part of the *Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia*. Those who voted for the question were *Yabloko*, *The Union of Rightist Forces (Soiuz pravykh sil or SPS)*, the Communists and the *Agrarian and Industrialist Group (Agrarno-promyshlennaya gruppа or APG)*. As a result Shchekochikhin and Ivanenko's parliamentary supporters gathered only 103 votes (against the 226 they required). For some reason the Russian parliament was not interested in the truth about the September bombings.

The second attempt to table a question, undertaken on March 31, brought Shchekochikhin and Ivanenko closer to their goal, but also ended in failure. Voting took place at a plenary session of the *Duma*, and despite the support of the *Communists*, the *Agrarians and Industrialists* and *Yabloko*, as well as part of the faction *Our Fatherland is All Russia (Otechestvo – vsia Rossia or OVR)* and the *SPS*, the draft question only gathered 197 votes against 137, with one abstention. Not a single deputy from the *Unity* faction voted in favor.

On March 16 2000 Zdanovich stated in one of his interviews that according to information in the possession of the FSB the journalist Nikolai Nikolaev, who presented the “Independent Investigation” series on the NTV television channel, was intending to broadcast an investigation into the exercise in *Ryazan* from the NTV studio within the next few days, before the presidential elections. The program was scheduled for March 24. It is hardly surprising that only a few days later the news that had been anticipated for many months finally arrived. On March 21 the *Federal News Agency (FNA)* announced the results of the analysis of the samples of “sugar” found in *Ryazan* on September 22 1999. The *FNA*’s information came from the *Ryazan* Region, from major-general Sergeiev, the head of the local UFSB, who said the analysis had determined that the sacks which had been discovered contained sugar without any traces of absolutely any kind of explosive substances. “Following the investigations carried out of the samples of sugar no traces of TNT, hexogene, nitroglycerine or other explosive substances were discovered”, said the report from the experts. In addition, according to Sergeiev, the analysis had confirmed that the explosive device found together with the sacks of sugar was only a mock-up. The conclusion was: “Consequently we may conclude that this device was not a bomb, since it lacked both a charge of explosive material and the means of detonation.”

It gradually became clear that the FSB was attempting to close the criminal case before Nikolaev’s TV program and the presidential elections. Following Patrushev’s statement about “exercises” the criminal case initiated by the head of the investigative department of the UFSB RF for the *Ryazan* Region lieutenant-colonel Maximov had been halted. However, on December 2, i.e. more than two months later, the General Public Prosecutor’s Office decided that the case had been halted prematurely and set aside the decision taken by the *Ryazan* UFSB on September 27, thereby reinstating the investigation and making it clear that something was not quite right with the FSB’s story about “exercises.” The completion of the investigation, however, was not entrusted to an independent investigator, but to one of the interested parties, in fact to the FSB, the very organization accused of planning the terrorist act. But at least the case had not been closed.

The *Ryazan* UFSB made repeated requests to the FSB laboratory in Moscow for the full text of the report on the analysis of the substance in the sugar sacks and the mechanical device found with them. On March 15 2000 the UFSB finally received from Moscow the long-awaited reply of which its leaders had such great hopes: “It was established that the substance in all the samples was saccharose, the basis of sugar produced from sugar beet and sugar cane. The chemical composition and appearance of the substance investigated correspond to those of sugar as used for food. No explosive substances were discovered in the samples presented. The triggering device could not have been used as a means of detonation, since it lacked a charge of explosive material. Consequently there was no real threat to the inhabitants [of the building].” This meant, of course, that there were no indications of “terrorism.”

“In my view, we have been given sufficiently weighty reasons to halt the investigation in view of the instructional nature of the events which took place on September 22 1999 in the house on *Novosyolov* Street,” was the opinion expressed on March 21 2000 by Maximov, the investigator who had initiated the criminal case.

Now the results of the analysis performed by Tkachenko had to be disavowed. This honorable task was discharged by Maximov on March 21: “The analysis was carried out by the head of the engineering and technical section Yury Vasilievich Tkachenko. As was subsequently discovered, following a twenty-four period of duty his hands bore traces of plastic explosive, the composition of

which includes hexogene. It should be noted that this kind of “background pollution” in the form of microparticles can persist on the skin for long periods, up to three months. The analytical procedure to be carried could only have been pure if performed in disposable gloves. Unfortunately, these do not form part of the work kit of an explosives specialist and no funds are available to provide them. We have come to the conclusion that this was the only reason that the ‘diagnosis’ made by the militia officers was the presence of an explosive substance.”

No doubt this was precisely what Maximov wrote in the supporting documentation sent to the General Public Prosecutor’s Office when he explained the need to close the case against the FSB under the law on terrorism. We have no right to demand heroism from the investigator. Maximov has a family, just like the rest of us, and it would have been impractical and dangerous to oppose the leadership of the FSB. It should, however, be noted that Maximov’s opinion contradicts the view of Tkachenko, who can in no wise be suspected of being an interested party in this matter. Tkachenko’s principled stance could not bring him anything but problems.

The *Ryazan* section of explosives specialists headed by Tkachenko was unique not only in *Ryazan* but in all of the surrounding districts. It included 13 professional sappers with extensive experience who had attended several courses of advanced training in Moscow at the *Vzryvispytanie* (*Explosives testing*) research and technical centre and who sat special examinations every two years. Tkachenko claimed that the equipment in his department was world standard. The gas analyzer used to analyze the substance that was discovered -- a device which cost about 20,000 dollars -- was in perfect working order (as it would have to be, since a sapper’s life depends on the condition of his equipment). According to the gas analyzer’s technical specifications it was both highly reliable and highly accurate, so that if the results of an analysis indicated the presence of hexogene fumes in the contents of the sacks, there should be no room for doubt. Consequently, the “imitation” detonator clearly included a live explosive substance, not an instructional substitute. According to Tkachenko the detonator which was rendered safe by the explosives specialists was also professionally constructed and not a mock-up.

In theory a mistake could have been made if the apparatus had not been properly serviced and if the gas analyzer had retained traces of material from a previous investigation. Tkachenko’s reply to a question about this possibility was as follows: “The gas analyzer is only serviced by a genuine specialist according to a strict schedule: there are work plans and there are prophylactic checks, since the apparatus includes a permanent radiation source.” There could also not have been any old “traces” because the identification of hexogene vapor is a rare event in the working life of any laboratory. Tkachenko and his colleagues were unable to recall any cases when they had needed to use the apparatus to identify hexogene.

On March 20 the inhabitants of the house on *Novosyolov* Street assembled at the NTV studio for the recording of the program *Independent Investigation* (*Nezavisimoe rassledovanie*). Representatives of the FSB also arrived at the television centre. The public tele-investigation was broadcast on March 24 with the participation of Alexander Zdanovich, first deputy head of the FSB’s investigative department Stanislav Voronov, Yury Shchekochikhin, Oleg Kalugin, Savostyanov, the head of the *Ryazan* UFSB Sergeiev, investigators and experts from the FSB, independent experts, legal experts, civil rights lawyers and psychologists.

Performing unmasked and unarmed the FSB personnel suffered a clear defeat at the hands of the public. The six months-long analysis of the sugar seemed like a joke. “If you claim that there was

sugar in the sacks, then the criminal case based on the charge of terrorism must be halted. But the criminal case has not yet been halted. That means it was not sugar,” exclaimed the attorney Pavel Astakhov, unaware that on March 21 the case really would be closed. It was obvious that different sacks had been sent to Moscow for the second analysis, not the ones which were found in *Ryazan*. But no one could prove this obvious fact.

Raphael Gilmanov, the explosives expert of *Transryvprom* was present in the hall and he confirmed that it is quite impossible to confuse hexogene with sugar. They are not even similar in appearance. He said that the FSB investigators’ claim that the first analysis had been polluted by “traces” from the briefcase of an explosives specialist was unconvincing. Equally unconvincing were the FSB representatives’ claims that the sappers called to the scene of the incident had mistaken a mock-up for a genuine explosive device. The FSB officers explained that general Sergeiev, who had reported the presence of the detonating device and was now present in the hall “is no great specialist in the area of explosive devices” and that on September 22 he had simply made a mistake. For some reason general Sergeiev did not take offence at being accused of a lack of professionalism, although the public statement he had made about the detonating device on September 22 had been based on the conclusions of experts under his command, concerning whose professional qualifications there was no doubt.

It turned out that the audience in the hall included a lot of military men, who unhesitatingly declared that what had happened in *Ryazan* bore no resemblance to any kind of exercises, not even those which were made “as close to life” as possible. The preparations for military exercises involved certain compulsory procedures, in particular concerning the possibility of an emergency, the provision of first aid and medication, bandages and warm clothing. Even the most important of exercises had to be coordinated with local leaders and the government departments concerned. In the *Ryazan* incident there had been no preparations and no co-ordination. That was not the way exercises were conducted, declared one of the inhabitants of the house in *Ryazan*, a professional soldier.

In general the FSB officers’ arguments were so inept that the response of one of the inhabitants of the house was a curt: “Stop trying to pull the wool over our eyes.” Here is a brief extract from the TV debate.

People: The FSB’s investigative department initiated a criminal investigation. So did it instigate a criminal case against itself?

FSB: The criminal case was instigated on the basis of evidence discovered.

People: But if it was an exercise, what was the evidence?

FSB: You haven’t been listening. The exercise was conducted in order to check the interaction between various law enforcement agencies. At the moment when the criminal case was initiated, neither the *Ryazan* militia nor the federal agencies knew it was an exercise...

People: Then who was the case taken against?

FSB: I repeat the criminal case was instigated on the basis of evidence discovered.

People: What evidence? Evidence of an exercise in *Ryazan*?

FSB: It’s not worth even trying to explain to someone who has no idea of criminal law procedure...

People: What happened to the safety of the citizens who spent the whole night in the street, what about the safety of their physical and psychological health? And a second thing, you are outraged when telephone terrorists phone up and threaten bombings, but how are you any different from them?

FSB: What does guaranteeing the safety of citizens mean? It's the final effect, when there won't be any more explosions...

People: I'm an ex-soldier. The number of exercises I went through in 28 years, you know, and what these fine respectable people, these generals are telling us about exercises, you know, it's enough to make you sick!

FSB: As a former soldier you probably carried out military exercises. We work in a special service and that service uses special personnel and equipment on the basis of the law on operational and investigative activity...

(We interrupt the argument between the people and the FSB to emphasize once again that on the subject of exercises the law "On operational and investigative activity in the Russian Federation" makes no mention of exercises.)

People: If there was someone recording what happened during the exercise, where are those people now?

FSB: If we could only increase our staff ten times over, then of course...

People: Stop trying to pull the wool over our eyes! The people who saw the hexogene would never confuse it with sugar...

FSB: They sprinkled the powder on the lid of a briefcase they've been taking to all their training sessions since 1995. And they even took it to Chechnya. In short, the test papers reacted to the hexogene fumes...

People: I saw the sacks from only three meters away. In the first place, they were yellowish. In the second place, they were fine granules, like vermicelli.

FSB: Sugar from the *Kursk* Region. Sugar from the *Voronezh* Region is different. And the sugar we get from Cuba is altogether yellow!

The *Ryazan* journalist Alexander Badanov was present in the studio and the next day his article appeared in a local *Ryazan* newspaper: "In the television program the people from *Ryazan* tried to find out what really happened. However, the FSB spokesmen failed to give satisfactory answers to most of the questions... According to Zdanovich, the FSB is now pursuing a criminal investigation based on the September events in *Ryazan*. Such an absurdity is probably only possible in Russia: the FSB is pursuing a criminal investigation into an exercise conducted by itself! But a case can only be instigated on the assumption that an unlawful act has been committed. What then are we to make of all the previous statements from highly placed members of the special services that no laws were broken in the course of the exercise? The residents of house number 14 attempted to submit a claim for recompense for moral damage against the FSB to the *Ryazan* public prosecutor's office. The residents were told that under the procedural rules they could only present their claim against the particular individual who gave the order to carry out the exercise. Zdanovich and Sergeiev were asked the same question six times: Who gave the order to hold the exercise in *Ryazan*? Six times Zdanovich and Sergeiev avoided answering, saying it would prejudice the investigation... The lack

of genuine information has given rise to the story that the special services really did want to blow up a residential building in *Ryazan* to justify the offensive carried out by federal forces in Chechnya and to rouse the soldiers' fighting spirit. "I saw the contents of the sacks and it wasn't anything like sugar," Alexei Kartofelnikov said in conclusion. "I am sure that what was in the sacks was not sugar, but genuine hexogene." The other residents of the house agree with him. It would seem to be in the FSB's own interests to name the person who signed the order to hold the exercise which has undermined the people's trust in the Russian special services and their prestige."

The practical outcome of the meeting in the studio was that the attorney Astakhov became involved in the old collective complaint submitted by the people from the house. The victims requested the General Public Prosecutor's Office to explain the goals of the operation and also to determine the size and form of compensation for moral damages. This time the reply came back with suspicious speed: "The FSB personnel acted within their competence," said the General Public Prosecutor's Office. The reason for haste is clear enough. Zdanovich had a press conference planned for March 24, at which he intended to "go for" the mass media, and the presidential election was set for March 26.

Following the shameful defeat of Zdanovich and his colleagues in Nikolaev's studio the leadership of the FSB decided not to take part in any more open debates with the public and not to go to NTV any more. It was during these fateful days for the entire country that the FSB also decided to launch the planned annihilation of NTV. On the evening of March 26, the day of the election, in Yevgeny Kiselyov's program *Itogi (Summing Up)* Boris Nemtsov stated publicly that NTV was in danger of being closed down because it had shown Nikolaev's program "The *Ryazan* sugar -- special services exercise or failed bombing?"

"I don't know what's going to happen to NTV. After one of the authors, Nikolaev I think his name was, told his version of the bombings in Moscow and other cities. I think there is now a real threat hanging over NTV... I believe it is my duty to protect NTV if any attempts are made to close it down. And I cannot rule out the existence of such a possibility. At least such attempts have been in relation to a number of journalists, perhaps not coming from Putin, but from his entourage."

Speaking off the record FSB generals admitted that they had taken the decision to force the leaders of the NTV television channel Gusinsky, Igor Malashenko and Kiselyov out of Russia. Literally the day after Putin came to power he set about destroying NTV and Gusinsky's media empire *Most (Bridge)*, and the only one of the three men named above who has been able to remain in Russia is Kiselyov.

By March 24 Zdanovich desperately needed to have in his possession a decision of the General Public Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation confirming the legality of the FSB's exercise in *Ryazan* in September 1999. And Zdanovich actually received such a document just before his press conference on March 23. The General Public Prosecutor's Office refused the application made by the citizens of *Ryazan* for the instigation of criminal proceedings against FSB personnel for holding an "anti-terrorist exercise" in September 1999 on the grounds that "no crime had been committed." The conclusion of the Public Prosecutor's Office was that the actions taken by operatives of the state security agencies to check the efficiency of measures taken by the agencies of law and order had not breached the limits of competence of the agencies of the FSB of Russia with regard to "a complex of preventive and prophylactic measures designed to ensure the safety of the public" which had been implemented in the course of the *Whirlwind Anti-Terror* operation "with

reference to the sharp deterioration of the operational situation in the country as a result of a series of terrorist acts.” In view of this and also taking into consideration the fact that the actions of the FSB operatives had not resulted in any consequences involving danger to the public and had not involved any violations of citizens’ rights or interests, the General Public Prosecutor’s Office had decided to reject the application for the instigation of criminal proceedings.

In the evening of that very day the head of the department for monitoring the FSB at the General Public Prosecutor’s Office, Vladimir Titov, triumphantly reported this outcome in the five o’clock news bulletin on the state television channel RTR. As retold by RTR and Titov the familiar tale of what happened in *Ryazan* had become quite unrecognizable:

RTR: The residents were evacuated. The explosives specialist who arrived at the scene did not find any explosive substance. At first the militiamen wanted to declare the whole incident a stupid joke.

Titov: But then the head of the analysis department Tkachenko arrived and checked the sacks with the apparatus he was carrying. The apparatus showed the presence of hexogene.

RTR: A kilogram of the contents was extracted from each sack and taken to the proving ground. But the substance did not detonate. The sacks contained sugar. Two days later the director of the FSB Nikolai Patrushev announced that an anti-terrorist exercise had been held in *Ryazan*. And the experts explained why the apparatus used by Tkachenko had indicated the presence of hexogene.

Titov: The head of the laboratory was constantly performing analyses and the apparatus reacted to the presence of microparticles on his hands.

RTR: Today a line has been drawn under the “*Ryazan* hexogene” case . Copies of the ruling of the General Public Prosecutor’s Office are being sent to the *Ryazan* UFSB and for the attention of deputies of the *Yabloko Duma* faction who drafted a question on the progress of the investigation.

The initial conclusions of experts that the sacks discovered in the basement of the apartment building in *Ryazan* contained hexogene were overturned in the course of the investigation carried out by the General Public Prosecutor’s Office. Repeat analysis proved that the sacks were filled with sugar. However, the press and television carried reports that hexogene had been used in the exercise and that in conducting the exercise the FSB had put the public at risk.

Titov: There is only one conclusion that can be drawn, the self-interest of some correspondents, I would even say dishonesty... all they want is to cook up some tall story, that’s all... just to push their circulation up.

RTR: The residents of house number 14 to 16 on *Novosyolov* Street will now finally learn why they had to spend all night out in the street waiting for an explosion.

Titov: It was a test for the head of the local UFSB. They had to see how he would act in an emergency.

RTR: In conclusion the General Public Prosecutor’s Office has ruled that the exercise as held did not involve any danger to the public and fell within the limits of competence of the special services. The official investigation begun by the *Ryazan* investigators under the law on terrorism last autumn will be closed.

On September 24, now in possession of this remarkable indulgence in which the General Public Prosecutor's Office denied the people of *Ryazan* the right to proceed legally against the FSB, Zdanovich launched his attack on the journalists. In a highly nervous state, speaking atrocious Russian, he began issuing unconcealed threats:

"I would like to draw your attention to the fact that we have not failed and will not fail in the future -- I wish to state this officially -- to note a single provocation which individual journalists organize against the state service, the institution of the state... That means, to take a concrete example: there is a correspondent from the *Novaya gazeta* who published these articles, I am not afraid to call him a provocateur, since we have the testimony in full of the soldier who later, so to speak, was used to rehash the story in the *Obshchaya gazeta* too about the way everything happened and how those words were, so to speak, dragged out of him, and what he was promised for all of it. It's all proved. Under the current criminal investigation concerning this... concerning your publications, perhaps not yours, the proceedings concern some others -- it will all be finished in early April. That means your correspondent will be interrogated in the course of the criminal investigation to see why he, so to speak, committed such actions. And under this there are already specific complaints from members of the airborne assault forces, and when it has all been procedurally consolidated and the minutes are fitted into the criminal case and it's evaluated in the appropriate manner by the prosecutor's office and members of our Contractual and Legal Department I wouldn't be at all surprised if we take formal legal action, including through the courts, because no one is allowed to engage in provocation."

Having heard Zdanovich's threats one of the journalists present at the briefing, apparently not too seriously frightened, said: "Well, to be honest I didn't want to ask you a question about *Ryazan*, the subject doesn't interest me very much, but you launched into the polemic yourself. Can you please explain to me, say I have a private house in the country, can you hold a practise alert there and plant a practise bomb under my house, do you have the legal right?"

Zdanovich's answer demonstrated yet again that although the FSB and Russian society may live in the same state, they speak different languages: "Right, I understand, right then, let me say once again that we acted strictly within the limits of the law on combating terrorism. All of our actions have been investigated by the public prosecutor and not a single action which violated one or another law has been identified. That's the answer I can give you."

There were too many events crowded into the second half of March. It was evidently because of the election that the issue of the disgraced *Novaya gazeta* carrying material on the financing of Putin's election campaign and the FSB never appeared. On March 17 unidentified hackers broke into the newspaper's computer and destroyed the electronic proofs for that issue. Shchekochikhin announced that the forced entry of their computer system was only the latest in a series of incidents designed to prevent the newspaper from functioning normally. In particular the newspaper's offices had recently been broken into and the computer containing information on advertisers had been stolen. Over the last two years the tax police have carried out four checks in the *Novaya gazeta* offices and the Kremlin has demanded that certain of its sponsors cease financing this uncooperative organ of the press.

The management of *Novaya gazeta* attempted to find out why exactly it had found itself in such serious conflict with the FSB. *Novaya gazeta* journalists actually asked some members of that

department to analyze the situation for them. The reply received by the newspaper is nothing if not frank;

“This kind of activity by the state against a publication undoubtedly indicates that you have entered forbidden territory and stepped on someone’s toes. It could be that you were undesirable witnesses to one of the less fortunate episodes in the internal squabbles between the special services. If this did happen none of the opposed groups within the system will confirm it. It is in all of their interests to conceal it. They are clearly apprehensive that new living witnesses to the preparation of the *Ryazan* ‘events’ may turn up.”

By this time the provincial town of *Ryazan* had become a place of pilgrimage for foreign journalists. As Pavel Voloshin wittily remarked *Ryazan* “will soon have as many foreign journalists per head of population as Moscow.” All the five-star rooms in the local hotels were now occupied by foreign correspondents and all of them, together with their camera crews, were besieging the local militia, the FSB and even the MChS. And so the UFSB and UVD in *Ryazan* received orders from Moscow to break off contacts with the press. Some officers who had already given interviews hastily took back what they had said. In the *Ryazan* departments of law enforcement an internal investigation into leaks of information was begun. And Bludov answered all of the journalists’ questions with a terse “No comment.”

To a man the residents of the house in *Ryazan* changed their minds about taking the FSB to court, although no one was convinced the FSB was innocent. Militia and FSB officers visited house number 14/16 repeatedly and tried to persuade people not to sue the organizers of the exercise. Even general Sergeiev came, asked them not to complain and apologized for his colleagues in Moscow. When on September 20 NTV broadcast a report on the imminent first anniversary of the woeful incident, one of the woman said: “That date’s coming up soon and I just feel like leaving home. Because I’m afraid, God forbid, that they’ll mark the anniversary with another exercise like the first one. Personally I have my doubts it was an exercise. I have my doubts.” “They treated us like scum,” said another woman living in the house. “If only they’d at least told us early in the morning it was an exercise, but it was only two days later... We don’t believe it was an exercise.” “I don’t believe it was an exercise,” said Ludmila Kartofelnikov. “How can they mock people like that? On the eighth floor of our house an elderly woman couldn’t carry her paralyzed mother out and she was evacuated on her own. The way she sobbed afterwards in the cinema!” The hero of the events in *Ryazan* Alexei Kartofelnikov also had his doubts: “On that day no one explained to us that it was an exercise. And we don’t believe it was. That’s the way it is here -- if something blew up, it was a terrorist attack. If they disarmed it, it was an exercise.”

Moving beyond the bounds of the law, the FSB based its actions not on the Constitution of the Russian Federation, not even on the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, but on its own political preferences as expressed in formal orders and verbal instructions. The arbitrary lawlessness into which Russia has been plunged has come about above all because the special services have worked in a planned and deliberate manner to undermine the legislative foundations of Russian statehood in order to create chaos and the conditions which would allow them to seize power. In this war the special services’ most terrible weapon were the freelance special operations groups which they organized and controlled right across the country.

Chapter 8

The FSB sets up freelance special operations groups

Freelance conspirational military operations groups consisting of former and current members of special armed forces units and the structures of law enforcement began to be set up in Russia in the 1980s. Russia has about 30 state departments of armed law enforcement, and military operations sections were set up within each of them. It is hard to say whether this development was deliberately organized or spontaneous. It is, however, obvious that the FSB tries to have its own people everywhere and even if it does not always organize the groups in the formal sense of the word, it has controlled their activity to a greater or lesser degree from the very beginning. The story of the establishment in the Maritime Territory of the group headed by the brothers Alexander and Sergei Larionov is an instructive example.

In the late 80s Alexander and Sergei Larionov were assigned to work in one of the largest production associations in *Vladivostok*, named *Vostoktransflot*. Once there, Sergei Larionov rapidly became the head of the association's Communist Youth Organization. When the privatization of the association began, the Larionov brothers somehow managed to find enough money to buy, either in person or through their representatives a large block of shares in *Vostoktransflot* and then they registered a security service at the company under the name of *System SB*. This organization became the basis for the most powerful and violent organized criminal group in the history of the Maritime Territory.

The Larionov brothers' men toured the military bases of the Pacific Fleet, approaching the commanders or their deputies for personnel matters and telling them they were hiring men due for transfer to the reserve for work in the special units of *System SB* which dealt with the fight against organized crime. So after they were demobilized ex-members of military sabotage groups went to work for the Larionovs. Their group was structured on the same lines as the GRU, with its own intelligence and counter-intelligence sections, its own "cleaners", its own surveillance brigades, explosives specialists and analysts. State-of-the-art equipment was bought in Japan: radio scanners that could intercept pager messages and radio-telephone conversations, "bugs", night-vision devices and directional microphones concealed in a variety of objects.

The Larionovs' brigade worked very closely with the special services of the Maritime Territory, primarily with the naval intelligence service of the GRU. Contracts for the elimination of criminal "bosses" came from the local UFSB. The Larionovs' own analysts identified seven such bosses who headed groups which controlled businesses in *Vladivostok*. The brothers decided to "take them out" and take over the businesses for themselves.

The man at the top of the list was a bandit with the underworld name of "Chekhov." Two "liquidators" from the Larionovs' brigade set up an ambush on a road outside the city and raked "Chekhov"'s automobile with automatic weapons fire. When the driver leapt out of the car he was killed by a shot to the head and the wounded "boss" was taken into the low hills, doused with petrol and set on fire.

An explosive device of massive power was thrown into the bedroom of another "condemned man." The target escaped unhurt, but the entrance hall of the apartment building collapsed and four innocent bystanders were killed.

In 1993 conflict arose within the group. One of its leaders, Vadim Goldberg, and his allies kidnapped Alexander Larionov, took him out to the forest and killed him by stabbing him dozens of times with knives. When he learned his brother was dead, Sergei Larionov went into hiding. Late in 1993 all the members of the band, including Sergei Larionov and Goldberg were arrested by militia detectives. At one of his first interrogations Larionov declared that he wouldn't say anything yet, but he would tell everything he knew at the trial: everything about *System SB* and its controllers in the special services. To prevent this from happening Larionov was killed. He was being held in the *Vladivostok* detention center No. 1, in a solitary cell under heavy guard. As Larionov was on his way to another interrogation a prisoner called Yevgeny Demianenko, who had been behind bars for 19 years, was led into the corridor in the opposite direction. As Demianenko passed Larionov he pulled out "a point" and killed Larionov with a single blow.

The acts of vengeance against Larionov continued after he was dead. In 1999 persons unknown attempted to blow up his flat with his wife inside it, but she was not hurt. Some time later a hired killer shot Larionov's lawyer Nadezhda Samikhova. Rumors circulated in *Vladivostok* that "the special services are getting rid of witnesses." The public prosecutor's office certainly took a suspiciously long time to bring the case to court. The investigation lasted for several years and charges were only brought on January 14 2000. The criminal case against the Larionovs' group amounted to 108 volumes, but there were only nine accused in the dock. Three of them left the court as free men, because the time they had spent in detention was counted against their sentence. The others were given jail sentences of eight to 15 years (Goldberg himself received a 15-year term).

There is good reason to believe that the brigade of the well known Samara criminal "boss" Alexander Litvinka (known by the underworld nickname of "Nissan") worked for the FSB. Litvinka lived in Ukraine. In the early 80s he arrived in Samara and following a series of armed robberies he was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. He emerged from the penal colonies as a "boss" and was given the nickname of "Nissan" for his love of Japanese automobiles. Having acquired the support of *Samara* "bosses" such as Dmitry Ruzlyayev ("Big Dima") and Mikhail Besfamilny ("Fiend"). Litvinka set up his own brigade, which was founded on former karate players who were strict teetotalers and obeyed orders unquestioningly.

Litvinka was soon involved in a war for control of the Volga Automobile Plant (VAZ). In early 1996 a meeting between representatives of two Samara criminal groupings was held at the Dubki Hotel . When the negotiations had been successfully concluded, four persons unknown shot the assembled delegates using Kalashnikovs. Four underworld "bosses" and one "legitimate villain" were killed. Litvinka was identified as one of the assailants and he was arrested shortly afterwards. A month later he was released from jail and no charges were brought against him. From that moment on no one in criminal circles doubted that Litvinka worked for the special services and he was declared an outlaw at one of the "thieves' councils." To avoid being killed, Litvinka left the *Samara* Region and only appeared there on rare occasions, usually to carry out another contract killing of a gangland "boss." It seems clear that Litvinka was responsible for the killing of Ruzlyayev in *Samara* in 1998 and of the "boss" Konstantin Berkut in 1999.

On the afternoon of September 23 2000 Alexander Litvinka was killed in Moscow in the vicinity of house number 27 on *Krylatskie Kholmy* Street. The shooting was carried out by four men. At the crime scene militiamen found four pistols abandoned by the killers: two "Makarovs" with silencers, a "Kedr" automatic and an "Izh-Baikal." They also found a "Makarov" belonging to the victim. The

assailants left the scene in a white VAZ-2107 automobile. We can only guess at who it was that eliminated Litvinka, FSB operatives or *Samara* “bosses.”

The well known *Kurgan* brigade of Alexander Solonika (“Sasha the Macedonian”), consisting mostly of former and current employees of the Russian special services and military units, was also “run” by the special services, in particular the SBP and FSB. The *Kurgan* group appeared in Moscow in the early 90s and was taken over by the leader of the *Orekhov* group, Sergei Timofeiev (“Sylvester”). Timofeiev was an agent of the MB-FSK and maintained close contact with a former officer of the Fifth Department of the KGB USSR by the name of Maiorov, who later headed up one of the security organizations in the *Toko* Bank. Maiorov regularly visited the head of the Operations Department (OU) of the ATTs FSB, lieutenant-general Ivan Kuzmich Mironov, the former secretary of the Communist Party organization of the Fifth Department of the KGB USSR, who was now directly responsible for seeking out terrorists.

In the mid-90s major changes began taking place within the *Orekhov* group when Timofeiev acquired a rival in the person of Sergei Butorin (“Osya”). In September 1994 Timofeiev was blown up in his Mercedes automobile. Then one by one people loyal to Timofeiev disappeared. Butorin created his own group, which included people from the *Orekhov*, *Kurgan* and *Medvedkov* criminal organizations. His “cleaners” included special operations officers from the GRU, MVD and VDV. Serving members of various military and law enforcement departments appeared in Butorin’s entourage, including one lieutenant-colonel from counter-intelligence (he was later accused of a number of serious crimes, but the charges were dropped).

In late 1994 three men by the names of Koligov, Neliubin and Ignatov emerged as the clear leaders of the *Kurgan* group. The fame of the “*Kurgan* cleaners” spread throughout Russia. One of the most famous of the hitmen was Alexander Solonik, but the most active and dangerous killer in the group was called Konakhovich.

The *Kurgan* group fought a bitter war with the *Bauman* group. According to one of the agents who worked with the *Kurgan* group, during this war dozens of members of the *Bauman* brigade were killed, and usually they were first abducted and subjected to extremely cruel torture, including being burned and having their eyes put out before they were eventually finished off. The *Kurgan* group called the members of the *Bauman* group “the beasts’ brigade” and claimed that it included a lot of Dagestanis. One reason the war was fought was to gain control over one of the firms that sold American automobiles. But the real point was that the tires of these automobiles were used to conceal drugs imported from Columbia.

The activities of the *Kurgan* group were monitored by the 12th Section of MUR. Operational matters were handled by Oleg Plokhikh. Two members of the *Kurgan* organization were finally arrested and put away in the *Matrosskaya Tishina* (*Sailor’s Silence*) detention center. In conversation with his lawyer one of them said that if they used psychotropic drugs on him he might break down and “spill” everything he knew about a dozen major contract killings, including that of the well known television journalist Listiev. He asked to be transferred to *Lefortovo* jail and promised to begin co-operating with the investigation if they would give him definite guarantees of his safety, since the *Kurgans* had been responsible for many killings, including those of several so-called “legitimate villains”, which were punishable by death under the unwritten laws of Russian prisons. MUR began preparations to move both the detainees, but they were too late. Information leaked out and both *Kurgans* were killed during the same night, even though they were in different

cells. It was a contract killing of two suspects whose testimony would have helped to solve a number of other sensational contract killings.

Solonik was luckier. After his arrest he was put in a special wing at *Matrosskaya Tishina*, from where arrangements were made for his flight abroad, to Greece.

The rout of the *Kurgans* might have been the direct responsibility of the leader of the *Koptev* criminal organization, Vasily Naumov (“Naum”), who was one of the MVD’s secret agents. At one time the *Kurgans* had gained the confidence of the *Koptev* organization and then, having identified almost all of their rivals’ sources of income, they began doing away with the *Koptev* brigade’s leaders. Realizing just who was responsible, Naumov “shopped” the *Kurgans* to the 12th Section of MUR. Then the FSB became involved in the conflict because it didn’t want the *Kurgan* group, which it ran, to be destroyed and because it was afraid of information leaking out and causing a scandal. The FSB quickly figured out that information on the *Kurgans* was being supplied to MUR by Naumov, who had close contacts with members of the *Kurgan* group. They informed the *Kurgans* of their discovery.

On January 27 1997 Naumov, accompanied by his armed bodyguards from the militia special operations group *Saturn*, arrived by car for a meeting with the MUR operations officer who was his contact at the GUVB building at 38 *Petrovka* Street. He called the officer on his mobile phone, asked him to join him outside and carried on waiting in the car. While the officer was coming downstairs from his office, a *Zhiguli* automobile pulled in behind Naumov’s car and the men in it shot Naumov dead with automatic weapons. The *Kurgans* had made it clear that they knew about Naumov’s collaboration with MUR.

Agent Naumov’s activities could not, however, have led to the destruction of the *Kurgan* group if not for two other circumstances. The first was that Korzhakov was removed from his post as head of the SBP and the structure was subsequently dismantled. Without Korzhakov’s support the *Kurgans* were vulnerable. The second was a “paid up” contract issued to the central administration of the MVD for the *Kurgan* group’s destruction. The contract was “paid” by the *Bauman* bandits, who traditionally had good contacts in the MVD and after Korzhakov’s dismissal they were able to raise the matter of getting rid of the *Kurgans* in the ministry.

Apart from MUR, the *Kurgans* were also being hunted down by Butorin, who gave orders for them to be shot. All of the murders planned by Butorin’s group were thoroughly planned and executed at the level of professional special services, including literally minute-by-minute reporting-in by participants in an operation. The intention was to gather together the core of the *Kurgan* operatives (Koligov, Neliubin, Ignatov and Solonik) in Greece and kill them all at the same time.

Butorin’s operation for the annihilation of Solonik’s group was carried out under the control of the FSB or the GRU. Probably this is why there was an information leak and two weeks of round-the-clock observation of the Greek villa were wasted. Koligov, Neliubin and Ignatov didn’t turn up to see Solonik. Then two people who were loyal to Butorin, “Sasha the Soldier” and “Seriozha,” both of whom knew Solonik, arrived at Solonik’s house, called him out to the car and drove off in the direction of Athens. On the way “Soldier,” who was sitting on the rear seat, threw a noose over Solonik’s neck and strangled him.

Meanwhile operatives of the Moscow RUOP had set out to fly to Greece after receiving information from Butorin that Solonik lived in the small village of *Baribobi* on the outskirts of *Athens*. Following the directions Butorin had given them, on February 3 1997 the RUOP officers discovered

Solonik's body. If they had arrived a day earlier they might have found him alive. But the people who drew up the timetable for their operation knew just who should arrive where and when, and they were late precisely because they were not supposed to find Solonik alive.

That, in general terms, is the official version of events. But what actually happened we shall never know. Solonik had left four audiocassettes with his recorded memoirs in a numbered safe in a bank in Cyprus. In January 1997, a few days before he "met his end" he phoned his lawyer Valery Karyshev and asked him to publish the contents of the tapes in the case of his death. When Solonik "departed" on February 2 for some reason he took the money from his account with him. Somehow Solonik's fingerprints disappeared from his case file and the girl friend who was with him in *Baribobi* disappeared into thin air.

With typical lawyer's alacrity Karyshev published Solonik's tapes that same year, and it became clear that the book, which told a lot of stories, but without naming names, was Solonik's special insurance policy: don't come looking for me, or I will name the names. Incidentally, Butorin, who was put on the federal wanted list "for committing especially heinous crimes" was never found. They say he became a big businessman. He always had several foreign passports, so he could easily have left Russia altogether.

Another free-lance special group was the organization of GRU colonel Valery Radchikov, the head of the Russian Fund for Afghan War Invalids. The group was founded in 1991 via the GRU. At the final count thirty-seven people connected with the invalids' fund were killed and another 62 were injured.

In 1994 the fund's first manager, Mikhail Likhodei, was blown up in the entranceway of his apartment block. In October 1995 Radchikov only survived by a miracle when he was seriously wounded by six bullets but managed to evade the killers who attacked him in his car. However, his legal advisor and deputy Dmitry Mateshev never recovered consciousness and died following the shoot-out. On November 10 1996 14 people were blown to pieces and 26 mutilated by an explosion at the *Kotlyakovskoe* Cemetery. The dead included Likhodei's widow Elena Krasnolutsкая, who was financial director at the invalids' fund and Likhodei's friend and successor Sergei Trakhirov. Radchikov was accused of planning the bombing. On September 3 1998, when Radchikov was already in jail, another of his assistants, the general director of a new Afghan War fund, Valery Bukolov, was shot dead.

For all these years money had been embezzled from the fund, which after all is only the norm in Russia, but the extent of the embezzlement was exceptional. The most conservative estimates put the amount at about 200 million dollars. The case was investigated by the finest men in the public prosecutor's office, led by investigator for specially important cases Danilov. He was assisted by four other "big-wigs" and over 100 operatives (making in total a team of over 180). But they were unable to work out where the millions stolen from the Afghan War invalids had gone to. Radchikov himself was accused of stealing only two and a half million.

A few days after Radchikov's arrest his deputy at the fund, Valery Voshchevoz, who monitored all of the fund's cash flows and was one of Yeltsin's agents for the presidential campaign of 1996, was hastily dispatched to the *Amur* Region as the president's plenipotentiary representative. The trial of Radchikov and his two accomplices, Mikhail Smurov and Andrei Anokhin, lasted ten months. On January 17 2000 the state prosecutor demanded sentences of 13, 15 and 10 years for the accused.

Radchikov was accused of plotting in 1996 to kill his competitor in the “Afghan movement”, the chairman of the invalids’ fund Sergei Trakhirov and of giving a pistol and at least 50,000 dollars for this purpose to one of his neighbors in the apartment block, the Afghan War veteran Andrei Anokhin. Anokhin in turn persuaded Mikhail Smurov to take part in the murder for 10,000 dollars.

Killing Trakhirov was not easy. Everywhere he went he was accompanied by bodyguards from the *Vityaz* unit which was under the command of S.I. Lysiuk, who worked closely with the FSB. “Hero of Russia” Sergei Ivanovich Lysiuk, the founder and first commander of the *Vityaz* interior forces’ special operations unit of the MVD RF, had been recruited into the ranks of the secret agents of the Special Section of the KGB when he was still a senior lieutenant. The last member of the special service to act as Lysiuk’s contact was the head of the military counter-intelligence unit, Vladimir Yevgenievich Vlasov, who actually removed Lysiuk’s name from the listings of the FSB’s secret agents (so that he would not be given a new controller) and made him a so-called “archive agent.” Lysiuk won his “Hero of Russia” for commanding the *Vityaz* unit in the defense of the *Ostankino* television center in 1993. He was the one who gave the order to open fire on the supporters of the putsch.

In the new circumstances Vlasov was one of Lysiuk’s deputies in his commercial firm. Operational information actually indicates that the commercial activities of Lysiuk’s firm included training contract killers, including members of Lazovsky’s group, but Lysiuk himself might not have known anything about that, even though the Moscow Region criminal investigation department reported frequent sightings of Lazovsky at Lysiuk and Vlasov’s base.

And so the conspirators decided to blow up Trakhirov at the *Kotlyakovskoe* Cemetery during the wake for Mikhail Likhodei, the chairman of the Afghan War invalids’ fund who was killed in 1994. Amazingly enough, just a few days before the bombing Trakhirov’s bodyguards were changed. The new bodyguards were killed in the explosion, but the old ones from *Vityaz* survived. We can assume that Lysiuk might have known about the forthcoming assassination attempt from Vlasov or other people in his entourage.

The court hearings on the case of the bombing concluded on April 18. The accused were offered the final word and all three of them said they had “nothing at all” to do with the terrorist attack and asked the court to find them innocent. Radchikov’s lawyer, P. Yushin declared that the case had been deliberately fabricated. On January 21 the Moscow District Military Court under the chairmanship of colonel of justice Vladimir Serdiukov acquitted the accused because “their involvement in the crime committed had not been proved.” The court regarded the arguments of the investigation into the case of the explosion at *Kotlyakovskoe* Cemetery as unconvincing. The acquittal was founded on the results of the court’s analysis of the remains of the explosive device, which diverged significantly from the results of the analysis carried out during the investigation. In addition a female acquaintance of one of the accused, Mikhail Smurov, testified that on the day of the explosion Smurov was at home and could not possibly have set off the explosive device as the investigators accused him of doing.

Valery Radchikov was also acquitted on the charge of embezzling two and a half million dollars from the fund. All three accused were released directly from the court room. On July 25 2000 the Public Prosecutor’s Office lost its appeal to the Supreme Court for the acquittal to be set aside. Radchikov was intending to take the dispute to the European Court. However, at about eight o’clock in the evening on January 31 2001 he was killed in an automobile accident 39 kilometers along the

Minsk Highway on his way back to Moscow in a *Moskvich 2141* automobile. That same day the *Novosti* press agency announced that the law enforcement agencies were of the opinion that Radchikov's death might not have been a simple accident.

Dozens of dead bodies, millions of dollars missing and not a single criminal caught -- taken altogether this is simply a statistical impossibility for the world of crime. You don't need to be Sherlock Holmes to work out who was behind this complicated and highly successful game in which the main player suffered a fatal automobile accident at such a convenient moment.

Chapter 9

The FSB organizes contract killings

From 1993 Lazovsky's brigade included the *Uzbek Quartet*. All four of the group were Russians who had been born in Uzbekistan. They were also former special operations group officers who, according to the head of the 10th Section of the Moscow RUOP, Vitaly Serdiukov, were supremely skilled in using all forms of firearms and could improvise powerful bombs from items that happened to be at hand. These four criminals specialized in contract killings. Provisional estimates by operational agents made the foursome responsible for about 20 hits carried out in Moscow, *St. Petersburg*, *Lipetsk*, *Tambov*, *Arkhangelsk* and other cities. Behind the killers stood a "general contractor", a kind of operations manager who accepted the contracts. With that kind of organization it was effectively impossible to identify the clients who ordered the killings. Tskhai was the first to figure out the "Uzbek system," which always kept the client out of the picture.

The *Uzbek Quartet* lived in one of the houses on *Petrovka* Street, close to the Moscow GUVB building. The hitmen's victims apparently included several oil and aluminum magnates, bankers and big businessmen. It is quite possible that the quartet were also responsible for the murder of the vice-governor of *St. Petersburg* Mikhail Manevich, the general director of Russian Public Television (ORT) Vladislav Listiev, the chairman of the Republican Union of Entrepreneurs Oleg Zverev and many others. In any case the RUOP operatives claimed that the only possible comparison for the quartet in terms of the number of its victims and the "quality" of its work was the *Kurgan* brigade. The *Kurgans*, however, killed mostly "legitimate villains" and underworld "bosses."

The *Uzbek Quartet* and Lazovsky's people were suspected of abducting Felix Lvov, the Russian representative of the American corporation AIOC from the VIP lounge at *Sheremetievo* airport and later killing him. Lvov's firm was competing for control of the *Novosibirsk* Electrode Plant, which was the main supplier of electrodes to the *Krasnoyarsk* Aluminum Plant (*KrAZ*). In late 1994 the management at *KrAZ*, headed by the general director Yury Kolpakov, signed a contract with AIOC, which worked closely in Moscow with the *Yugorsky* commercial bank. The bank's president Oleg Kantor and his deputy Vadim Yafyasov were planning to make *KrAZ* one of the bank's clients and earn big money from reprofiling the bank to service the financial requirements of aluminum plants.

The negotiations were proceeding successfully. In March 1995 Yafyasov was appointed deputy general director of *KrAZ* for foreign trade. Lvov, who already worked with the management at *KrAZ*, had succeeded in getting the flow of virtually all of *KrAZ*'s goods and raw materials channeled through AOIC and was working towards getting the American company put in charge of the *Achinsk* Aluminum Plant, with the subsequent sale to AOIC of 20 per cent of the shares. On April 10 1995, four days before a meeting of the *Achinsk* Plant's shareholders which was due to appoint a new general director, Yafyasov was killed in his own car outside the entrance to his home in Moscow.

It is natural that Felix Lvov was frightened by this event. In late May he testified before a session of the State *Duma* concerning illegal operations for the purchase of shares in Russian aluminum plants and the involvement in this business of the Uzbek and Russian mafias. But his appeal to public opinion and the authorities did no good. On the afternoon of July 20 the president of the *Yugorsky* Bank Oleg Kantor was stabbed to death in the grounds of a dacha complex outside Moscow which was guarded 24 hours a day. In late July yet another signal was given when persons unknown

abducted a driver from the firm *Forward*, which belonged to Lvov, and then released him after a few days.

On September 6 1995 Lvov was flying to Alma-Ata from the Sheremetievo-1 airport. He had already gone through customs when he was approached by two FSK officers who showed him their identity passes and led him away. Witnesses later identified one of the FSK officers, a tall, lean man with black hair, from a photograph. He was “Lyokha,” one of Lazovsky’s “warriors.” There is good reason to believe that in addition to Lazovsky, Pyotr **Suslov** was directly involved in this abduction.

On September 8 Felix Lvov’s body was discovered lying on a heap of rubbish just five meters from the asphalt surface of a lay-by 107 kilometers from Moscow along the *Volokolamsk Highway*. He had been shot five times. His pockets contained 205,000 rubles, Lvov’s card as a member of the board of directors of *Alpha Bank* and a Ministry of Foreign Affairs identity card with Lvov’s photograph on it and a false name (Lvov had nothing to do with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The killers in the *Uzbek Quartet* were only caught by chance when the leader of the group, who was known as “Ferganets” (i.e. a person from *Fergana*) was caught trying to cross the Tadjikistan-Kirgizia border with false documents. A check on the files showed that “Ferganets” was wanted on suspicion of having killed Manevich. Under questioning he stated that the other members of the group were in Kirgizia. In mid-July 1998 “Ferganets” accomplices were arrested and all four were taken to Moscow under special security arrangements. Their place of arrest was kept secret.

In fact the public prosecutor’s office of *St. Petersburg* suspected another *St. Petersburg* criminal group, also based on special operations personnel, of the murder of Manevich. The group was headed by 40 year-old former warrant officer Vladimir Borisov (“Ensign”) and former tank forces captain Yury Biriuchenko (“Biriuk”). Criminal investigation officers managed to identify the group late in the summer of 1998. On August 21 almost simultaneous attempts were made on the lives of two brigade leaders in the *Sharks* criminal grouping, Razzuvailo and Los, who were also officers in the army’s special operations forces. The first was fatally wounded in the hallway of a house on *Ligovsky Prospect* by a killer with a pistol who had been disguised as a vagrant by professional make-up artists at the *Lenfilm* film studios. An attempt was made to blow up the second in his BMW automobile on the *Sverdlovskaya Embankment* of the river *Neva*, but the bomb was not powerful enough and Los survived to tell detectives who he thought might have been behind the crimes.

Borisov and Biriuchenko also organized the murder in Pskov in 1998 of yet another brigade leader from the *Sharks*, Izmorosin. The killings of the two criminal “bosses” and the attempt on a third were combined in a single criminal case and a special operational investigations group was set up to investigate it under the leadership of senior investigator Vadim Pozdnyak.

For the most part the members of Yury Biriuchenko’s brigade were former special operations officers who had learned how to handle weapons in the shooting range of the *St. Petersburg* garrison and had also, as the investigation later established, been taught the techniques of external surveillance methods and telephone bugging by full-time employees of the GRU and the *St. Petersburg* UFSB. Each of Biriuchenko’s fighting men was equipped with cutting-edge technology: an automobile, a pager, a radio telephone and equipment for special purposes. Their apartments and cars were registered in other people’s names and the warriors each had several sets of documents, were known by false names and used a system of digital codes for communicating with each other.

Soon after the unsuccessful attempt on Los's life operational officers detained Borisov with his closest lieutenant Sergei Kustov (an oriental martial arts trainer) and several rank and file warriors who were registered as managers with the limited company *Petrovsky Autocentre*. Biriuchenko and the members of his team were hunted right across Russia, in *Pskov*, *Vologda* and *Rostov* and in the villages of the *Novgorod* Region. Biriuchenko himself hid for a long time in Prague, where he was finally arrested with assistance from Interpol and transported to *St. Petersburg* under armed guard.

In most of the proven cases the murders were committed in the hallways of buildings, and the contract killers used a wide range of weapons, from "TT" pistols and "SVD" sniper's rifles to home-made explosive devices based on plastic explosive. In normal times a hired killer's "wages" were between 200 and 500 dollars and for each task completed a bonus of 2,000 dollars was paid.

The investigators accused Borisov, Biriuchenko and Kustov of four contract murders, banditry, extortion and other serious crimes. The members of the group were suspected of virtually all the spectacular murders committed in *St. Petersburg* and the north-west of Russia beginning from the fall of 1997. In particular checks were made on their possible involvement in the death of Manevich and the attempt on the life of Nikolai Aulov, the deputy head of RUBOP. Several of the operatives who worked on this case are still convinced that they only exposed the tip of the iceberg. According to Vadim Pozdnyak, leader of the operational investigations group, "if we had been released from other current business we would certainly have uncovered at least another ten crimes committed by this band."

In 1995 Lazovsky set up a group similar to the *Uzbek Quartet* consisting of veterans from the *Vitiaz* and *Vympel* special units: Kirill Borisov, Alexei Sukach (who was awarded a medal "For Bravery" for action in Chechnya and several MVD interior forces decorations), Armen Shekhoyan and Pavel Smirnov. Subsequently the only charge on which they were tried was involvement in contract killings. The group operated for four years and its "contractor" would appear to have been Marat Vasiliev.

In 1999 Vasiliev was arrested and sentenced to 13 years of hard labor in a penal colony for the killing in 1993 of a certain Aliev, the owner of a row of stalls at the *Liublino* market (this was the only crime for which Vasiliev was convicted). In the fall of 2000 Borisov was detained and after him so were the other special operations men, Shekhoyan, Smirnov and Sukach. The group's arsenal was discovered in Sukach's apartment: seven submachine guns, ten "Makarov" pistols, two "CZ MOD-83" pistols made in the Czech republic and a "Rohm" German revolver. When the trial began in Moscow in April 2001 the accused denied absolutely all of the charges which were brought against them. The question of their possible involvement or Lazovsky's involvement in terrorist attacks in Moscow in September 1999 was not even raised by the investigators or the public prosecutor's office. Suprunenko kept in mind the sad fate of his predecessor Vladimir Tskhai and decided not to give the FSB any reason for getting rid of him.

The *Vympel* operatives were accused of purely criminal offenses. For instance, the public prosecutor's office alleged that on May 21 1996 Marat Vasiliev suggested that Borisov and Sukach should "sort things out" with the owners of the *Usadba* cafe and kebab-house located 36 kilometers along the Moscow ring road. At three o'clock in the morning the warriors arrived at the kebab-house, doused it with petrol and set it on fire. When the owners of the cafe, Gazaryan and Dulian, came running out of the burning building, pistol shots were fired at them (but only over their heads, to give them a fright).

On September 23 Dmitry Naumov, the head of the Italian firm *Dimex* was murdered. He sold oil products from Chechnya abroad and had pocketed a large part of the revenue. Naumov, who was known under the nickname “Bender” only rarely made an appearance in Russia. He had dual citizenship and spent most of his time in Italy. In May 1996, however, he came to Moscow on business and stayed at the *Balchug-Kempinski* hotel, where Borisov and Sukach saw him for the first time.

On September 23 Naumov turned up in Moscow again and took a room at the *Tverskaya* hotel. At about six o’clock in the evening Sukach, who was on *Triumfalnaya* Square in front of the *Maiakovskaya* subway station, received two “TT” pistols with silencers from a go-between and then handed them on to Borisov. The killer was then taken to the hotel in a *Zhiguli* automobile driven by Pavel Smirnov. Borisov went up to the fourth floor, where he bumped into Naumov in the hall and opened fire from both “rods” at once. All five of the bullets he fired struck his victim in the head. On his way out of the hotel Borisov told the security guard: “They’re shooting people in your hotel and you’re asleep.” The guard went dashing upstairs and Borisov got into the *Zhiguli* and drove away. A couple of days later everyone involved in the murder was in Chechnya.

Lazovsky was arrested but did not give the *Vympel* officers away. The group soon returned to Moscow and on July 11 1997 on Marat Vasiliev’s orders they killed the general director of the firm *Harley Enterprises* Alexander Bairamov, who imported cigarettes into Russia on privileged terms. The businessman did not want to share the profits from his latest deal, which had earned him eight million dollars. On *First Krasnogvardeisky* Passage one of the *Vympel* officers’ cars cut in front of Bairamov’s Mercedes, forcing it to crash into another automobile (with the killers in it). When the drivers involved in the accident got out of their cars Borisov and Shekhoyan literally shot Bairamov full of holes (Sukach’s pistol jammed).

Once again the group went away to Chechnya for a while, but by May 1998 they were back in Moscow to carry out another contract, for the murder of the general director of the company *Wind of the Century* (*Veter veka*) Alexander Redko, who was an assistant to the Liberal Democrat Party State *Duma* deputy Alexei Zuev. On June 18 the killers arrived at the garages on *Kravchenko* Street and began waiting for their victim. When the businessman took out his car and went to close the garage Borisov and Sukach opened fire. Redko’s guards gave chase but they couldn’t catch the former special operations officers. Redko was seriously wounded but he survived.

On June 25 1998 the chairman of the town council of *Neftiugansk*, Petukhov, was killed. Information gathered in the course of an operation with the highly significant title of *Predators* (*Khischniki*) led the investigators to conclude that the contract for the murder had been issued by **Suslov** and carried out by Lazovsky.

On August 23 1998 Borisov and Sukach killed Dmitry Zaikin, a member of Lazovsky’s group, for stealing a large delivery of drugs from Sukach. At one o’clock in the morning Sukach drove Zaikin to Marino in a *Volga* automobile and shot him right there in the car. Then Sukach and Borisov drove the body to the wasteland at *Verkhnie polia*, dismembered it with a spade and buried it, throwing the head into the river Moscow.

In 1998 Morev’s special group began operations. The way in which it was set up is quite commonplace. Morev served in the armed forces in Chechnya in a separate surveillance battalion of the Eighth Regiment of the special operations forces of the VDV (military unit 3866). Near *Argun* the unit ran into an ambush and only three of them were left alive. They were rescued by helicopter.

A few days later the three of them set out for the small village of *Svobodny* which lay close by. The surveillance officers opened the doors of the houses and tossed grenades inside. The five houses in the village were totally destroyed and the women, children and old men inside were killed. Later there was an investigation and the military prosecutor initiated a criminal case. The three soldiers were threatened with a court-martial. At that time, in April 1996, Andrei Morev was recruited by an FSB colonel in the special section to which he had been taken. The colonel offered Morev a simple choice: go to jail or work with us. Morev chose the second option and was given the code name "Yaroslav." He was then transferred to the reserve and set off home to the town of *Yaroslavl*. For two years he was forgotten, then in 1998 they remembered about him and he was summoned to Moscow.

The special group contained 12 men, all of whom had served in Chechnya and been forgiven certain transgressions in exchange for their collaboration. The group was informed that its main task was to liquidate particularly dangerous criminals and underworld "bosses." The team operated inside and outside Russia. It made working trips to Iraq, Yugoslavia, Ukraine and Moldavia. Groups of two or three men were always sent on special missions. In Iraq they liquidated a former intelligence agent from either the SVR or the GRU.

In Ukraine they liquidated a local businessman by the name of Tishchenko. The group flew into *Kiev* having been given Tishchenko's photograph in Moscow, as well as the address of a secret apartment on *Kiev's* main street and the make and number of their victim's car. They obtained a bag containing their weapon from a pigeon-hole at the left luggage office of the railroad station, using a number and code also provided in Moscow. The gun was a dismantled "SVD" sniper's rifle. The apartment in *Kiev* was empty and its windows overlooked a road junction with traffic lights. Tishchenko always followed exactly the same route and his car often stopped at this junction, and that was where they shot him, from the window of the apartment. The operation took just one day.

Usually no more than two days were allowed for a liquidation, although the planning and preparation might last as long as a year: the routes followed by the target were checked, and so were his acquaintances, habits and work schedule. Two days before the deadline the hired killer was provided with information about his victim and he arrived at the scene to find everything in place for him to complete the job. For instance, the *Yaroslavl* underworld "boss" who went by the name of "Perelom" ("Break" or "Fracture," as in a broken arm) was shot down with automatic weapons in the very center of town as he was driving up to his house. The group worked with gunsights so that the bandits' girlfriends who were in the car would not be hurt. The automatics were abandoned at the scene, together with the ID of some Chechen (the operation's Moscow controllers thought it would be a good idea to send the investigation off along the "Chechen trail"). The group's final operation to eliminate a target took place on June 2 when they killed a local militiaman in *Voronezh*. They sabotaged the brakes in his car so that the militiaman crashed into a specially positioned truck at high speed.

The group gathered for briefings once a week in an apartment in Building 1 of house 5 on *Vagonoremontnaya* Street (a woman and her child lived in the apartment). The group met their controller here, an FSB officer by the name of Vyacheslav (he never mentioned his surname even once) and he gave the group their missions. All of the special group's members had "cover documents" with false names. Morev, for instance, had three passports (as Andrei Alexeievich Rastorguev, Mikhail Vasilievich Kozlov and Alexander Sergeievich Zimin). He also had an external passport in the last name.

The special group was not registered among the staff of any of the departments of law enforcement or the special forces. In other words, it never officially existed. This free-lance special team worked to a high professional level. In two years of operations they had only one failure, due to fact that the target (one of Gennady Zyuganov's assistants) failed to show up at the scene in Moscow. One operation was also called off in *Kishinev*, when some people in FAPSI had ordered the elimination of the director of a local wine factory, but then canceled the operation at the last moment (by an odd coincidence warrant officers from FAPSI in Moscow earned some money on the side in their free time as security men in one of the firms shipping wine from Moldavia and the head of security at FAPSI was informed about this).

On several occasions the special group brought weapons out of Chechnya. The briefings before these trips did not take place on *Vagonoremontnaya* Street but at 38 *Petrovka* Street, in the premises of the MUR. Before they set out the members of the group were given militia uniforms and appropriate identity cards. One of these trips was typical. They made their way via *Volgograd* to *Mozdok* in *Gazelle* goods vans; on the approaches to *Mozdok* the column was met by a *KamAZ* army truck carrying the weapons (submachineguns, "SVD" sniper's rifles and TNT). They unpacked it all from the green army crates and soldered it into zinc coffins, as though they were transporting dead bodies. Then the column of *Gazelles* with "load 200" set off back to Moscow. Since it was escorted by FSB employees there were no surprises along the way. The cargo was unloaded in housing estate number 9 in *Solntsevo*, where the special group also gave back their militia uniforms and passes and collected their bonuses. The whole excursion lasted two weeks. Depending on the amount of weapons they brought back each of the participants in such a trip would earn from 700 to 2,000 dollars.

The group's final weapon-smuggling operation took place during the first half of August 2000. At that time the special team was already having problems. First several of its members disappeared, then another one drowned in the river *Volga*. In June Gennady Chugunov, Mikhail Vasiliev and Sergei Tarasiev (their real names) were burnt to death in their car. Morev had been traveling with them in the *Zhiguli*, but he got out earlier since he had a meeting arranged with his cousin. Before the trip the *Zhiguli* had stood for a while at number 38 *Petrovka* Street.

When he heard about his friends' death Morev first videotaped his testimony as insurance, then left copies of the tape at several different addresses and got out of Moscow. He was then put on the federal wanted list for ferrying weapons out of Chechnya and attempted murder. Now Morev wanders around Russia, taking care not to sleep anywhere for more than two nights in a row. But unlike his comrades, he is still alive.

The special services were also involved in the murder in *St. Petersburg* on November 20 1998 of Galina Starovoitova, State *Duma* deputy and leader of the *Russia's Democratic Choice* (*Demokratichesky vybor Rossii*) movement, and the wounding of her assistant Ruslan Linkov. While the criminals abandoned the "Agran-2000" automatic pistol and the "Beretta" they used to murder Starovoitova, for some reason they took the "USP" pistol used to wound Linkov in the head away with them. In November 1999 Konstanin Nikulin, a former soldier of the *Riga OMON*, was arrested in Latvia. When searched he was found to be carrying a 9-millimeter pistol which forensic examination demonstrated was the one with which Linkov had been wounded.

However, the *St. Petersburg* UFSB refused to accept this. UFSB press secretary A. Vostretsov stated that "there is at present no information indicating Nikulin's involvement with this case." The

investigative agencies instead put forward a financial explanation for Starovoitova's murder which essentially claimed that several days before the killing took place a meeting of sponsors of Russia's *Democratic Choice* had been held in the organization's Moscow office and they had allocated 890,000 dollars for elections to the legislative assembly in *St. Petersburg*. The FSB claimed that the money had been handed over to Starovoitova and she had written out a receipt which was put in the safe at the movement's headquarters. Unfortunately no one had seen this receipt, since a week after the murder the *Russia's Democratic Choice* office was burgled and Starovoitova's receipt disappeared. *Russia's Democratic Choice* has always rejected the account of the murder as being motivated by theft.

Chapter 10

The special services and abductions

Every time we hear about beheadings we are reminded of the abduction and brutal execution of hostages in Chechnya. Everybody knows that most of the abductions are carried out by Chechen bandits in the hope of extorting ransom. Just how difficult a job it is to get hostages freed can be seen from the well-known case of the abduction of Magomet Keligov. On 15 September 1998 Keligov, who was born in 1955, was kidnapped in the town of *Malgobek* by a Chechen organized criminal group from *Urus-Martan*, headed by Rizvan Varaev. The group's scout in this case and organizer of the crime was Keligov's neighbor, one of the inhabitants of the town of *Malgobek*. The kidnappers believed that they would not be identified and they began sending intermediaries to the Keligov family to convey their demands for a ransom of five million dollars. The Keligovs, however, refused to pay up. The scout was rapidly identified and placed under arrest and all the members of Varaev's group were identified. Varaev then openly admitted that he was holding Magomet Keligov hostage and demanded the ransom.

The victim's family had resolved not to pay the ransom (they probably didn't have that kind of money anyway). In fact the Keligov family paid for a special state anti-terrorism unit to prepare an operation to capture and eliminate Varaev's band. At 14.00 hours on July 22 1999 the Keligovs and members of the special unit ambushed members of the band who were returning to *Urus-Martan* from the village of *Goiskoe* in three automobiles. The column was raked with automatic weapons fire and shelled from grenade-throwers for twenty minutes. Seven members of the band were killed and five were wounded. The Keligovs and the members of the special unit then went to *Ingushetia*, taking with them Aslan Varaev's body and the badly wounded Rizvan Varaev. Rizvan died shortly afterwards, but the Keligov's nonetheless announced that the Varaev brothers had only been wounded and they were willing to exchange them for Magomet Keligov. In the course of subsequent negotiations with spokesmen for Varaev's band the Keligovs were forced to admit that Aslan and Rizvan had been killed, but even so the bandits agreed to exchange Magomet Keligov for the bodies of the two brothers. The exchange took place on August 31 1999 at 17.00 hours on the administrative boundary with the Chechen Republic, close to the village of *Aki-Yurt*. Magomet had spent almost a year as a hostage.

The Varaevs were unlucky. Other well known Chechen kidnappers have been far more fortunate: Arbi Baraev from *Alkhankala* (*Yermolovka*), Rezvan Chitigov, Apti Abitaev, Idris Mekhitsov ("Abdul-Malik"), Aslan Gachaev ("Abdulla"), Doku Umarov and others. In their cases too the special services have been accused of involvement in the abduction of people in Chechnya. In the case of Arbi Baraev there were substantial clues. According to Ruslan Yusupov, a Chechen who served as an officer first in the Soviet and then in the Russian armies and was recruited by a member of the FSB in Chechnya, Baraev undoubtedly worked for the Russian special services and they in turn took care of Baraev and his people.

In mid-July 2000 Yusupov was approached by his old schoolmate Magomet S. who said he wanted to contact the FSB and give them some information on Baraev. Magomet at least believed that Baraev was responsible for the abduction of dozens of hostages in Chechnya, including members of the FSB, the president's representative in Chechnya Valentin Vlasov and journalists from the ORT and NTV television channels. Baraev was also involved in the murder of Red Cross personnel, three British citizens and a New Zealander.

The FSB agreed with Magomet that for 25,000 dollars he would lead the FSB to the exact spot where Baraev was due to meet with his Chechen field commanders within the next 20 days. Magomet was told how to contact Yusupov and the deputy head of the district department of the FSB.

Five days later Magomet had another meeting with the deputy head of the district department of the FSB. This time Magomet brought with him one of Baraev's closest associates, Aslakhanov, under the FSB's guarantee of safety. Aslakhanov was on the Russian federal and Interpol wanted lists for taking part in the execution of an Englishman and a New Zealander, for kidnapping Polish citizens in *Dagestan*, abducting the photoreporter Jacini and soldiers' mothers who were trying to find their sons in Chechnya. Aslakhanov moved around Chechnya with the help of a Chechen MVD identity card in the name of Saraliev. In the course of negotiations the terms of the deal were changed. Magomet, himself a former guerrilla, and Aslakhanov agreed to hand over Baraev without payment, in exchange for an amnesty.

Ten days after that Aslakhanov passed on information about a forthcoming meeting between Baraev and his field commanders Tsagaraev and Akhmadov at a chemicals plant in *Grozny*. Four hours before the meeting Yusupov received information confirming this report via the deputy head of the district department of the FSB. The meeting between Baraev, Tsagaraev and Akhmadov took place as planned, but the FSB did not carry out any operation to arrest them. When Yusupov began trying to find out from the deputy head of the district department of the FSB why the operation had been canceled, the answer he received was: "If I stick my neck out any further, they'll have my head and yours. We're only pawns in all this, we don't decide anything."

After about another ten days Aslakhanov reported that he and Magomet would have to make a run for it because Baraev's people had found out everything. Yusupov immediately got in touch with the district leadership of the FSB and set up a meeting. When Magomet and Aslakhanov arrived at the meeting place in the nearby regional center, instead of FSB operatives they were met by guerrillas who shot them down right there in the street. That same day persons unknown abducted Yusupov's wife and her sister from a bus stop and took them to the premises of the republican *OMON*, where they told the militiamen that "these trollops' men are working for the Russians." The women cried and tried to explain that they were married, but no one would stand up for them. Their abductors took them away to some deserted yard, beat them till they were barely alive and raped them.

Yusupov contacted the criminal investigation department of the *Leninsky* District of *Grozny* and asked them to find the owners of the white *Zhiguli* automobile 023 VAZ 21-26 used by the abductors. The detectives told Yusupov that these people did not live in *Grozny* and no one knew them. Shortly after that Yusupov discovered that the abductors were members of Baraev's brigade, former members of the Chechen *OMON* who came from *Achkha-Martan* and they had committed a long list of crimes, but since they were Baraev's people, no one was trying to find them.

A week later two Chechens from the republican FSB and a Russian member of the GRU turned up to see Yusupov. They told Yusupov that Aslakhanov had been killed because of him and then beat him up in front of his wife and children and took him away to a private house in the next city district. An hour later two of Baraev's guerrillas arrived at the house. From the questions which they put to Yusupov it was clear that everyone present knew all about Yusupov's work for the FSB. When Yusupov denied collaborating with the FSB, he was beaten again and the beating was

actually administered by Chechens from the FSB. The following day Yusupov was taken to *Grozny* and dumped in the rubble. Two days later he and his family left *Grozny*.

The Chechens had a humorous saying at this time: "In Chechnya there are three and a half armored personnel carriers, ten special services and one Chechen per square meter." They also used to say: "Take away the GRU, FSB and MVD secret agents and peace will dawn." It was hard to tell just who was working for which Russian special service. There were persistent rumors that in addition to Arbi Baraev, the Akhmadov brothers from *Urus-Martan* worked for the Russians. Local residents said that until just recently the Akhmadov brothers and Arbi Baraev had had carried on living in their own houses. During the second Chechen War Baraev twice held boisterous weddings in his house in *Alkhankala*. The Akhmadovs and Baraev traveled around the republic quite openly in their own automobiles without encountering any problems when their documents were checked at roadblocks. Privates on guard at the roadblocks saluted Baraev as he passed. In the summer of 2000 it became known that the Akhmadov brothers carried FSB identity cards. The UFSB agent for the *Urus-Martan* district, Yunus Magomadov, may well have been sacked for leaking information and exposing the identities of secret agents.

Baraev was involved in the FSB's work on printing counterfeit dollars in Chechnya. From the very beginning of the Chechen campaign the printing of counterfeit dollars had been transferred to Chechen territory, so that if the printing works were exposed or discovered the blame for the crime would fall on the Chechen leadership. One of Baraev's printing works was discovered in April 2000 (the house in which it was located belonged to Baraev's relatives). The dollars were shipped to the central regions of Russia via *Ingushetia* and exchanged at a rate of 30-35 cents.

The counterfeit notes were very high-quality; it was virtually impossible to identify them using the detectors in operation in the ordinary bureaux de change, specialized equipment that only banks possessed was required. A large proportion of the profits earned was used to pay fighters their "salaries" or buy weapons and ammunition. The counterfeit dollars also circulated outside Russia. It is believed that in the last few years up to ten billion counterfeit dollars might have been put into circulation, i.e. about 10,000 dollars for every Chechen. It makes no sense to assume that Baraev alone was responsible. It is more likely that Baraev was simply used as a cover for the business of producing counterfeit notes which was organized by the FSB.

Diplomatic but entirely unambiguous hints at Baraev's collaboration with the FSB were given by the president of *Ingushetia* Ruslan Aushev at a press conference held on July 6 2000. When asked who was responsible for the recent attack on a military column in *Ingushetia*, Aushev replied:

"The column in *Ingushetia* was attacked by Arbi Baraev's detachment. There is, by the way, one thing which I do not understand: Arbi Baraev is based in the village of *Yermolovka*, and any of you who have been to *Grozny* know that is almost a suburb. That's where he is, I think he has married for the fifth time. So fine, there he is, and everybody knows where he is. It seems to me that the joint forces group needs to take rather more decisive action, especially as Baraev is attacking army columns... I know that Arbi Baraev, according to my information is located in *Yermolovka*, which... you know it's not really a problem to resolve this. I was saying recently he got married yet again... And our Federal Security Service Office knows that. Everybody knows it."

The well known civil rights activist and *Duma* deputy Sergei Kovalev was more frank:

"Let us take one of the most important dealers in human beings, a young scoundrel, probably quite an audacious one. Let us forget that absolutely everyone in the Northern Caucasus says: 'Arbi

Baraev? But he's a KGB agent!' All right, so these are confident claims, but they can't be verified. But there are a few riddles here. A few months ago everybody knew that he was living not far from *Grozny* in the village of *Yermolovka*. He got married there for the nth time, as permitted by Islam, and was living with his young wife. The commander of the federal forces was asked: 'Why don't you take Baraev?' He replied with a true soldier's naiveté: 'if they tell us, we'll take him'. So why don't they tell him?.. We had meetings with Chechen members of parliament. One of them, a very reliable and well-respected man, told us that one of his relatives who had recently come down from the mountains arrived in *Yermolovka*. And then a so-called 'clean-up' started. His documents weren't in order -- what was he to do? Well-wishers told him: 'Go to Baraev's house, no one will touch you there'. He went to Baraev's and the clean-up just passed him by."

It was apparently through the GRU or MUR that information was leaked to the press to show that the Akhmadovs and Baraev had protectors in very high places. A number of Moscow newspapers published material stating that Baraev was in Moscow in August 2000 and stayed in a house on *Kutuzovsky Prospekt*. It had been ascertained that Baraev met with highly placed Russian officials and apparently the cars which had pulled up at the entrance to Baraev's apartment included one bearing the number of head of the president's office Alexander Voloshin.

Possibly president Aushev's statement and the scandalous articles about Baraev's stay in Moscow provided the decisive argument in support of those who wished to eliminate Baraev. The details of his death remain unclear to this day. Supposedly he was killed in his home village of *Alkhankala* some time between June 22 and 24 2001 in the course of an operation which some sources claim was carried out by a division of MVD and FSB forces, while according to other sources it was a GRU special detachment consisting of Chechen nationals. But according to information provided by State *Duma* deputy MVD general Aslanbek Aslakhanov from Chechnya, Baraev was killed in a blood feud by people whose relatives he had himself killed.

If Baraev had lived his testimony could have been highly damaging to a number of highly placed officials, as well as members of the special services and the military. There was nobody who wanted Baraev alive and capable of telling tales which would cast light on so many murky dealings. And a dead Baraev could be blamed for any number of things...

If Baraev was the most famous of the kidnappers, Andrei Babitsky, a journalist from the American Radio Liberty (*Svoboda*) was one of the most unusual victims. Despite the obvious difference between Babitsky's case and other cases of abduction, it provided new proof of the Russian special services' involvement in abduction.

After the start of the second Chechen War the military authorities in *Mozdok* refused to give Babitsky accreditation. The requirement for administrative accreditation was unlawful, since a state of emergency had not been declared in Chechnya and no zone of "anti-terrorist" operations had ever been declared. According to a decision of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, unpublished enactments of the Russian government or the military departments of state which infringe the rights and freedoms of the citizen are to be regarded as null and void. On the basis of this understanding of Russian law, Radio Liberty correspondent and Russian citizen Andrei Babitsky traveled to Chechnya in defiance of the administrative prohibition. In late December 1999 he came back from *Grozny* to Moscow for a few days, bringing with him video footage which was later shown in the program *Itogi* on the NTV television channel. On December 27 he returned to *Grozny* and on January 15 2000 he was preparing to travel back to Moscow.

On his way out of *Grozny* on January 16, close to the *Urus-Martan* intersection on the *Rostov-Baku* highway, Babitsky and his Chechen assistant were detained at a road block manned by the *Penza OMON*. The statement made by the investigator of the Public Prosecutor's office claimed that it was a member of the UFSB who searched Babitsky and confiscated his belongings. This provided documentary proof that Babitsky was arrested by the UFSB. He was later handed over to the Chechen *OMON*, where one of the *OMON* commanders, Lom-Ali, personally beat him up, after which he handed Babitsky over to Fomin, the head of the FSB department in *Urus-Martan*.

Babitsky was officially arrested under a decree on vagrancy and he was sent to the filtration camp at *Chernokozovo* "in order to establish his identity." There Babitsky was beaten again and forced to "sing" for hours under torture. In video footage shown on television on February 5 the traces of the beatings were clearly visible. In contravention of the Criminal Law Procedural Code no report was drawn up of Babitsky's arrest in *Chernokozovo*. He was denied the right to see his relatives or have a meeting with his lawyer (as stipulated in article 96, part 6 of the Criminal Procedural Code). The General Public Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation did not bother to answer queries from lawyers, including those from the famous lawyer Henry Reznik. Nor was any reply forthcoming to a inquiry about Babitsky from *Duma* deputy Sergei Yushenkov.

Babitsky's colleagues began looking for him on January 20, but since the Russian authorities denied that he had been detained, it was a week before anything became clear. On January 27 the authorities announced that Babitsky had been arrested because he was regarded as a suspect and had been detained for 10 days (ending on January 26). The Public Prosecutor's Office was planning to accuse Babitsky of an offense under article 208 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation ("Organizing an illegal armed formation or participating in such a formation"). "If our guys have got your friend, and I think they have, then that's it, curtains, you won't be seeing him again. Nobody will. Sorry to be so blunt," Alexander Yevtushenko, a correspondent of the newspaper *Komsomolskaya pravda*, was told by an old acquaintance who was an FSB officer.

On February 2 at *Chernokozovo* a package was accepted for prisoner Babitsky. However, the investigator Yuri Cherniavsky would not permit a meeting with Babitsky, hinting that he would be released in four days. The journalist's release was demanded by Radio Liberty, the Council of Europe, the US State Department, the Union of Journalists, and civil rights activists (including Andrei Sakharov's widow, Elena Bonner). In negotiations with US Secretary of State Albright, Russian Minister of foreign affairs Igor Ivanov stated that acting president Putin personally had the situation "under control."

At 4 p.m. on February 2 the prosecutor of the *Naur* District of Chechnya, Vitaly Tkachyov, announced that Babitsky's preventive detention had been replaced by a signed undertaking not to leave Moscow, where he was on the point of being sent from *Gudermes*. Later the press secretary of the Public Prosecutor's Office of the Russian Federation Sergei Prokopov announced that Babitsky had been released on February 2. (Only later did it emerge that Babitsky was not released and he spent the night of February 2 in a motorized cell, a truck used for transporting detainees. At three o'clock the following afternoon with barely a sign of embarrassment Yastrzhembsky declared that after being "freed" Babitsky had been exchanged for three prisoners of war. Then he corrected himself and said it was for two.

Since Babitsky was wearing a shirt that had been sent to *Chernokozovo* on February 2, the obvious conclusion was that he had been handed over on February 3. No one in Chechnya knew the

“Chechen field commanders” to whom Moscow claimed Babitsky had been handed over in exchange for “captive Russian military personnel.” President of Chechnya Maskhadov declared that he did not know where Babitsky was. And no one had seen the “exchanged” Russian soldiers.

In actual fact, apart from Babitsky all the individuals involved in the exchange were members of the FSB. One of them, a Chechen working for the FSB, had helped to hoodwink Babitsky, and when Babitsky realized what was going on it was too late. In an interview on NTV on the evening of February 8 Russian minister of the interior Ivan Golubev announced that he had taken the decision to exchange Babitsky. But another official tried to convince journalists that the “exchange” had been a local initiative and the Kremlin was looking into who was responsible for what had happened because the “Babitsky affair” was working against Putin.

Official government spokesmen claimed that Babitsky was alive and that a video recording which confirmed this would arrive in Moscow the next day. In fact the video tape was handed over to Radio Liberty by persons unknown on the evening of February 8, sooner than promised. One of the “Chechens” who had supposedly traveled from Chechnya to hand over the tape was wearing an MVD uniform. The video footage showed Babitsky in an exhausted condition.

Journalists who analyzed the tape said that the way Babitsky was taken by the arms was typical of the militia, but that Chechens did not handle people that way. In fact not even the members of the FSB who were involved in the “exchange” made any real effort to conceal the falsification. When an FSB department was celebrating the anniversary of the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, one of them confessed to Alexander Yevtushenko: “You saw the warriors in masks. And the one who grabbed hold of Babitsky. They showed it on television. Well, that was me.”

The area where the “exchange” took place was not far from *Shali*, which was entirely under the control of federal forces and not far from the village of *Nesker-Yurt*, also under federal control, where there federal soldiers and fortified road blocks and armored personnel carriers. The people in masks led Babitsky off somewhere and left him on the roadway. In his pocket was a passport which was not his, put there by his abductors.

After a while Babitsky was arrested by the bold militia and discovered to be carrying a passport in someone else’s name. He was accused of using a false document. For some reason the General Public Prosecutor’s office was not interested in the fact that Babitsky had been abducted, beaten and tortured, but for the half-dead victim to be using someone else’s passport was clearly a serious crime. The passport became the basis for the main charge in Babitsky’s case.

Throughout all of this, of course, the structures of coercion and officials involved in the Babitsky affair were confident that they were could act with absolute impunity, and this confidence was based on the fact that Babitsky’s suppression had been sanctioned by the leadership of the FSB.

In the war in Chechnya the special services carried out reprisals against their enemies without the slightest regard for the law. The strange story of the kidnapping of Kenneth Gluck, the representative of an American medical charity, on January 9 2001 close to the Chechen village of *Starye Atagi* led many people to suspect that Gluck had been abducted by the Russian special forces. At a press conference in *St. Petersburg* on April 18 2001 Zdanovich made it clear in Patrushev’s presence that the FSB had no interest in Gluck’s work in Chechnya: “the FSB, to put it mildly, has grave doubts about whether Kenneth Gluck was really a representative of a humanitarian organization.” After this Zdanovich claimed that the well known field commander and trader in hostages Rezvan Chitigov worked for the CIA in Chechnya.

It became clear that the FSB regarded Gluck as a CIA agent involved in spying for the USA. This was apparently the reason the FSB had decided to exclude him from the Chechen republic. First Gluck was kidnapped and then on February 4 his liberation was stage-managed “without any conditions or ransom as a result of a special operation carried out by FSB agents.”

It was absolutely clear to everyone that no special operation had been carried out to free Gluck and he had simply been set free by his abductors, who had decided not to kill him. After the Babitsky case the FSB no longer bothered to use conspiratorial methods, having come to believe in its own absolute impunity. The reality of the Gluck case was no less obvious. Everybody could tell that Gluck had been abducted by the FSB. “That’s why the whole business of Gluck’s capture and release was so strange,” Zdanovich declared at one of the press conferences. It would be hard to disagree with him. When one and the same organization kidnaps someone and then liberates him it really does look rather strange.

Against this background the story of the kidnapping by GRU operatives of former chairman of the Chechen parliament Ruslan Alikhadjiev seems almost natural and lawful. Having been a successful field commander during the first Chechen war, Alikhadjiev did not take part in the military operations of 1999-2000. In mid-May 2000 he was detained in his own house in *Shali*. According to local people, the arrest was carried out by agents of the General Staff GRU, who took the former speaker of parliament to *Argun*, where his trail went cold.

After May 15 not even Alikhadjiev’s lawyer Abdulla Khamzaev ever saw him again. Khamzaev said that he made repeated inquiries at various levels concerning the fate of his client, but was never able to meet with him. Information emerged from the Public Prosecutor’s Office that a criminal investigation had been initiated into Alikhadjiev’s disappearance under article 126 of the Criminal Code (abduction). The Prosecutor’s Office had not initiated criminal proceedings against Alikhadjiev and consequently had not sanctioned his detention. The MVD knew nothing about what had happened to Alikhadjiev. On June 8 2000 Khamzaev was notified by the FSB that Alikhadjiev was not in the FSB’s *Lefortovo* detention center. Khamzaev did not receive any answer to his inquiry from the General Public Prosecutor’s Office. Finally on September 3 the radio station *Ekho Moskv*y (*Moscow Echo*) reported that Alikhadjiev had died of a heart attack in *Lefortovo* and his family had already been officially notified of his death.

The abductions of Chechens in Chechnya by federal agencies of coercion in order to punish them, extort ransom or kill them were almost heroic exploits that went uninvestigated and unpunished. The militia of the October Temporary Department (*Oktyabrskogo vremennogo otдела*) of Internal Affairs in *Grozny*, led by colonel Sukhov and major V.V. Ivanovsky, was suspected by journalists and public figures of abducting and killing about 120 inhabitants of *Grozny* and other regions of Chechnya. The corpses were presumed to have been dumped in the basement of a building on territory which was guarded by the October Temporary Department of Internal Affairs. The militiamen later blew up this building in order to cover up their crimes.

The organization of security sweeps in order to abduct Chechens and extort ransom for the release of hostages became an everyday event, a part of life in wartime. Cases are even known of Russian officers selling Russian soldiers to Chechen bandits as slaves and then declaring them deserters.

The war in Chechnya has made human life cheap in Russia. The brutal killings and the trade in slaves and hostages has thrown our country back to the days of slavery. Thousands of people who go through the war in Chechnya are forced to kill. They can never go back to civilian life. Chechnya

is the FSB's workshop, the training ground for the future personnel of the Russian special services and freelance brigades of mercenary killers. The longer this war goes on, the more irreversible its consequences become. One of its fatal consequences is the eternal hatred of Chechens for Russia and Russians. Russia will never know peace again. It is doomed to bear this cross down the generations.

Chapter 11

The FSB: reform or dissolution?

For the sake of objectivity we should point out that attempts to reform the FSB from within have been made by isolated individuals in the system, but they have not been successful. On the contrary, efforts made by individual FSB officers to maintain the honor of the ranks of the special agencies and the crushing defeat suffered by heroic individuals in this war have only served to demonstrate yet again that reform of the FSB is impossible and this agency of the state must be abolished. One of the many documents which make this clear is a letter addressed to Russian president Yeltsin on May 5 1997, long before the bombings of the apartment buildings, by an FSB officer, a lieutenant-colonel of justice. Since we are publishing the document without his knowledge or consent, we feel we have no right to give his name:

On the unlawful activities of a number of officials of the FSB RF

Dear Boris Nikolaievich,

Circumstances oblige me to appeal to you personally in view of the fact that the director of the Federal Security Service colonel-general N.D. Kovalyov and other leaders of the FSB RF are taking no measures to deal with the problems of state security in Russia raised by myself in reports and statements which I have forwarded to them beginning in 1996.

In recent years organized criminal groups have been attempting to infiltrate the FSB RF by any possible means. Initially the most common approach was to establish relations with individual members of the FSB RF and engage in criminal activity under their protection (“roof”). And then these groups moved on to delegating their members to join the ranks of the FSB RF. They are accepted for service via acquaintances working in the personnel departments or as section leaders.

The infiltration of members of criminal groups into the ranks of the FSB RF was particularly intensive under M.I. Barsukov and N.D. Kovalyov. Under these leaders a number of members of the Solntsevo, Podolsk and other criminal groups were taken into the service (...) In order to ensure their safety the “right people” were promoted to key posts. At the same a number of professionals with extensive operational experience were dismissed without due cause. All of this took place with the connivance of former personnel section officer N.P. Patrushev.

The actions of FSB RF leaders Barsukov, Kovalyov and Patrushev are intended to force professionals out of the structures of the FSB RF in favor of criminal elements. For instance, when Patrushev was appointed to the post of head of the Internal Security Department of the FSB RF, instead of combating criminal groupings he began to persecute members of the FSB, professionals with long experience of the fight against crime, and forced them to resign from the security agencies. As a result the department ceased pursuing cases against armed criminal groups.

At the present time former head of the Internal Security Department of the FSB RF Patrushev has been transferred to the post of head of the Administration and Inspection Department of the FSB RF, and Kovalyov has replaced him by Zotov, concerning whose connections with criminal organizations a lot of information has been supplied to the FSB. Prior to this appointment Zotov supervised the anti-terrorist center, which had almost no successful operational activities to its name, while at the same time terrorist acts were being committed and continue to be committed on all sides and in Moscow alone large amounts of illegal weapons and munitions are in circulation. It was Zotov who in December 1995 made special efforts to block the progress of a case dealing with

a Chechen organized criminal group. According to operational sources Zotov was given a present of a foreign-made jeep-style automobile by one of the groups, which he sold on his appointment to a general's post in order to conceal the fact.

Kovalyov has appointed a number of officers to general's posts without regard for professional ability or services in the field, but on the basis of acquaintance and loyalty to the director. For instance in August 1996 a Long-Term Programs Department was established within the FSB RF. This department, directly subordinate to FSB RF director Kovalyov, absorbed a considerable number of professional personnel from other sections. However, no one in the FSB knows why Kovalyov maintains this department, since its aims and objectives and the functional responsibilities of its personnel have yet to be defined. In effect the Long-Term Programs Department of the FSB RF does nothing to combat crime, but guarantees the safety of non-state organizations (such as the Stealth company and others). Nonetheless friends of Kovalyov -- Khokholkov, Stepanov and Ovchinnikov -- have been appointed to general's posts in the Long-Term Programs Department. The first two have already also received their general's epaulettes. Khokholkov and Ovchinnikov had both previously been investigated by the Internal Security Department of the FSB RF. The first maintained close relations with bandits and accepted monetary remuneration from them, so that he could afford to lose as much as 25,000 US dollars in a single night at a casino...

The bandit Stalmakhov, who is well known to the RUOP GUV D of the city of Moscow, stated in conversation with one of our sources that since 1993 the members of his group, which included a number of former employees of the KGB USSR, had engaged in smuggling activities. Their criminal activities were covered up in exchange for monetary remuneration by highly placed members of the FSB RF, including generals of the Economic Department of the FSB Poryadin and Kononov, Moscow Region UFSB general Trofimov, and director of the FSB RF N.D. Kovalyov was informed of this. In February 1994 in my capacity as senior investigator for specially important cases of the Investigative Department of the MB RF I detained nine automobiles ("wagons") containing contraband goods with a value of more than three million US dollars. Due to measures taken by the officials named above the contraband was released and (...) subsequently sold illegally. A number of trumped-up claims were made that I was involved in extortion, which made it impossible for me to work on locating the contraband goods (...)

In the course of the initial investigative, operational and search measures it was established that in addition to extortion the members of the above-named criminal group had committed murders in Moscow and in Chechnya, had stored weapons and munitions at an illegal depot outside Moscow and had moved weapons and munitions from the military depots in the town of Elektrogorsk to areas of military operations in Chechnya (...).

According to operational data in my possession the members of the aforementioned criminal group allocated 100,000 US dollars to blocking the work on the case and declared that they had enough funds "to buy the FSB and the MVD and the Ministry of Defense."

A brief comment on the outcome of the opposition offered by our unnamed FSB lieutenant-colonel. Following his letter to Yeltsin the brave FSB officer was dismissed from the service. Zdanovich slandered him in the media, accusing him of being a common criminal. The dismissed officer took the leadership of the FSB to court. During the court hearings, which lasted for more than a year, the leadership of the FSB planned and carried out two attempts on the lieutenant-colonel's life.

However, somehow he managed to survive and win his case, in which one of the respondents was Patrushev. Unfortunately the new director of the FSB (who was Putin) refused to implement the court's decision, even though it carried the force of law, thereby demonstrating yet again the impossibility of reforming the FSB or of combating it on the basis of the existing legislation.

There is nothing surprising about the idea of dissolving the FSB. In December 1999, perhaps under the influence of the bombings in Russia, the newspapers carried information concerning a planned dissolution of the FSB. This is what one of the Moscow papers printed:

“According to well-informed sources in the next few days a new armed law enforcement agency may be set up on similar lines to the FBI in the USA. It is presumed that the job of heading up the new structure will be given to an officer with the rank of first deputy prime minister. According to our information, it is planned to appoint the present minister of the interior Rushailo... It is intended to endow the new department with the function of supervising all of the agencies of law enforcement, including FAPSI, the MVD, the FSB, the Ministry of Defense and so on. The new department will be based primarily on the structures of the MVD. At the initial stage it will take from the FSB the departments for combating terrorism and political extremism and economic counter-intelligence. And if in the future the new department should also absorb the counter-intelligence functions, the FSB will effectively cease to exist.”

However, gently dissolving the FSB in the MVD is not enough. The Supreme Court of the Russian Federation must initiate a full-scale investigation into all of the sensational terrorist attacks, first and foremost into the September bombings, whether they succeeded or were foiled, including the incident in *Ryazan*, this investigation must be transferred from an FSB due to be disbanded to a specially created agency at the MVD, and the individuals involved in organizing terrorist attacks in Russia must be punished as the law requires. The law must be applied with especial severity in those cases where the terrorists are found to be former or current employees of the Russian special services. The State *Duma* must draft and approve as a matter of urgency a law of inspection and promulgation which prohibits former and current members of the agencies of state security from occupying elected positions or state posts for the next 25 years and obliging all former and current members of the organs of state security to retire by a deadline agreed with a commission specially established for this purpose. This decree of the State *Duma* must also extend to the current president of Russia and former head of the KGB Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

The FSB in power

(in place of a conclusion)

The Federal Security Service has now succeeded in getting its own candidate elected president. When Putin spoke on the anniversary of the founding of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (the *Cheka*) on December 20, he began his address to his colleagues with a reference to the way former KGB personnel had pretended to be politicians, infiltrated the leadership of the country and seized power. The restoration of the memorial plaque to Andropov on the *Bolshaya Lubyanka* building which houses the FSB, a toast to the health of Stalin with the leader of the Russian communists Zyuganov, bombings in residential buildings and a new war in Chechnya, the passing of a law making it legal once again to investigate individuals on the basis of anonymous denunciations, the promotion to positions of power of FSB generals and army officers; and finally,

the total destruction of the foundations of a constitutional society built on the admittedly frail but nonetheless democratic values of a market economy, the strangling of the freedom of speech -- these are only a few of the achievements of prime minister and president Putin during the initial months of his rule.

To this must be added the corresponding line in foreign policy: a move towards Russia's political isolation through confrontation with the West; militarization of the Russian economy; the beginning of a new arms race; an increase in the smuggling and sale of Russian weapons and military technologies to governments hostile to the developed nations of the world; the use of FSB channels for the smuggling of narcotics under the control and protection of the FSB from Central and South-East Asia to Russia and onwards to the West.

Future historians will have to answer the question of who was responsible for the brilliant succession of precisely planned moves which brought Putin to power and who it was that proposed Putin as a potential candidate to the first president's intimate entourage, which in turn presented the former head of the KGB to Yeltsin as his successor. But perhaps even more astonishing is the fact that Stepashin and Primakov, the two candidates for the role of successor who preceded Putin, also came from the structures of coercion Yeltsin was amazingly stubborn in his efforts to hand over his post to someone from the agencies of state security.

In the year 2000 elections the Russian voters were faced with a delightful list of candidates: the old KGB-man Primakov, who confidently boasted that if he came to power he would put 90,000 businessmen (i.e. the entire business elite of Russia) in jail; the young KGB-man Putin, who before he was elected emphasized the need to continue Yeltsin's policies; and the communist Zyuganov, whose future actions could easily be predicted.

In order to jail 90,000 businessmen, Primakov would have had to arrest 60 people every day, including weekends and holidays, throughout his four-year term as president. The very idea is enough to make your hair stand on end. The young KGB-man Putin promised to be less bloodthirsty. Perhaps the election campaign was deliberately scripted by someone on the principle of good cop/bad cop? The bad cop Primakov voluntarily withdrew his candidacy following a crushing defeat in the elections to the State *Duma*. That only left the young KGB-man and the communist. It was the same kind of black-and-white choice as in 1996 and Putin won. He has not entirely disappointed the people's trust. At least he appears not to be working at a rate of 60 people a day, unless you count the whirlwind of terror and anti-terror and the war in Chechnya. But Putin undoubtedly deserves the title of tyrant, since he deliberately destroyed the initial shoots of self-government in Russia with his very first decrees and he now exercises that transparent form of arbitrary rule which the Russian people know as *bespredel* (literally – “without limits”). He is perfectly described by the definition of a “tyrant” given by the Soviet Encyclopedic Dictionary of 1989: “a ruler whose power is founded on arbitrary decision and violence.”

Russia, however, is an unpredictable country – which is the only thing which we know for certain about it. It is no longer possible to pull the wool over the Russian people's eyes, and perhaps that may prove to be a source of strength more powerful than the clenched fist of the special services.

Epilogue

At midnight on September 2 2002 the Federal Security Service (FSB) of Russia was disbanded by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation in a truly historical decision which marked the beginning of a new era in the development of democratic institutions in Russia. In view of this Decree's obvious importance, we have decided to present the full text of the Decree to our readers.

Decree of the President of the Russian Federation

On the dissolution of the following agencies of state security: the Federal Security Service, the External Intelligence Service, The Federal Secret Police Service, the Federal Agency for Governmental Communications and Information.

1. The activities of the agencies of state security of the USSR and Russia from December 1917 to the present are hereby declared to be in contradiction of the laws of the Russian Federation as promulgated in the Constitution of the Russian Federation and contrary to the interests of the people.
2. The following agencies of state security are hereby disbanded: the Federal Security Service, the External Intelligence Service, the Federal Secret Police Service, the Federal Agency for Governmental Communications and Information.
3. The legal instruments governing the activities of these agencies are declared null and void as of the date of publication of this Decree.
4. Within thirty days from the publication of this Decree a Public Commission shall be established to investigate the crimes committed by agencies of state security against the state's own citizens both within Russia and beyond its borders. The membership of this commission shall include prominent public figures, civil rights activists, lawyers, deputies of the State *Duma* and representatives of the mass media. The chairman of the Public Commission shall be appointed by the President of the Russian Federation and shall be accountable to him.
5. All restrictions on access to archives of the agencies of state security are hereby removed. The Public Commission for the investigation of crimes committed by agencies of state security against the state's own citizens is hereby instructed to devise and implement a program for the publication of documents of particular public interest.
6. The records of operations carried out by agencies of state security in relation to persons of Russian or foreign nationality shall be made available to such persons or, if they are no longer alive, to their surviving relatives.
7. Should individuals who have been the subject of operations conducted by agencies of state security consider that the agencies of state security have violated their civil rights and thereby caused them moral and material harm, they shall be entitled under the terms of currently effective legislation to make application to the judiciary of Russia or their country of residence for legal action to be taken against specific members of the agencies of state security.
8. As of midnight January 1 2002 the agencies of the Ministry of the Interior shall stand guard over all office premises of the agencies of state security and continue to guard them until further notice.
9. The Ministry of the Interior shall appoint a commandant (from the staff of the Ministry) to be responsible for guarding the office premises of the agencies of state security throughout Russia.

Agents of the Ministry of the Interior shall rigorously suppress any acts of insubordination by members of the agencies of state security.

10. Within a period of 90 days from the promulgation of the present Decree the Public Commission for the investigation of crimes committed by agencies of state security against the state's own citizens and the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation shall jointly define the terms for the transfer of a number of the functions of the abolished agencies of state security to the competence of the Ministry of the Interior.

11. The Office of the President shall draft a law of inspection and promulgation applicable to present and former members of the agencies of state security and their agents and shall, within a period of ten days from the publication of the present Decree, forward the draft bill to the State Duma for consideration. Special attention shall be paid in this matter to those members of the organs of state security whose activities were connected the so-called struggle against dissent.

12. All present and former members of the agencies of state security shall within a period of one month furnish the tax office of the relevant territorial unit of the Russian Federation with a formal declaration of property owned by themselves and their close relatives (including parents, brothers and sisters, and close relatives of husbands and wives, both present and past), the said declaration to include the following: real estate, vehicles, accounts in Russian and foreign banks, shares and securities issued by Russian and foreign companies, together with a detailed statement of the sources of income which was used to acquire such property. In the course of the year 2002 the tax authorities of the Russian Federation shall take appropriate measures to verify these declarations and decide upon appropriate action in accordance with procedures specified under the terms of Russian tax legislation.

As from the date of signing and publication of the present Decree until such time as the tax investigations been completed all individuals and organizations are prohibited from performing any transactions for the purchase, sale, gift, alienation or mortgaging of real estate, vehicles, shares and securities or the transfer of money from accounts belonging to present or former members of the agencies of state security or their relatives. All such transactions performed during the period specified to which present or former members of the agencies of state security or their relatives are party shall be declared null and void.

13. Until such time as they are discharged to the reserves of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, all military personnel of the agencies of state security shall be bound by the following terms:

- a) they shall remain at their places of residence;
- b) within seven days of the publication of the present Decree they shall register temporarily with the Office of the Interior for the area in which they are registered as resident, for which purpose commissioners shall be appointed from among the officer corps of the Ministry of the Interior.
- c) within twenty hours of the publication of the present Decree they shall surrender the official personal weapons of their rank, official identity cards, undercover identity papers, keys and seals to the commissioner at the Office of the Interior, together with a detailed account of their work place and official functions, the titles of their departments and sections and individual positions.
- d) until such time as they are discharged to the reserves, military personnel of the agencies of state security must report in person to the commissioner at the Office of the Interior for the area in which

they are registered as resident as follows: generals and admirals once every three days; senior and junior officers once every five days; warrant officers, first sergeants, sergeants and privates once every seven days. The commissioners at the Offices of the Interior shall establish special records for this purpose;

e) for violations of these instructions the officers commanding Offices of the Interior shall impose upon the guilty parties penalties up to and including garrison arrest. Failure to sign in as required shall be regarded as failure to report for duty;

f) financial allowances shall be paid via the financial agencies of the aforementioned Offices of the Interior at the rates set for supernumerary military personnel until such time as a decision is taken to discharge the persons concerned;

14. Within seven days of the publication of the present Decree members of the agencies of state security shall draw up a detailed account of their work in the agencies of state security from the day of their enrollment to the date of publication of the Decree on the dissolution of the said agencies, which shall include the following;

a) specific mention of their involvement in particular operations and the titles of such operations, concerning whom and on whose instructions the operations were carried out, and in addition everything known to them about operations carried out by other members of their agency and other agencies;

b) a statement of the complete identification data of resident agents, other agents, owners of apartments used for secret meetings and clandestine or conspiratorial purposes, the names and addresses of contacts; the locations at which their private and professional files are kept; their operational names, together with the identification data of the subjects of relevant operations and the locations of their files;

c) Senior staff members of the agencies of state security must indicate the full titles of their units and the identification data and places of residence of their subordinates;

d) the accounts specified above must be submitted to the commissioners at the Offices of the Interior, logged in the register of individual statements and forwarded directly to the chairman of the Public Commission.

e) individual members of the agencies of state security who have permitted the deliberate destruction of operational records without authorization shall be subject to the provisions of criminal law;

15. Persons who have previously served in the agencies of state security of the USSR and Russia and continue at the present time to serve in the state institutions of the Russian Federation must be withdrawn from active service within five days and shall remain at the disposal of such departments until such time as the law of inspection and promulgation applicable to present and former members of the agencies of state security of the USSR and Russia shall come into effect.

16. The provisions of the present Decree shall apply to all present or former members of the agencies of state security and also to all persons who have at any time served in or been members of the secret service staff of the agencies of state security of the USSR and Russia.

17. The present Decree shall be regarded by all military personnel of the agencies of state security as a written order from their Commander in Chief. Those who disobey this order shall be held criminally responsible.

18. This Decree comes into force on the day when it is signed and published in the mass media.

President of the Russian Federation

Commander in Chief

* * *

Anticipating the future is always a risky business, and attempting to anticipate political developments in Russia is even more so. Nonetheless we would maintain that the only inaccuracy in the “presidential decree” which serves as the epilogue to this book is its precise date. We are absolutely convinced that this decree will be promulgated at some time in the near future. If not, then what would be the point of our writing this book?