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The KGB view of the West: conspiracies and agents of influence

Ben de Jong

This article discusses the KGB view of the West, mainly in the post-Stalin period, as it can be found in the writings of former KGB officers and in several other sources. Memoirs and other writings by former KGB officers were relatively rare inside the Soviet Union before 1991, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union quite a few of those were published in Russia and this is still going on.[1]

The Soviet system and its leadership exhibited a strong suspicion and distrust towards individual foreigners and their contacts with Soviet citizens. On the part of the Soviet authorities, the KGB in particular, there was an all-pervasive fear of their citizens being recruited as spies by Western intelligence services and theconsidered the danger of ideological contagion, growing out of contacts with westerners very real as well. This suspicion within the Soviet establishment towards foreigners, those from the West in particular, was strongly present during Stalin's time, when any contact with a foreigner, even in the form of written correspondence, could easily lead to a death sentence on account of espionage. After the death of the dictator in 1953, this attitude persisted to a large extent, even though for a Soviet citizen the consequences of contacts with foreigners would then on average be less severe than had been the case during Stalin's lifetime. That the KGB in the post-Stalin period still regarded contacts between Soviet citizens and westerners as fraught with grave potential danger for the security of the Soviet state, becomes clear, for instance, from a speech held by the chief of the KGB in the Sverdlovsk region, a KGB officer by the name of P.S. Muzykin. He spoke at a meeting with his co-workers in July 1968 'On the organization of counterintelligence work against ideological diversion by the adversary'. The speech clearly illustrates the KGB's obsession with monitoring contacts between Soviet citizens and foreigners, in spite of the fact that the region was in fact closed to foreigners in Soviet times, due to the large number of defense establishments there. On the work of the KGB in the Sverdlovsk region Muzykin said the following, among other things:

> Our region is closed to visits by foreigners, but this does not protect us against the penetration of bourgeois propaganda. To carry out hostile ideological actions, the adversary uses radio stations, international correspondence, personal meetings with our citizens on the territory of the USSR and during travels abroad. In 1967-68 alone, 5227 persons travelled abroad. More than 1400 people were at different moments in contact with foreigners on the territory of the USSR. About 12,000 were corresponding regu-

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[1] During the Cold War, a considerable number of memoirs by KGB defectors has been published in the West. Some of those contain very valuable insights into the workings of the KGB.

larly with foreigners. More than 3000 people had relatives there [abroad] with whom they conducted an active written communication and had meetings periodically.[2]

Surveillance of Soviet citizens by the KGB, including their contacts with foreigners, took place on a scale hard to comprehend for someone living in a Western democracy. Exact information on this phenomenon is hard to come by, since relevant KGB archives have never been opened after 1991. An indication can be found, however, in the memoirs of several former KGB officers who went to live in the U.S. Oleg Kalugin, a former major general of the KGB, offers the following description of the amount of surveillance in Leningrad in the beginning of the 1980s, where he was then stationed as the second in command of the KGB:

> I was one of three KGB officials in Leningrad with the power to authorize wiretapping in the city. As I spent more time on the job, I marvelled at the extent of our bugging, surveillance, and mail interception efforts. In the Big House [KGB headquarters in Leningrad], nearly one thousand KGB employees, working in a warren of rooms, were involved around the clock in monitoring and recording phone wiretaps and other bugs. At any given time, there were dozens of phones, offices, and apartments being bugged, and this batallion of KGB workers – most of them women – recorded and transcribed the conversations. Sitting in the Big House, we had the capacity, through special hook-ups with the central Leningrad phone station, to record any conversation in the city. The phone calls of dissidents, artists and other troublemakers were monitored periodically. Foreign diplomats, businessmen and journalists were subjected to near-constant bugging of their phones and hotel rooms. Indeed, at the major Intourist hotels – the Astoria, Evropeyskaya, and Pribaltiskaya – suspicious foreigners were placed in certain rooms already outfitted with hidden microphones. Tourists also were watched, though more spottily since there were so many of them. Virtually all the Intourist guides were KGB informers, who immediately reported to us, if they harbored suspicions about a certain foreign tourist.[3]

[2] As quoted in A.S. Smykalin, 'Ideologicheskiy kontrol' i Pyatoye upravleniye KGB SSSR v 1967-1989 gg.,' ('Ideological control and the Fifth Directorate of the KGB of the USSR in 1967-89.') *Voprosy istorii*, no. 8, 2011, 36. The author is grateful to Dr. Marc Jansen at the University of Amsterdam for drawing his attention to this article. The population of Sverd-lovsk region stood at almost 4,5 million inhabitants in 2002. See http://en.wiki-pedia.org/wiki/Sverdlovsk_Oblast#Demographics, accessed on 27 November 2011.

[3] Oleg Kalugin, *The First Directorate: My 32 Years in Intelligence and Espionage Against the West.* St. Martin's Press: New York, 1994, 297-298. Kalugin left the KGB in 1987 and when still in the USSR openly criticized the organization in the late 1980s. He went to live in the United States in 1995. *Izvestia*, 24 March 2000; *The Russia Journal*, 7 August 2003, http://www.russiajournal.com/news/cnews-article.shtml?nd=39832, accessed on 7 August 2003.

In Kalugin's view, all this work did not amount to much in terms of combating espionage. Sometimes compromising information on extramarital affairs or homosexual activity came to light that could be used to pressurize an individual into becoming a KGB informer, but results were meager when compared to the amount of time and energy spent on this elaborate system of surveillance. The defector Victor Sheymov, referring to Moscow at the end of the 1970s, writes that every foreigner in the capital was surrounded by KGB informers. As Sheymov has it, a safe assumption was that more than half the foreigners' Soviet contacts were reporting to the KGB. Those informers were in addition to KGB officers who could be interested in a particular foreigner either because he was suspect or because he was considered a suitable target for recruitment. Hotel rooms and specific tables in restaurants often used by foreigners were bugged on a routine basis and homing devices were placed in cars belonging to foreigners. Needless to say that toilets in hotel rooms also were often bugged. The most bizarre mechanism of surveillance, if Sheymov is to be believed, were so-called 'decoy cars' that were meant to catch would-be defectors in Moscow. They were usually American brands and had diplomatic license plates similar to those of the U.S. embassy. The foreign-looking drivers were, of course, KGB officers who would every now and then leave their car parked somewhere, to go for a walk and then get back. The drivers and their cars belonged to the KGB Seventh Directorate which was responsible for surveillance and all this was done to ensnare would-be defectors who would supposedly approach these drivers posing as Americans. The phones of foreigners living in Moscow were, of course, eavesdropped on around the clock and every letter to them was opened.[4]

Institutionalized distrust and suspicion could in some cases also be directed at KGB personnel when they had, for instance, spent time in prison in the West after their arrest in a spy scandal. In such a case they were deemed to be at risk of having been recruited by a service of the country where they had been imprisoned. According to one account, the well-known KGB officer Rudolf Abel, who was sentenced to thirty years imprisonment in 1957 in the U.S. on account of espionage and released five years later in a spy swap, was never really trusted again by the KGB after his return to Moscow. He was not given any meaningful work to do and the KGB even listened in on him on his death bed hoping he would reveal inadvertently that he had been recruited by the Americans when in prison.[5]

In KGB documents, the West in general and the USA in particular were routinely characterized as the 'main adversary' (*glavnyi protivnik*). An internally published KGB counterintelligence dictionary from 1972 defines the term 'adversary' as 'the foreign and internal enemies of the Soviet state' and circumscribes 'main adversary' as follows:

[4] Victor Sheymov, *Tower of Secrets: A Real Life Spy Thriller.* Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, p. 295-297. Until his exfiltration by the CIA, together with his wife and daughter, from the USSR in 1980 Sheymov was an officer in the KGB Eighth Chief Directorate (government communications).

[5] Oleg Gordievsky, *Next Stop Execution: The Autobiography of Oleg Gordievsky.* London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995, 141-142.

the main political adversary of the Soviet state which is in connection with this also the main target of the activity of the Soviet organs of state security. In the present period, for the organs of the KGB as well as for the Soviet state as a whole, the m.a. is the United States of America, the main pillar of international reaction, the world center of anticommunism and the organizer of aggressive military blocs. Because of the fact that the anti-communist and anti-Soviet politics and the foreign policy strategy of the USA has a coalition character, the m.a. also comprises England [Great Britain], the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany], France, Japan and Israel, who are allies of the USA. NATO is also considered the m.a. In the counterintelligence activity of the organs of the KGB the m.a. are the intelligence services of the USA and also the intelligence services of England, the FRG, France, Japan and Israel.[6]

The notion of the West as the main enemy often showed very clearly in the statements made by KGB officials over the years even if the exact terms were not being used. For instance, at a conference in 1967 marking the fiftieth anniversary of the state security service of the USSR, A.M. Sakharovsky, who was head of the intelligence service of the KGB, the First Chief Directorate (FCD), from 1956 to 1971, said the following:

> We are engaged in an irreconcilable battle against an experienced and perfidious enemy. The battle will be won by the side that is better prepared, able to understand the situation more quickly and correctly, able to expose the weak points of the opponent. He will be able to deal a decisive blow and will surpass the opponent with his bravery, tenacity and inventiveness.

And Yuri Andropov, then KGB chairman, also put it very clearly in 1968 at a meeting of the Second Chief Directorate of the KGB, which was responsible for counterintelligence and internal security:

> ... one must understand that the struggle between the organs of state security and the special organs of the opponent in the present conditions reflect the present stage of a heightening of the class struggle. And this means that the struggle is more merciless. Today the same question is being decided as in the first days of Soviet power: who [will prevail over] whom? Only to-

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[6] Vysshaya Krasnoznamennaya Shkola Komiteta Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti pri Sovete Ministrov SSSR imeni F.E. Dzerzhinskogo, *Kontrrazvedyvatelnyy slovar'* ('Red Flag High School of the Committee of State Security of the Council of Ministers named after F.E. Dzerzhinsky. Counterintelligence dictionary.'), Moskva, 1972, 235. To be found at http://www.geno-cid.lt/KGB/ci_dictionary.pdf, accessed on 12 September 2011. *KGB Lexicon: The Soviet Intelligence Officer's Handbook.* Edited and introduced by Vasili Mitrokhin (London & Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), 328, offers the same definition with a slightly different wording.

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day this question is not being decided within our country but within the framework of the whole world system, in a global struggle between two world systems.[7]

It is not surprising that inside the KGB, the main intelligence and security service of the USSR in the period after Stalin's death, negative attitudes towards the West were strongly present. This would be natural for an organization that has the defense of the fatherland against subversion on the part of Western intelligence services as one of its main tasks. The extent to which these attitudes existed and their intensity was, however, striking.

In the official Soviet world view, the hand of the West and its 'special services' was easily seen in places where the average Westerner would have great trouble discerning it.[8] Phenomena in Soviet society that were considered negative or undesirable from the official point of view, were routinely ascribed, at least partly, to the influence and machinations of the West, and of its special services in particular. In the *Kratkii politicheskii slovar'* ('Short political dictionary'), for instance, which was published in Moscow in the 1980s, the following could be found under the entry 'dissidents':

> ... the term 'D.' is used by imperialist propaganda to describe individual renegades, persons who have dissociated themselves from socialist society and taken the road of anti-Soviet activity. They violate laws and look for support abroad from imperialist propaganda centers and intelligence services, because they do not enjoy support inside the country.[9]

The idea that the dissident movement inside the Soviet Union was to an extent a product of the West and its intelligence services, was clearly a part of the official Soviet world view. Shortly before the expulsion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn from the USSR in 1974, KGB chairman Yurii Andropov and the chief public prosecutor Roman Rudenko sent a note to the Politbureau and the Secretariat of the CPSU in which they referred to the campaign in the West to defend Solzhenitsyn in which a variety of human rights organizations and governments took part. They wrote that 'the whole campaign [in favor of Solzhenitsyn] was well-coordinated and led from one center [abroad].' The two officials also referred in their note to 'the concern of

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[7] The statements by Sakharovsky and Andropov are quoted in Vasili Mitrokhin, *The KGB in Afghanistan.* Cold War International History Project. Working Paper #40, July 2002, Updated July 2009, p. 146. Accessed at http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/WP40-english.pdf on 13 November 2011.
[8] In Soviet times and in present day Russia as well, the term 'special services' is commonly used to describe the intelligence and security services of a particular country.
[9] *Kratkii politicheskii slovar'* ('Short political dictionary'), Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, Izdanie chetvertoe, dopolnennoe, 1987, 124.

the secret services of the adversary for Solzhenitsyn's fate.'[10] The Soviet leadership did not accept the notion that the public attention paid in the West to dissidents like Solzhenitsyn came to a large extent from organizations like Amnesty International, who were not in the habit of receiving their orders from Western intelligence services. On the other hand, the fact that in some cases Western intelligence services did support dissident movements inside the Soviet bloc during the Cold War cannot be denied. The former U.S. Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Robert Gates writes in his memoirs, for instance, that the CIA under President Ronald Reagan actively gave financial and material support to dissident movements like the Polish independent trade union Solidarity in the later phase of the Cold War. For obvious reasons, the CIA gave this support not directly through its own personnel, but through intermediaries.[11]

What the KGB counterintelligence dictionary quoted earlier says about so-called 'anti-Soviet émigré organizations' also offers insight into the world view that was dominant within the Soviet 'organs of state security'. The dictionary discusses 'anti-Soviet émigré organizations' in a separate entry and gives a long list of tasks they fulfill in carrying out their anti-Soviet work. According to this dictionary, these organizations in many ways work closely with the intelligence services of capitalist states. The dictionary says matter-of-factly that the leadership of such organizations is in the hands of 'agents of American, English and other capitalist intelligence services, who have received special training and have experience with subversive activity against the USSR.' One of the tasks of these émigré organizations is furnishing 'capitalist intelligence services with agent cadres.' They also set up 'subversive-terrorist, retaliatory, protective and other semi-military and military formations with an eye on [future] war with the USSR.' Furthermore, these organizations 'collect secret and other information on the USSR that can be of interest to the adversary' and work together with 'imperialist intelligence services' in recruiting Soviet citizens and inducing them to commit high treason. They also carry out 'subversive work against the Soviet state' among émigrés by order of the intelligence and counterintelligence services of capitalist states and are widely used as a cover for the activities of those services.[12]

As was the case with the Soviet view of dissidents referred to above, this characterization of 'anti-Soviet émigré organizations' was not entirely without foundation. It has been well-known from publications in the West for quite some time, for instance, that Western intelligence services like the CIA and the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), especially in the first decade after World War II did indeed

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[10] *Akte Solschenizyn 1965-1977. Geheime Dokumente des Politbüros der KPdSU und des KGB.* Berlin: Edition q, 1994, 388.

[11] Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows. The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996, 236-238, 450-451.

[12] *Kontrrazvedyvatelnyy slovar'*, 30-31. The 'anti-Soviet émigré organizations' referred to here have such names as the Union for the Struggle for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia and the Central Union of Political Émigrés.

infiltrate agents recruited from émigré organizations in the West into the Baltic states, western Ukraine and also into other countries of the then Soviet bloc. The aim of such operations was to foment insurrection in those parts of the Soviet Union and the satellite countries and to support existing resistance movements against the Soviet regime which had re-established itself in the region after the defeat of Nazi Germany. As is well-known, all these operations by the CIA and SIS failed miserably, having been infiltrated from the start by the Soviet Ministry of State Security MGB and the security organs of the satellite countries.[13]

From the perspective of the KGB, the danger of infiltration by Western intelligence services and their agents does not come only from the classical 'agent' in the sense of someone who hands over secret information to the adversary, but also from so-called 'agents of influence'. Their primary job is different, as the term suggests, namely to influence events or organizations in a way that is deemed desirable by their real masters. The defector Vasili Mitrokhin defines 'agent of influence' in his *KGB Lexicon* as follows:

> An agent operating under intelligence instructions who uses his official or public position, and other means, to exert influence on policy, public opinion, the course of particular events, the activity of political organizations and state agencies in target countries.[14]

A fear of foreign influence of this kind was clearly present within an organization like the KGB in the last decades of the Soviet Union. KGB chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, who was to achieve world-wide notoriety as the main instigator of the failed coup against Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev in August 1991, offered an apt illustration of this attitude in a speech made during a closed session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in June of the same year.[15] In the speech Kryuchkov spoke about the 'influence of foreign agents' on his country and quoted extensively and approvingly from a 1977 KGB document, signed by its then chairman Yurii Andropov and entitled 'On the plan of the CIA to recruit agents of influence among Soviet citizens'. The document is a striking example of the conspiratorial way of

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[13] See, for instance, Peter Grose, *Operation Rollback: America's Secret War behind the Iron Curtain.* Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000, passim; Tom Bower, *The Red Web: MI6 and the KGB Master Coup.* London: Aurum Press, 1989, passim; Gordon Corera, *The Art of Betrayal: Life and Death in the British Secret Service.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2011, 51-67.

[14] *KGB Lexicon*, 3.

[15] Kryuchkov had been chief of the intelligence service of the KGB, the First Chief Directorate, in 1974-88 and was KGB Chairman since 1988. He served as a diplomat at the Soviet embassy in Budapest, Hungary, during the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, together with the then Soviet ambassador, Yurii Andropov. Kryuchkov was never stationed in the West as an intelligence officer and as far as is known, set foot in a Western country for the first time only in the second half of the 1980s. His highest rank in the KGB was general of the army. For information on Kryuchkov's career see *A biographical directory of 100 leading Soviet officials.* Compiled by Alexander Rahr. Westview Press: Boulder etc., 1990, 86-87; *Entsiklopediya sekretnykh sluzhb Rossii* ('Encyclopedia of Russia's secret services'), Moskva: AST, Astrel', Transitkniga, 2004, 585-587.

thinking that prevailed within the Soviet establishment and within the KGB especially. Quoting from it, Kryuchkov said:

Today American intelligence is planning tot recruit agents among Soviet citizens, train them and then advance them into administrative positions within Soviet politics, the economy and science. The CIA has drafted a program to subject agents to individual instruction in espionage techniques and also intensive political and ideological brainwashing. In addition, one of the most important aspects of such training is instruction in management of the economy at the highest level. American intelligence plans, deliberately and regardless of cost, to search out people whose personal character and professional abilities make them likely to rise to administrative posts within the state bureaucracy, so that they can carry out the tasks assigned to them by their handlers. Also, the CIA intends that individual and isolated agents carrying out policies of sabotage in the economy and distortion of superiors' instructions will be coordinated from a single centre within the U.S. intelligence system. The CIA believes that such deliberate action by agents will enable certain internal political difficulties to be created for the Soviet Union, retard development of its economy and channel its scientific research into dead-ends. Drawing up these plans, American intelligence believes that increasing contacts between the Soviet Union and the West create a favourable environment for them to be put into effect. According to statements by American intelligence personnel working directly with agents recruited among Soviet citizens, the current policy of the US special services will promote severe changes in various aspects of our society.[16]

From this description it becomes clear what the KGB understands by an 'agent of influence' in very practical terms. During this speech in June 1991, Kryuchkov added that the West still practiced this kind of secret activity.[17] He doesn't seem to have been a full-blooded conspiracy theorist, however. He writes in his memoirs that the main reasons why things went wrong with the USSR at the end of the 1980s were of an internal nature. The collapse of the Soviet Union was in his view not primarily caused by Western special services, but they definitely made a contribution.[18]

One of the Western agents Kryuchkov undoubtedly had in mind during his speech in June 1991 was Alexander Yakovlev, one of Gorbachev's most important political allies in the years of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Yakovlev was a member of the Politbureau of the CPSU in the 1980s and an outspoken political reformer. Without going into specifics, Kryuchkov writes in his memoirs that the KGB received information in 1989 that Yakovlev was in contact with American special services. According to

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[16] As quoted in *Instructions from the Centre: Top Secret Files on KGB Foreign Operations 1975-1985*. Edited by Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky. London etc.: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991, 221-222. The original can be found in V.A. Kryuchkov, *Bez sroka davnosti. Kniga pervaya*. ('Without term of limitation. Book one.') Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 2006, 14-15.

[17] Kryuchkov, *Bez sroka davnosti. Kniga pervaye*, 15.

[18] Vladimir Kryuchkov, *Lichnoe delo. Chast' vtoraya*. ('Personal file. Part two.') Moscow: Olimp, Ast, 1996, 365.

Kryuchkov, there had been similar information in 1960, when Yakovlev studied at Columbia University, New York.[19] In the Soviet system in the post-Stalin period but earlier as well, nothing could be undertaken by the KGB against a Politbureau member like Yakovlev without the consent of the party leadership, the general secretary in particular, in this case Gorbachev. According to Kryuchkov, Gorbachev refused to have anything to do with the accusations leveled against one of his most important political allies in the Soviet leadership. Kryuchkov explicitly brought up the subject of Yakovlev's contacts with American services in one of his meetings with Gorbachev, but, according to Kryuchkov, the party leader refused to act.[20] Kryuchkov clearly suggests, though without saying it in so many words, that Gorbachev also worked for U.S. intelligence: 'Gorbachev and Yakovlev were in total agreement on strategy and tactics, because they only had one master: Washington.'[21] In 1993 a criminal investigation was launched by the public prosecutor's office in Russia into Yakovlev's role during *perestroika*, after Kryuchkov had repeated his accusations in an article in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* in February of that year. In June of the same year the investigation apparently came to an end without having led to a trial.[22]

Kryuchkov is not alone in his suspicions concerning Yakovlev. Vyacheslav Shironin, a former major general of the KGB, says about Yakovlev in his memoirs that 'he worked with the CIA over a period of thirty years.' Yakovlev, in Shironin's view, was recruited by the Americans during his period of study at Columbia University at the end of the 1950s, 'where leading professors were experienced CIA officials.'[23] KGB suspicions of Yakovlev at times seem rather far-fetched. Shironin mentions an anonymous KGB officer who apparently told him that for a time within the KGB Yakovlev was seen as a *rezident* of the CIA, but this idea was later rejected.[24] That would have meant that Yakovlev functioned as 'chief of station' of the CIA, which is barely imaginable. A chief of station (the KGB equivalent is called *rezident*) heads the CIA station in a foreign country, is always a regular full-time CIA officer and a U.S. citizen and plays a leading role in CIA operations in that

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[19] Yakovlev was one of a first group of three students in 1960, undoubtedly carefully selected by the Soviet authorities, that went to study at Columbia. Another member of the group was the former KGB general Oleg Kalugin.

[20] Kryuchkov, *Lichnoe delo. Chast' pervaya*. ('Personal file. Part one.') Moscow: Olimp, Ast, 1996, 294-297, 302

[21] Ibid., 46.

[22] *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 13 February 1993; Kryuchkov, *Lichnoe delo. Chast' pervaya*, 302

[23] Vyacheslav Shironin, *Pod kolpakom kontrrazvedki. Taynaya podopleka perestroyki*. ('Behind the scenes of the counterintelligence service. Perestroika's secret background.') Moscow: Paleya, 1996, 202, 198, 313. Shironin joined the KGB in 1964 and mainly worked in its internal directorates. He carried out missions in Afghanistan, the Baltic states and the North Caucasus and in the beginning of the 1990s was deputy chief of the Second Chief Directorate (domestic counterintelligence). His highest rank with the KGB was major general. See Shironin, *Pod kolpakom kontrrazvedki*, passim; A. Diyenko, *Razvedka i kontrrazvedka v litsakh. Entsyklopedicheskiy slovar' rossiyskikh spetssluzhb*. ('Intelligence and counterintelligence in personal profiles. Encyclopedic dictionary of Russian special services.') Moskva: Russkiy Mir', 2002, 555.

[24] Shironin, *Pod kolpakom kontrrazvedki*, 316. *Rezident* is the term used by the KGB for the chief of a KGB station in a particular country.

particular country. It is very difficult to imagine how Yakovlev could ever have held such a position. Apart from this, it is striking that none of the former KGB officers who accuse Yakovlev and others of having been agents of the West, offers circumstantial evidence supporting the accusation, let alone any kind of real proof.

Shironin clearly suggests that Oleg Kalugin, who would turn into a 'dissident' KGB general many years later, was also recruited by the CIA at Columbia at the end of the 1950s.[25] Shironin is understandably also very critical of former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev and strongly suggests that he was a CIA agent as well. When discussing 'agents of influence' in his book Shironin mentions a closed meeting, with no third person present, that Gorbachev is supposed to have had with U.S. president George Bush the elder 'in the captain's cabin of a U.S. war ship. Bush had in an earlier period been director of the CIA, so he was a very experienced intelligence official!'[26] This probably refers to the summit meeting of the two leaders late 1989 in the harbor of Malta. The suggestion of such a personal meeting is rather amazing if one takes into account the fact that Bush and Gorbachev, as far as is known, do not have a language in common.

It is not surprising that politicians like Gorbachev, Yakovlev and former foreign minister of the USSR Eduard Shevardnadze are not popular with former KGB officers, since they are seen by many of them as the main instigators of the collapse of the USSR and of the loss of its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, among other things. It is one thing, however, to disagree with the policies adopted by Gorbachev and his supporters in the Soviet leadership in the 1980s, but to suggest, as Shironin does, that the collapse of the USSR was consciously planned by Gorbachev at the beginning of *perestroika*, is something else altogether. Shironin refers approvingly to the former East German leader Erich Honecker who is supposed to have said that the reunification of Germany and the end of communism in the Soviet Union 'was already planned at the dawn of *perestroika* in Washington after secret talks of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze with the leaders of the United States.'[27] Filipp Bobkov, a former general of the army of the KGB,[28] and for many years the chief of the Fifth Directorate that, among other things, persecuted dissidents in the USSR, expressed himself in similarly negative terms about Gorbachev when he wrote in his memoirs that 'all activities of the new leaders of the state [i.e. Gorbachev and his associates] completely coincided with what American special services had wished to happen for decades.'[29] When bringing up these accusations against Gorbachev, Yakovlev and others, Kryuchkov and other KGB officers do not offer a shred of evidence and do not even try to give an explanation as to what the character of the evidence could be.

[25] Shironin says about Kalugin, that there is, however, no concrete evidence of his betrayal. For Shironin's view on Kalugin see Shironin, *Pod kolpakom kontrrazvedki*, 312-318.

[26] Shironin, *Pod kolpakom kontrrazvedki*, 61.

[27] Shironin, *Pod kolpakom kontrrazvedki*, 169.

[28] 'General of the army' (*general armii*) was the highest general's rank within the KGB and the armed forces of the USSR. After that came the different marshall's ranks.

[29] Filipp Bobkov, *KGB i vlast'*. ('The KGB and power.') Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Veteran MP", 1995, 369.

In response to these accusations, former DCI Robert Gates denies in his memoirs that Gorbachev and Yakovlev were CIA agents. When discussing the role of the former USSR president and the possibility that he was a CIA agent, Gates writes: 'We could not possibly have guided him to engineer so successfully the destruction of the Soviet empire.'[30]

Another politician who receives a very bad press from several former KGB officers in their publications is the Afghan leader Hafizullah Amin, who was the most prominent victim of the Soviet invasion of his country in December 1979. Amin died when KGB *spetsnaz* forces disguised in Afghan uniforms attacked his palace outside Kabul.[31] According to a KGB defector's account, in the period before the Soviet invasion the KGB had already tried to eliminate Amin by using an illegal who had infiltrated his palace as a cook, to poison him. This plan failed, however.[32] Some KGB authors like Kryuchkov pronounce a very critical judgment on Amin on moral grounds. They do this in spite of the fact that Amin considered himself a communist and a close ally of the Soviet Union, up to the very moment when he was killed by Soviet *Spetnaz* units. According to Kryuchkov, Amin was a 'careerist, a man of exceptionally adventurous character, cruel and unscrupulous in choosing the means he used to realize his ambitious aims.' Kryuchkov expresses his shock at the fact that under Amin in Afghanistan 'methods of physical and psychological pressure' were used against prisoners and in other passages in his memoirs he speaks of Amin's 'fascist regime' and 'anti-people's regime.'[33] He is not alone in his sharp criticism of the Afghan leader. The high KGB official Vadim Kirpichenko called Amin 'a double-dyed fascist and an executioner of the Afghan people.'[34] These characterizations may sound strange coming from officers of an organization that often dealt harshly with opponents or alleged opponents of the Soviet regime, but they may not be surprising in the light of the fact that the Soviet leadership decided to eliminate Amin in December 1979. Interestingly, one of the reasons the Soviet leadership decided to topple Amin and invade Afghanistan seems to have been the fact that they considered him much too radical in his communist policies, as a consequence of which he caused a moslem rebellion against his own Afghan government to grow and risked seriously destabilizing his country.[35] This Soviet view of

[30] Gates, *From the Shadows*, 327.

[31] Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive. The KGB in Europe and the West.* London etc.: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1999, 508-510.

[32] Vladimir Kuzichkin, *Inside the KGB. Myth and reality.* London: André Deutsch, 1990, 315. Andrew and Mitrokhin consider this story probably authentic. See Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way. The KGB and the Battle for the Third World.* New York: Basic Books, 2005, 400-401, 576-577, note 43. This is the U.S. edition of the second Mitrokhin volume. For the attempt by the KGB to poison Amin on the eve of the Soviet invasion in December 1979, also see Gregory Feifer, *The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan,* New York etc.: Harper Perennial, 2010, 58-60, 69-71.

[33] Kryuchkov, *Lichnoe delo. Chast' pervaya,* 188, 193, 198, 199.

[34] Vadim Kirpichenko, *Razvedka. Litsa i lichnosti.* ('The intelligence service. People and personalities.') Moscow: Geya, 1998, 350.

[35] Artemy M. Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan,* Cambridge, Massachusetts & London, England: Harvard University Press, 2011, 20-22.

Amin could partly explain the negative characterizations of him and his policies just mentioned. The accusations against him went further, however, in that Amin was also accused by some former KGB officials of being a CIA agent. Shironin, in particular, writes that Amin was in touch with the CIA. These contacts allegedly went back to the period when the Afghan leader studied in the United States, also at Columbia University, New York, just like Yakovlev and Kalugin. As a suspicious circumstance, Shironin mentions the fact that Amin occasionally visited the U.S. embassy in Kabul unaccompanied by an interpreter or a bodyguard.[36] According to Steve Coll in *Ghost Wars*, after Amin came to power in Afghanistan in September 1979 he and the KGB in Kabul had a falling-out of some kind, after which the KGB planted rumours that Amin was a CIA agent. These rumours then came back to the KGB in a confusing case of 'blow-back'. Apart from this, Amin apparently held a series of private meetings with American diplomats in Kabul in the fall of 1979.[37] So possibly the suspicions of the KGB against Amin were based on a curious mixture of rumours that it itself had spread, and facts.[38]

In the period preceding the Soviet invasion of December 1979, the U.S. had, according to Shironin, put together a plan to carry out a large airborne operation at the airport of Kandahar in the south of Afghanistan if requested to do so by Amin.[39] It is unclear how the U.S. government could possibly have pulled this off politically, a few years only after the end of the Vietnam War that had been such a disaster for the Americans. Maybe the suspicions against Amin on the part of the KGB can partly be explained by the fact that many in the Afghan leadership had been recruited as KGB agents, often in an earlier phase of their career, while Amin, according to Mitrokhin, probably had not been.[40]

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[36] Shironin, *Pod kolpakom kontrrazvedki*, 128-129. Hafizullah Amin has been characterized by Steve Coll as 'a former failed graduate student at Columbia University in New York.' Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars. The secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet invasion to September 10, 2001*. The Penguin Press: New York, 2004, 46.

[37] Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 47. Coll defines blowback as 'the term used by spies to describe planted propaganda that filters back to confuse the country that first set the story loose.' Ibid.

[38] Apart from the question if Amin was a CIA agent or not, in the months before the Soviet invasion of December 1979, there was apparently a fear among the Soviet leadership of a 'turn by Amin in an anti-Soviet direction.' Quoted from a high level CPSU document in Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye*, 20.

[39] Shironin, *Pod kolpakom kontrrazvedki*, 132.

[40] The material brought to the West by Mitrokhin apparently does not contain any reference to Amin having been a KGB agent, which in itself is, of course, no proof that he was not an agent. See Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way*, 393, 575 (note 18). According to Mitrokhin, a large number of Afghan leading communists and others had been recruited as agents by the KGB prior to December 1979. Among those were Nur Muhammad Taraki, who had been recruited as an agent by Soviet intelligence in 1951. Taraki was president of the Revolutionary council of Afghanistan and prime minister, when he was executed by Hafizullah Amin in October 1979 and succeeded by him. When Amin was killed by Soviet troops at the beginning of the Soviet invasion in December 1979, he was succeeded by Babrak Karmal, who had also been recruited as an agent by the KGB at an earlier point in his life. Once such agents acquired leading positions within their respective communist parties, they formally ceased to be KGB agents in most cases. Mitrokhin, *The KGB in Afghanistan*, 17-18, 32-33 (note 54).

Vladimir Kryuchkov, in a statement he made in the first half of the 1990s, referred to again another kind of conspiracy by the West. Details can be found in a speech which he made for the military college of the Russian Supreme court in November 1993, when he stood trial for his role in the failed coup of August 1991. Referring to the end of the 1980s, he said that a number of foreign powers, among them the United States, intended to reduce the population of the USSR to 150-160 million people over a period of 25-30 years.[41] It should be noted that the population of the USSR around 1990 numbered approximately 260 million. Kryuchkov didn't explain how the U.S. and other countries thought to put this plan into practice. It seems almost inconceivable that it could be realized without the U.S. waging a nuclear war of some kind against the Soviet Union. In retrospect, the fact that Kryuchkov had these ideas may seem rather amazing. He was KGB chairman in 1988-1991 and previously the chief of the FCD for fourteen years. In other words, he was supposed to be well informed, especially about the West, even though he paid his first visit to a Western country very late in his career.[42] But ideological prejudice and a tendency to see conspiracies made it apparently very difficult for him to see reality as it was. Generally speaking, there is a clear tendency among KGB officers to blame all kinds of problems that existed in the Soviet Union on the West or on Western special services. A statement by Filipp Bobkov is typical in this respect, namely when he says that in Soviet times Western services 'regularly sent residents-cum-parsons [to the USSR], who incited believers to disobedience to authority and to undermining activities of a more aggressive character.'[43] This is clearly a reference to the dissident religious movement, which in Bobkov's view was supported by Western services. He also states without further explanation that American services deliberately stirred up the problem of anti-Semitism in the USSR.[44] Similarly pernicious Western influences are present in Russia after the collapse of the USSR, if Bobkov is to be believed. Writing in 1995 he says:

> Western experts, specialists and advisers have penetrated all corners of industry, agriculture, finance and all spheres of politics as well. All doors and safes are open to them. They study our lives and advise us how to carry on, but they don't know our lives and they are not interested. These businessmen have their own goals and tasks: they are fighting for spheres of influ-

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[41] Kryuchkov, *Lichnoe delo. Chast' vtoraya*, 413.

[42] Kryuchkov made his first trip to a Western country, the United States, only in 1987. *A biographical directory of 100 leading Soviet officials*. Compiled by Alexander Rahr. Westview Press: Boulder etc., 1990, 86-87.

[43] Bobkov, *KGB i vlast'*, 360-361. Bobkov made his career with the internal apparatus of the KGB, not with the foreign intelligence service FCD. In 1969-82 he was chief of the Fifth Directorate that was responsible for and In 1982 he became a deputy chairman of the KGB. For his career see *Entsiklopediya sekretnykh sluzhb Rossii*, 463-464.

[44] Bobkov, *KGB i vlast'*, 39.

ence in the richest regions of the country by changing them in colonies [literally: appendices with resources].[45]

Such opinions are maybe not surprising to hear from someone like Bobkov who concerned himself with dissidents' activities and all kinds of 'ideological sabotage' for the largest part of his KGB career.

Vitaly Pavlov was a KGB officer who served his whole career with the First Chief Directorate. He spent several years in the West, stationed at Soviet embassies, and travelled there regularly on special KGB assignments.[46] He sees the hand of 'agents of influence' in several recent developments. Writing in 1999, Pavlov says that such agents in the Russian parliament, whom he doesn't mention by name, contributed to the breaking of the power of the KGB from 1991 onwards and to the undermining of the influence of the Russian intelligence service SVR since.[47] Pavlov also refers approvingly to a warning by the Russian security service, dating from the beginning of 1994, concerning the increasing 'use by the special services of the U.S. of American political science institutes, universities, non-governmental foundations and social organizations for intelligence work and undermining activities on Russian territory.'[48] Pavlov's allegation that the Norwegian intelligence service carries out espionage under the cover of the environmental organization Bellona,[49] which explores the issue of nuclear contamination in Russia's northern seas, among other things, undoubtedly fits this way of thinking as well. The suspicion that international NGOs are being used for espionage purposes by Western intelligence services seems to be shared fairly widely within the present-day Russian political establishment, judging from the frequency with which Russian security officials warn against this phenomenon. The director of the Russian security service FSB, Nikolai Patrushev, said in December 2006, for instance, that his service had observed a 'sharp increase' of information-gathering by people who were in Russia legally, but not as diplomats.[50] Especially during the later Gorbachev years, when the USSR was on its way to collapse, there was a fear among some KGB officers that the West was aiming for the break-up of the Soviet Union. A typical example is to be found in a statement by Nikolai Leonov, then a former head of the analytical department of the FCD, made in April 1991. Speaking at a congress of the conservative movement Soyuz, he said the following about Zbigniew Brzezinski, former National Security Adviser of U.S. president Jimmy Carter: 'Read the articles and speeches of Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security adviser to the U.S. President, and you will see that his goal is to eliminate the Soviet Union as a united state.'

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[45] Bobkov, *KGB i vlast'*, 372.

[46] For Pavlov's career, see *Entsiklopediya sekretnykh sluzhb Rossii*, 656-657.

[47] Vitali Pavlov, *"Sezam, otkroysya!" Taynye razvedyvatelnye operatsiy. Iz vospominaniy veterana vneshney razvedki.* ('"Open Sesame!" Secret intelligence operations. From the memoirs of a veteran of foreign intelligence.') (Moscow: Terra-Knizhnyy Klub, 1999), 595.

[48] Pavlov, *"Sezam, otkroysya!"*, 597.

[49] Pavlov, *"Sezam, otkroysya!"*, 598.

[50] *The Moscow Times*, 20 December 2006.

Leonov also feared American intentions to redraw the borders of the Soviet Union on a grand scale:

> During his latest visit to Moscow, Secretary of State James Baker hinted that the US recognize the USSR within the 1933 borders, when we established diplomatic relations. What does this mean? The matter concerns not only the Baltics, whose secession the US has always advocated. For many long years the US financed the 'embassies' of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in Washington. A return to the 1933 borders would mean a review of the Soviet-Finnish border, something advocated in that country, too, a review of borders in the west of the Ukraine and Byelorussia and with Romania, a secession of the half of Sakhalin and the Kuriles. Actually, it is a programme for dissecting the Soviet Union.[51]

It seems clear that conspiratorial views of the kind quoted in this article were part and parcel of the ideological outlook that was commonly found within the KGB. Such ideas go back a long time and were an important part of marxist-leninist ideology since the beginning of the twentieth century and of the Soviet system as a whole. Indeed, Lenin and the Bolsheviks, when they came to power in Russia at the time of the October Revolution, already held an extremely conspirational world view that left little room for subtlety and nuance. When the sailors of the naval base at Kronstadt near St. Petersburg staged an uprising against the Bolsheviks on 2 March 1921, the Bolshevik government condemned it immediately in a statement signed by Lenin and Trotsky on the very same day. The statement mentioned the French security service, the White Guards and the Socialist Revolutionaries as the main instigators of the rebellion.[52] Apparently, these three very disparate groups or organisations, however unlikely allies they were because of their huge political differences, had in the eyes of Lenin and Trotsky united in their common hatred of Bolshevism.

Until the very last, the Soviet leadership had grave misconceptions of the West and was often extremely ill-informed, as becomes clear, for instance, from the following anecdote. One of the late Boris Yeltsin's biographers relates a story concerning the first trip the Russian leader made to the U.S. in 1989. Yeltsin paid an impromptu visit to a shopping mall in the vicinity of Houston, Texas. It was an improvised visit, taking place at very short notice so Yeltsin could be sure not to be shown a 'Potem-

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[51] As quoted in *Instructions from the Centre*, 219. Leonov was originally a Latin America specialist and chief of the analytical department of the FCD in the 1970s. His highest rank with the KGB was lieutenant general. For his career, see *Entsiklopediya sekretnykh sluzhb Rossii*, 2004, 598.

[52] *Kronshtadtskaya tragediya 1921 goda. Dokumenty v dvukh knigakh. Kniga I.* ('The Kronshtadt Tragedy of 1921. Documents in Two Volumes. Book I.') Moskva: Rosspen, 1999, 130-131. Judging from the statement of the Soviet government, the ground for the suspicion against the French security service lay in the fact that a Paris newspaper had in an article on 13 February 1921 already mentioned the likelihood of an uprising in Kronshtadt. The Socialist Revolutionaries were a political party that was an important rival to the Bolsheviks and drew its support mainly from the Russian peasantry.

kin' version. He came away from the visit deeply shocked at the abundance of food and other goods available to ordinary Americans, goods the average Soviet citizen could only dream of. After his visit to the shopping mall, on a flight from Houston to Miami, he sat motionless on the plane for a time with his head in his hands, visibly in shock, saying after a long silence 'What have they done to our poor people?'[53] Yeltsin clearly had no idea of the level of prosperity in the West.

Conspiratorial views of the West did not come to an end in Russia, of course, with the collapse of the USSR in 1991. A typical example from a prominent Russian politician may be found in a statement in March 2006 by the leader of the Russian Communist Party, Gennadii Zyuganov, in which he blamed the United States for the spread of bird flu in a number of European countries, including Russia. During a press conference in Moscow, he said, among other things: 'The forms of warfare are changing. It's strange that not a single duck has died in America – they are all dying in Russia and European countries. This makes one seriously wonder why.' Zyuganov apparently was of the opinion that the spread of bird flu had to do with the gas warfare capability of the U.S. because he remarked during the press conference that he had good knowledge of war gases as he dealt with them during his army service. Asked to be more precise as to whether he believed the bird flu outbreak could be a deliberate attack by the U.S., Zyuganov answered positively: 'I not only suggest this, I know very well how this can be arranged. There is nothing strange here.'[54]

How did this long-lasting strain of paranoia within the KGB and the Soviet system as a whole, influence the intelligence assessments of the KGB and its predecessors? A few historical examples may suffice. The most outspoken episode concerns the German attack on the USSR of 22 June 1941, even though it has to be said that the blame for ignoring the many warning signals does not primarily lie with the Soviet intelligence services but rather with Stalin personally. The details of the case are by now well-known.[55] The Soviet intelligence service was not entirely without blame, since the Great Terror of 1937-38, in the words of Andrew and Mitrokhin, 'had institutionalized the paranoid strain in Soviet intelligence assessment. Many NKVD officers shared, if usually to a less grotesque degree, Stalin's addiction to conspiracy theory.'[56] The dictator's suspicion of the West and of Great Britain in particular, played a very important role, in that he saw a British disinformation campaign behind the numerous warnings of a German attack which aimed in his view to provoke the USSR to a war with Nazi Germany. Stalin also didn't believe that Hitler, while still being at war with Great Britain, would launch a war in the East and put Ger-

[53] Raymond Aron, *Yeltsin: A Revolutionary Life*. London: Harper Collins, 2000, 328-329.
[54] "Russian Communist leader sees U.S. behind bird flu outbreak," *Johnson's Russia List*, 2006-65, #24. At: http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/2006-65-24.cfm Accessed on 3 August 2007.
[55] For a short overview see Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, 120-124. David E. Murphy, *What Stalin Knew: The Enigma of Barbarossa*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005, discusses exhaustively the information the Soviet intelligence services had at their disposal in the months preceding the German attack. Some of it was presented to Stalin.
[56] Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, 122.

many again in the position of fighting a war on two fronts, as it had done to its great disadvantage during World War I. The Soviet dictator's response to an intelligence report from a member of the NKVD Berlin network, Harro Schulze-Boysen, who worked at the German Air Ministry, is typical. In the margins of an NKVD report from Schulze-Boysen of 16 June 1941, in which he warned not for the first time for the rapidly approaching day of the German attack, Stalin wrote: 'You can send your "source" from the German air force to his whore of a mother! This is not a "source" but a disinformer. J. Stalin.'[57] Schulze-Boysen's warning went unheeded just as Stalin ignored numerous other warnings from his intelligence service and from other quarters, at great cost to the Red Army in the opening phase of the war.

A case like this does not stand alone. In the middle of World War II, from 1942 to 1944, the Soviet intelligence service temporarily refused to take seriously the huge volume of intelligence coming from what was probably the most productive Humint network in its history, the Cambridge Five.[58] This had to do with the fact that people at the Lubyanka, the state security headquarters in Moscow, started to distrust the Cambridge Five and their proclaimed allegiance to the USSR. The vast amounts of intelligence they handed over was in the eyes of the Lubyanka too good to be true and, in the case of Philby, reports that British intelligence had not recruited agents in the USSR were found by Moscow to be especially untrustworthy. 'Stalin's Englishmen' therefore, in the eyes of the NKVD 'logically' had to be double agents whose primary loyalty was to the British intelligence and security services and not to the cause of Soviet communism. The notion that the British had, indeed, not recruited agents in the Soviet Union was not considered a plausible one by Moscow. Soviet intelligence for this reason doubted the veracity of the intelligence reports from the Cambridge Five or, in some cases, had to use the most contorted logic to accept just a few of them as authentic when their authenticity simply could not be denied. At some point during the war, the NKVD even sent a special surveillance team to London to check on the movements of the Cambridge Five and their possible contacts with the British services.[59]

Another example of paranoia getting the better of good analysis in the KGB is to be found in former KGB general Oleg Kalugin's memoirs. Kalugin discusses the crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968, which he watched from afar in Washington where he was stationed as intelligence officer and deputy *rezident* at the Soviet embassy. Kalugin writes that he received a top-secret cable from Moscow the day before the invasion, 20 August 1968. It explained the justification of the upcoming

[57] Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, 122.
[58] The Cambridge Five, consisting of Kim Philby, Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross, were recruited in the mid-1930s as students in Cambridge, or shortly after their graduation as was the case with Philby, and rose to various positions within the British establishment where they had access to much information and documents that were of great interest to Soviet intelligence.
[59] Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, 156-160. For further details also see Genrikh Borovik, *The Philby Files: The Secret Life of the Masterspy – KGB Archives Revealed*. London: Little, Brown and Company, 1994, 210-220.

invasion in terms of the 'counterrevolutionary activity in Prague', which in Moscow's view was 'supported by American and NATO secret services. In the days after the invasion Soviet propaganda continued to mention cases of CIA and NATO agents having been infiltrated into Czechoslovakia. ' It was abundantly clear to Kalugin, however, that U.S. and Western intelligence services had not fomented unrest in that country. On the basis of numerous purloined U.S. intelligence reports, he put together his own analysis of the situation and 'conclusively showed that, while America was closely monitoring the situation in Czechoslovakia, the CIA had taken no steps to destabilize the country.' Kalugin sent his report to KGB chairman Andropov but learned later that on its arrival in Moscow Andropov had the report destroyed immediately.[60]

Even someone like KGB chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov who, as was seen earlier, does not blame the collapse of the USSR exclusively on Western intelligence services, does at times not shy away from a clearly conspiratorial view of the world. He was, for instance, an ardent supporter of an intelligence operaton codenamed RYaN, which in the 1980s was an extreme expression of traditional Soviet suspicion of the West. RYaN was an acronym which stood for the Russian *Raketno-Yadernoe Napadenie* (nuclear missile attack) and has been described in detail elsewhere.[61] When relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union reached a new low during President Reagan's first term in office in the beginning of the 1980s, the old guard in the Kremlin took the possibility of a surprise nuclear attack by the West, a first strike, very seriously and ordered its intelligence services, the FCD of the KGB among them, to look out for indications of a first strike. According to Andrew and Gordievsky, Soviet suspicion of a nuclear first strike by the West reached its climax in November 1983, during a NATO military exercise codenamed Able Archer which had to do with nuclear release procedures.[62] It has to be said that many American experts and intelligence officers at the KGB apparently regarded RYaN with considerable scepticism, but as chief of the First Chief Directorate Kryuchkov was an ardent advocate of the operation.[63] RYaN was formally abolished by Yevgeni Primakov only in November 1991, after he had become the chief of the newly established but short-lived intelligence service of the USSR after the failed coup of August 1991.[64]

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[60] Kalugin, *The First Directorate*, 105-108.

[61] Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev*. London etc.: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, 488-507; *Instructions from the Centre*, 67-90; Benjamin B. Fischer, *A Cold War Conundrum: The 1983 Soviet War Scare*, https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/a-cold-war-conundrum/source.htm. Accessed on 4 November 2011.

[62] Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations*, 502. Cold War historian Mark Kramer, speaking at the conference 'Need to Know. Intelligence and Politics: Western and Eastern Perspectives' in Brussels on 8-9 November 2012, doubted strongly that among the Soviet political and military leadership in autumn 1983 there was a real fear of a nuclear surprise attack by the West.

[63] Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations*, 488; *Instructions from the Centre*, 69.

[64] *Izvestia*, 28 November 1991.

The KGB's view of the West was in many ways distorted. In the field of internal security – with its very broad definition comprising many 'dangers' not seen as such in Western democracies – the KGB and its predecessors could perhaps be considered successful, since they largely managed to crush the political adversaries, real and imagined, of the Soviet regime. In the field of foreign intelligence, it could be argued that the KGB excelled in the collection of secrets from the West, especially through its many successful Humint operations of which the Cambridge Five are but one example. Interpreting this intelligence, however, clearly seems to have been the main weakness of the KGB. Indeed, intelligence reports to the Soviet leadership from the KGB and its predecessors usually lacked interpretation for fear of offending political sensibilities. Both Stalin and Khrushchev largely were their own intelligence analysts.[65] In the case of Khrushchev, around the time of Cuba crisis of 1962, the First Chief Directorate would give him 'a selection of paraphrased reports' every day. No section of the FCD wrote intelligence estimates in which open source information and secret intelligence were combined.[66] If it was difficult, if not impossible, for the Soviet leadership and the KGB to have a balanced view of the West, this must to a large extent be blamed on the essence of the one-party state the Soviet Union was, in which challenging the dominant political view was in Stalin's time an undertaking with potentially deadly consequences and even later, in the post-1953 period, not a very wise thing to do from a career perspective, to say the least.[67] The KGB was never really able to distance itself from the CPSU and its conspiracy-minded and Manichean world view. This was in the nature of things for the KGB which, according to article 3 of its statute dating from 1959, 'works under the direct control and leadership of the CPSU.'[68]

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[65] Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, 720. Nikolai Leonov, the chief of the analytical department of the FCD in the 1970s, writes in his memoirs that an analytical department in the foreign intelligence service was established in 1943. Nikolai Leonov, *Likholetye* ('Dark times'), Moscow, 1994, 121, 125-126. According to the defector Alexander Orlov, in the 1930s analysis of intelligence information was done by the party leadership. Alexander Orlov, *Handbook of Intelligence and Guerrilla Warfare*, Ann Arbor, 1963, 187.

[66] Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, 'Soviet Intelligence and the Cuban Missile Crisis,' *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Autumn 1998, 65-66.

[67] Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, 721-722. The KGB and the Soviet leadership probably found it much easier to digest scientific and technical intelligence, where distortion of information for reasons of political correctness was much less likely. Ibid., 723-724.

[68] *Lubyanka: Organy VChK-OGPU-NKVD-NKGB-MGB-MVD-KGB 1917-1991. Spravochnik.* Sostaviteli: A.I. Kokurin, N.V. Petrov. ('Lubyanka: Organs of the VChK-OGPU-NKVD-NKGB-MGB-MVD-KGB 1917-1991. A Handbook. Compilers: A.I. Kokurin, N.V. Petrov.'), Moskva: Mezhdunarodnyy Fond 'Demokratiya' a.o., 2003, 693.