



Report Information from ProQuest

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Coronavirus Update

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FULL TEXT

Herd immunity, the much-disputed approach to bringing a raging virus outbreak under control that seems to have taken hold at the White House, has emerged as a topic in the worldwide conversation about the coronavirus this week. On Thursday, it was panned by scientists from the United States and Europe who called it "a dangerous fallacy unsupported by scientific evidence" in the medical journal *The Lancet*.

Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, also weighed in against herd immunity on Thursday, declaring on the ABC News program "Good Morning America" that it would be "ridiculous" to "just let things rip and let the infection go – no masks, crowd, it doesn't make any difference." He said there would be "so many people in the community that you can't shelter, that you can't protect, who are going to get sick and get serious consequences."

That was a reference to an Oct. 4 petition called the Great Barrington Declaration, which was cited by two senior officials in a conference call with reporters on Monday. The declaration said that there should be "measures to protect the vulnerable" but that "those who are not vulnerable should immediately be allowed to resume life as normal." It said that schools and universities should be open for in-person classes and "extracurricular activities, such as sports, should be resumed." Its website says that just over 9,900 "medical and public health scientists" have signed it, as have more than 26,000 "medical practitioners."

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the World Health Organization, had criticized herd immunity as a way of stopping the pandemic as "scientifically and ethically problematic" during a briefing earlier in the week. "Herd immunity is achieved by protecting people from a virus, not by exposing them to it," he said.

For the most part, public health experts generally agree that they would like to avoid further lockdowns. But they also say that herd immunity should not be a strategy, because it could involve large numbers of avoidable deaths. That leaves stopgap measures like wearing masks and social distancing as the best way forward until there is a vaccine that can confer widespread immunity.

For now, seven months and eight million cases into the pandemic, the United States is approaching new and alarmingly high peaks. Seventeen states are facing surges worse than anything they endured earlier in the outbreak. Minnesota, Montana and Wisconsin reported more new cases during the seven days that ended on Wednesday than in any other week since the virus arrived in the country. In Minnesota, only two counties now meet the state's criteria for keeping schools open for in-person classes. At the end of August, 24 did.

"What's happening in the Upper Midwest is just a harbinger of things to come in the rest of the country," said Michael Osterholm, an infectious disease expert at the University of Minnesota.

President Trump played down the resurgence of the virus during a campaign rally on Thursday in Greenville, N.C. "It's going to peter out and it's going to end," he said, referring to the virus. "But we're going to help the end."

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Other new numbers pointed to continuing damage. The number of Americans applying for first-time unemployment benefits swelled last week to 886,000, a historically high number and a sign that the lack of new federal aid is hurting the economy. The figure was nearly 77,000 greater than in the previous week. Adjusted for

seasonal variations, the total was 898,000.

More and more people have exhausted their state unemployment benefits, which typically expire after 26 weeks. It has now been longer than that since the pandemic forced the economy into lockdown mode and unemployment claims rocketed to unprecedented highs. Many workers have moved into extended benefit programs that provide another 12 weeks of benefits. Some 2.77 million people received such benefits during the week that ended on Sept. 26, the week posted by the Labor Department on Thursday. That was 819,000 more than during the week before.

A different number has dropped, but it holds troubling implications for the future labor market. A month into the fall semester, with the pandemic continuing to force classes online, undergraduate college enrollment is 4 percent below last year's level, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reported on Thursday. Freshman enrollment has had an even greater drop, more than 16 percent, indicating that students are putting off college or opting for gap years amid the uncertainty of the pandemic. But Doug Shapiro, the center's executive research director, said the "staggering" news was that enrollment at community colleges declined 22.7 percent compared with a year ago.

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There are signs in the United States that a learn-to-live-with-it approach is catching on -- which means people could become complacent. As the holiday season approaches, many retail workers will be trained to handle conflicts with customers who resist mask wearing, social distancing and store-capacity limits.

In Britain, Queen Elizabeth II seemed to be getting on with the royal routine, even as coronavirus cases continued to climb. For the first time in seven months, Queen Elizabeth II of Britain attended an engagement outside of palace grounds on Thursday. She joined her grandson, Prince William, on a visit to a military research facility that helped investigate the 2018 nerve agent attack on Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy who was living in Salisbury, England. (British authorities concluded that a pair of assassins from Russia's military intelligence agency had sprayed the poison on Mr. Skripal's front door. He and his daughter, Yulia, who was visiting from Moscow, became critically ill but survived.)

European tabloids and celebrity websites covered the visit as only they can. "First away date after corona lockdown -- with Prince William!" blared the German site Gala. The queen had abruptly retreated to Windsor Castle, 20 miles from Buckingham Palace, on March 19 as the coronavirus closed in on London. Photographs on Thursday showed the queen without a face mask; news reports said that everyone at the research lab who was introduced to her or Prince William had been tested for the coronavirus.

Coronavirus Update wraps up the day's developments with information from across the virus report.

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Putin's Leading Rival Was Poisoned, Affirm World's Top Experts

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FULL TEXT

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons bolstered the assessments of European countries that a form Novichok sickened Aleksei A. Navalny, the Russian opposition leader.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons confirmed on Tuesday that the substance used to poison the Russian opposition leader Aleksei A. Navalny had "similar structural characteristics" to the Novichok family of highly potent nerve agents.

The finding from the world's leading chemical weapons body adds additional weight to the conclusions of laboratories in Germany, France and Sweden, and increases the likelihood that Russia, which has been accused of using a similar poison in at least one previous assassination attempt, will be punished, likely with targeted financial sanctions.

"These results constitute a matter of grave concern," the organization said in a statement. "The use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances," it said, is "reprehensible and wholly contrary to the legal norms established by the international community."

Mr. Navalny, the most prominent figure in Russia's political opposition, fell ill on a flight from Siberia on Aug. 20 and slipped into a coma. The Russian authorities initially prevented his family from transporting him abroad for treatment, but he was eventually brought to Berlin, where he was treated at the Charité hospital. He was discharged on Sept. 23 and has vowed to return to Russia to continue his work after a period of rehabilitation in Germany.

The German authorities said they never doubted the conclusions of military scientists in Germany, who had reported discovering traces of Novichok in biological samples taken from Mr. Navalny, as well as on a plastic water bottle from his hotel that was smuggled out of Russia by his aides.

But the findings of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons add an authoritative and independent assessment that the Germans could use as ammunition in the pursuit of punishment, most likely in the form of financial sanctions against Russian officials.

By doing so, Germany would be following a playbook used in 2018, when the British government relied on the chemical weapons body to bolster its conclusions that Russian operatives had used a Novichok poison in an attempt to murder Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer who had spied for Britain. In that case, the organization's findings helped assure Britain's allies and justify a mass expulsion of Russian officials in the weeks after the poisoning.

Steffen Seibert, the spokesman for the German government, said in a statement Tuesday that "in the coming days" the countries of the European Union together with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons would discuss "next steps."

"The German government renews its call on Russia to explain what has happened," Mr. Seibert said. "Any use of chemical weapons is a serious process and cannot be without consequences."

Separately, forty-four signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the United States, Britain and every country of the European Union issued a joint statement on Tuesday calling on Russia to investigate the poisoning and cooperate with technical experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. "We condemn in the strongest possible terms the use of a toxic chemical as a weapon in the Russian Federation on 20 August," the statement said.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013 for its efforts to whittle away the world's stocks of chemical weapons, but its record as the world's watchdog for such weapons has become clouded in recent years.

In 2017, an official from the organization traveled to Moscow to certify that Russia had fulfilled its obligations as part of the Chemical Weapons Convention and destroyed its remaining declared stocks of chemical weapons. Less than six months later, a pair of Russian operatives traveled to Britain, armed with a Novichok-class chemical

weapon that had apparently been produced secretly, under the noses of weapons inspectors, according to the British government. The operatives used it to poison Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia Skripal in Salisbury, in southern England. Three other people in Salisbury were also poisoned, and one of them, Dawn Sturgess, died. Two years after that, it was used on Mr. Navalny.

Russian officials have denied involvement in both attacks. On Sept. 15, the head of Russia's foreign intelligence service, Sergei Naryshkin, gave a rare news conference in which he said that all stocks of Novichok had been destroyed in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention.

"To say that on the territory of Russia there is production or stocks of military-grade poisons is of course disinformation," Mr. Naryshkin said.

Western intelligence services say otherwise, though Mr. Naryshkin's comment, even if inaccurate, was revealing -- a rare acknowledgment that Russia had, at least at one time, possessed stocks of Novichok. The nerve agent was developed in the Soviet Union and Russia in the 1980s and '90s and was so highly classified that before the Skripal attack it was not even listed as a banned substance under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Before Mr. Naryshkin's comment, Russian officials had denied that the Novichok program existed, though some of the Russian scientists involved in it had spoken about it publicly.

Despite Russian denials, a small group of Western countries have known about the Kremlin's Novichok program for decades, including where the substance is produced and stored, said Andrew Weber, a senior fellow at the Council on Strategic Risks.

Western officials pressed their Russian counterparts on several occasions to cease production of the weapons, though for years the West resisted including the Novichok class on the Chemical Weapons Convention list of banned substances, Mr. Weber said.

The weapons were considered so dangerous that publicly acknowledging them was judged a proliferation risk, said Mr. Weber, who was an assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programs during the Obama administration.

Russia never possessed large stockpiles of Novichok, but was able to produce small amounts on demand, he said. Even low quantities, he added, would be sufficient to kill thousands of people.

It was only after the Salisbury poisonings that Western officials accused the Russians publicly and successfully pushed to have three forms of Novichok nerve agent added to the list of banned substances, though not all of them.

The nerve agent used on Mr. Navalny, according to the German authorities, is a novel form of Novichok that until now was unknown to Western experts.

In an interview posted Monday on a popular Russian YouTube channel, Mr. Navalny struggled to explain what it felt like to be poisoned with Novichok, saying it was like nothing he had ever experienced.

"Normally when you're not feeling well, you can assess yourself and figure out what's happening -- my heart hurts, my stomach hurts, my leg hurts, or I've got a cold," he told the interviewer, Yuri Dud. "But in this case you can't understand it."

He said it was something like being kissed by a dementor, the ghoulish soul-sucking monsters from the Harry Potter series.

"It doesn't hurt," he said, "but life escapes you."

Photograph

The Russian opposition leader, Aleksei A. Navalny, posted a photograph with his wife, Yulia Navalnaya, at a Berlin hospital. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

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Picking Up the Pieces After the Poisonings

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FULL TEXT

A new AMC show dramatizes the 2018 poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain. Even for a reporter who covered the real events, the four episodes contain revelations.

LONDON -- After a former Russian spy was found convulsing on a park bench in the English city of Salisbury, the British prime minister at the time, Theresa May, stood before Parliament and the world and accused the Kremlin of "a brazen act to murder innocent civilians on our soil."

The March 2018 speech, in which Mrs. May revealed that the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, had been poisoned with a deadly nerve agent known as Novichok, shook the British public and set the stage for a geopolitical confrontation that continues to reverberate two and half years later.

But in "The Salisbury Poisonings," an engrossing and deeply researched four-part drama about the attack that premieres on Thursday on the streaming service AMC+, the speech is just background noise. It plays briefly on a blurred television screen before a character barks, "turn that [expletive] off."

So it goes throughout the series. The headlines that kept much of the world riveted for months -- with lurid details of the poisoning, the expulsion of Russian diplomats from Britain and the United States, the indictment of two Russian military intelligence officers and their clumsy, cartoonish denials -- are relegated to snippets of BBC News programs and radio reports broadcast in the kitchens and cars of the ordinary Britons whose upended lives are the primary focus of "The Salisbury Poisonings."

These are Britons that in my own reporting on Russian espionage I am guilty of overlooking. For the past two and a half years, I've traveled to a dozen countries to investigate the activities of Russian assassins from the military intelligence unit that British authorities say poisoned Mr. Skripal. My stories were part of a New York Times series that won this year's Pulitzer Prize for international reporting. Not once did I visit Salisbury.

This series is less a spy story than a cautionary tale about the collateral damage that can occur when international intrigue runs amok, said Declan Lawn, a former investigative journalist with the BBC who researched and wrote the series with the journalist and documentary filmmaker Adam Patterson. With Russia, such intrigues appear to be perennial, given the recent poisoning, also with a Novichok nerve agent, of the Russian opposition leader Aleksei A. Navalny.

"You know when you watch a James Bond movie and he drives through the city center wrecking everything around him and turning over market stalls and so on?" Mr. Lawn said in an interview. "This is a story of the people who have to pick up the pieces."

Among those people are Tracy Daszkiewicz (played by Anne-Marie Duff), a public health official who potentially saved hundreds of lives by insisting that central Salisbury be locked down soon after Mr. Skripal first fell ill, and Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey (Rafe Spall), who nearly died after touching a door handle at Mr. Skripal's home that had

been tainted with Novichok.

The series spends a lot of time with Charlie Rowley and Dawn Sturgess, a down-on-their-luck couple whose lives had begun to turn a corner before Mr. Rowley (Johnny Harris) stumbled upon a poison-laced perfume bottle the Russian assassins had recklessly tossed in a dumpster.

Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, who had been visiting from Moscow and was poisoned along with her father, are portrayed not as symbols of Kremlin vengeance, but through the lens of a touching friendship with their next-door neighbors, a brawny former submariner named Ross Cassidy and his wife, Mo.

"You watch the news and it's spy this and secret agent that," Mo, (Clare Burt), says in episode three. "To us, they're just people, you know?"

Though heavily researched, "The Salisbury Poisonings" is not a documentary. The timing is compressed and the characters, while based on real people, are composites and consolidations.

Even so, the series serves as an effective counterpoint to the fake reports and conspiracy theories churned out by the Kremlin at the time. From the beginning, Russia was dismissive and mocking, at turns accusing British spy agencies and the C.I.A. of plotting to frame the Kremlin with the poisoning, or of making up the events entirely. The Russian government's English language television station, RT, sent chocolate models of the Salisbury cathedral to news agencies. RT also broadcast an interview with the two men charged in Britain with carrying out the poisoning, in which they claimed implausibly to have traveled to Salisbury as tourists.

"The Salisbury Poisonings" is an earnest attempt to set the record straight.

Even for those who followed the saga closely, the series contains revelations. I never fully appreciated how widely the poison was spread around Salisbury. Traces of nerve agent were found at a pub the Skripals visited after they were exposed, as well as an Italian restaurant where they had lunch. At one point, the Skripals stopped to feed the ducks paddling in the River Avon and handed some bread to a boy so he could, too.

Sergeant Bailey exposed himself to the poison at Mr. Skripal's house and then brought the substance to his own home, smearing it on light switches and countertops. Sergeant Bailey survived, but much of the series revolves around his guilt about having possibly exposed others to harm, including his wife and two daughters.

For months, Salisbury was effectively shut down, its cobblestone streets clogged with emergency vehicles as helicopters buzzed overhead. When Mr. Lawn and Mr. Patterson arrived in the city several months later to start their research, they said they found a town still nursing psychological wounds. Tourists were staying away, children were afraid to go to school and people were only slowly getting back to their normal lives.

"The biggest surprise was how consequential this was for so many people and how many lives it changed," Mr. Lawn said. "There were hundreds if not thousands of people directly affected by this and traumatized by it."

For the family and friends of Dawn Sturgess, the trauma has never gone away. She was the unlikeliest of victims to be poisoned by Russian spies. A 44-year-old mother of three, Ms. Sturgess had struggled with alcohol abuse for years. When she became violently ill, four months after the Skripals, doctors initially thought it was a drug overdose, though her family insisted she had never been a drug addict.

The source of her illness was eventually traced to a bottle of Nina Ricci Premier Jour perfume that her boyfriend, Mr. Rowley, had pulled from a Salisbury trash can. Investigators later discovered that the bottle was filled with enough Novichok to kill thousands of people. Ms. Sturgess, who had sprayed the substance on her body, was the only person to die in a spy operation that was most likely planned and approved at the highest levels of the Russian government.

She was collateral in a spy game that few of us, the Sturgess family included, fully understand, even today. Though fictionalized, the heartbreak in "The Salisbury Poisonings" is real, and it lingers.

The series ends with a cellphone video of the real Dawn Sturgess, in a pair of sunglasses, dancing with her daughter, Gracie. She was 11 years old when her mother died.

Photograph

Top, Anne-Marie Duff as the British public health official Tracy Daszkiewicz in "The Salisbury Poisonings." Above, MyAnna Buring and Johnny Harris in the four-episode AMC+ series, about the poisoning of the spy Sergei V.

DETAILS

Subject:	Public health; Poisoning; Documentary films; Military intelligence; Espionage
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Putin Critic Leaves Hospital After Poisoning

Eddy, Melissa . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]24 Sep 2020: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Doctors treating Aleksei Navalny said he had been discharged after 32 days of treatment and could make a full recovery.

BERLIN -- Aleksei A. Navalny, Russia's most prominent opposition leader, has been released from a hospital in Germany and could make a full recovery from poisoning with a highly toxic nerve agent, doctors said on Wednesday, as European leaders wrestled over a response to Moscow.

"Based on the patient's progress and current condition, the treating physicians believe that complete recovery is possible," the Charité hospital said in a statement released on Wednesday. "However, it remains too early to gauge the potential long-term effects of his severe poisoning."

Neither the doctors nor Mr. Navalny, 44, who has returned to communicating with his supporters through his Instagram account in recent days, gave any indication of where he would go after his release. But a senior German security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the opposition leader's movements, said he would remain under protection in Berlin for rehabilitation.

Mr. Navalny has said that he intends to return to Russia once he has made a full recovery. He arrived at the hospital, one of Germany's leading research clinics, on Aug. 22 after being evacuated by air ambulance from the Siberian city of Omsk, where he had been receiving treatment after collapsing on Aug. 20 while aboard a domestic flight to Moscow.

Russia has maintained that it played no role in the poisoning of Mr. Navalny, although he would not be the first Kremlin enemy to be attacked with a class of Novichok, a Soviet-designed chemical weapon. A similar agent was used by Russian operatives in Britain in 2018 to attack Sergei V. Skripal, a former intelligence officer who had served prison time in Russia for spying for the British before being traded in a spy swap.

Given the substance used, the German authorities and others say there is no doubt that the Russian government was behind the poisoning. Such an act would be a breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention to which Moscow is a signatory.

The organization is expected in the coming days to release the results of its own analysis of biomedical samples collected from Mr. Navalny by its team of experts. Leaders in Berlin and Paris are awaiting the findings before moving to impose financial sanctions on Russia through the European Union.

According to the French newspaper Le Monde, during a Sept. 14 phone call between President Emmanuel Macron of France and President Vladimir V. Putin, the Russian leader stonewalled with denials and offered dubious explanations for Mr. Navalny's poisoning, suggesting that the Russian opposition leader might have poisoned himself.

Although Mr. Macron's office declined to comment on the report, which was published on Tuesday and based on

unspecified sources, Mr. Navalny responded with a sarcastic comment on his social media account.

"It's a good theory," he said. "I think it is worth the closest study."

"I boiled Novichok in the kitchen, quietly took a sip of it in the plane and fell into a coma," he continued. "Before that, I agreed with my wife, friends and colleagues, that if the Health Ministry insisted on taking me to Germany that they would never permit that to happen. Dying in an Omsk hospital and ending up in an Omsk morgue where the cause of death would be listed as 'lived long enough' was the ultimate goal of my cunning plan."

"But Putin," he said, "outplayed me."

Once Mr. Navalny arrived in Berlin, doctors at the Charité hospital placed him in a medically induced coma in the intensive care ward, where he spent 24 days, while also under constant police protection.

Suspecting that their patient was suffering from an agent more complex than what they could detect, they sent samples to their colleagues at the Military Institute for Pharmacology and Toxicology in Munich, which found traces of a nerve agent from the Novichok family in Mr. Navalny's blood and urine.

It was also found on a water bottle that the opposition leader's team brought to Germany from his hotel room, leading them to believe that he was poisoned there, not at the airport as had originally been suspected.

Laboratories in France and Sweden have confirmed the German findings that Mr. Navalny was poisoned with a nerve agent from the Novichok family.

Russia has been insisting that it is willing to open an investigation of the Navalny poisoning but that it has been stymied by the refusal of France and Germany to share the results of their analyses, an assertion that Mr. Putin repeated in his conversation with Mr. Macron, Le Monde said. Both countries have insisted that Moscow had all the information it needed from the two days Mr. Navalny spent in Russia before he was evacuated to Germany.

Russia's ambassador to Germany, Sergei Nechayev, told a German newspaper, the Berliner Zeitung, that Mr. Navalny had not responded to attempts from the embassy to provide him with consular services.

Michael Schwirtz contributed reporting from London and Aurelien Breeden from Paris.

Photograph

A picture on social media Wednesday showed Aleksei A. Navalny in Berlin. He could make a full recovery, doctors said. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA REUTERS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Social networks; Poisoning; Coma; Biological &chemical weapons; Diplomatic &consular services; Physicians
Location:	Russia France Germany
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Document 5 of 176

What Can Mr. Putin Get Away With?

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Why has the poisoning of Alexei Navalny been met with Western silence?

It is now an established fact, confirmed by laboratories in Germany, France and Sweden, that Alexei Navalny was poisoned with Novichok, a nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union. The powerful poison, which has been used in at least one previous assassination attempt against foes of the Russian regime, was this time employed against a domestic opposition leader who operated openly to expose corruption and challenge the Kremlin. It requires a serious response.

In the face of Kremlin stonewalling, many questions remain unanswered and are likely to remain so. Chief among them is whether President Vladimir Putin ordered or approved the attempted assassination. Then there is the fact that once again, the victim survived the attack, and the nerve agent was identified. Mr. Navalny had been flying home from Siberia to Moscow when he was stricken. Did his poisoners want him to perish on the way, as the timetable of the attack suggests, and want to cover up the reason? Or was it their intention to convey a brutal warning of what happens to those who challenge the Kremlin?

Mr. Navalny may have survived largely because of the pilot's alacrity in landing and getting him to a hospital. The government later allowed him to be taken to Germany for further treatment. Once they heard of his collapse, Mr. Navalny's colleagues quickly collected what they could from his last hotel in Siberia and got the evidence to Germany, where traces of Novichok were found on a water bottle.

Whatever the full story, the Russian government's contemptible posturing as an aggrieved victim of unfair suspicions only intensify the need to demand a reckoning from the Kremlin. Mr. Putin knows what happened, or he can find out, and if he continues to hide behind glaringly phony denials and ridiculous accusations, he only strengthens the suspicion that this was a deliberate, state-sanctioned hit. He had the greatest motive, means and opportunity.

Even if it was an operation ordered at some lower level, the attack on Mr. Navalny breaks new ground. Ranking assassinations according to degrees of infamy may seem frivolous, and attacking two former Russian double agents residing in England, Sergei Skripal and Alexander Litvinenko, by nerve gas or radiation, is hard to exceed in brazenness.

But Mr. Navalny was not a former spy. He was by far the best known and most visible of Mr. Putin's political opponents. His exposés of official corruption -- most famously of the extravagant properties owned by the former president Dmitri Medvedev -- were widely circulated, detailed and credible. Those who tried to kill him had to know, and not care, that the attack could be seen only as an attempt to silence a strong and effective political voice.

Even more appalling was their deployment of a banned chemical weapon on Russian soil against a Russian politician. The perpetrators knew that Novichok had been identified in the attack against Mr. Skripal and that its use was a violation of international law. Russia is a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and after Germany established that Mr. Navalny had been poisoned, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons issued a statement that under the convention, "any poisoning of an individual through the use of a nerve agent is considered a use of chemical weapons." At the very least, that obligates Russia to establish how a known nerve agent came to be used in the center of Russia.

Mr. Putin must believe that there is not much the West can do that it hasn't already done by way of sanctions. President Trump, for reasons that remain one of the top mysteries of his administration, has largely closed his eyes to Mr. Putin's serial transgressions, whether it's meddling in American elections, annexing Crimea or stonewalling on the poisoning of dissidents.

The surest sign of European anger would be cancellation of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, a gas conduit from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea. But the project is nearly completed, and Angela Merkel, the chancellor of Germany, is reluctant to take a step that would be costly for Europe and that would look like bowing to threats from the Trump administration, which has demanded cancellation of the pipeline.

Yet, as Mr. Putin looks intent on spending the rest of his life at Russia's helm and displays ever less concern for human rights or the rule of law, it is incumbent on the West to hold him accountable for murdering or trying to murder anyone he finds troublesome. A state prepared to use banned chemical weapons against its own citizens is a danger and threat to the rest of the world as well, and that must be made clear and unambiguous also to Mr. Putin and his co-conspirators.

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Photograph

(PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXEI NIKOLSKY/TASS, VIA GETTY IMAGES)

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Document 6 of 176

Putin Critic, Still on Mend, Flashes Wit On Instagram

Schwartz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]20 Sep 2020: A.14.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The opposition leader jokes that he has recovered enough from being poisoned to scroll Instagram and know where to put the likes.

Nearly a month after being poisoned with a nerve agent, Aleksei Navalny, the Russian opposition leader, said he has recovered his ability to speak and walk down stairs. He has also regained what is perhaps his most potent skill – making acerbic posts on social media.

In his second message on Instagram since emerging from a coma two weeks ago, Mr. Navalny on Saturday thanked his doctors at the prestigious Charité hospital in Berlin, and flashed some of the wit that has endeared him to millions of Russians, if not to their leader in the Kremlin.

"They transformed me from a person who was 'technically alive,'" he wrote, "into someone who has every chance of again becoming that Highest Form of Existence in Modern Society: a person who is able to quickly scroll through Instagram and knows, without thinking too hard, where to put likes."

Much as he has throughout his political career, Mr. Navalny seems intent on documenting every step of his recovery on social media, giving his nearly 2 million followers on Instagram and millions on Twitter and YouTube, a close-up look at the effects of one of the world's most mysterious and highly classified chemical weapons.

German authorities, backed by laboratories in France and Sweden, say Mr. Navalny was poisoned with Novichok, a class of chemical weapon developed by the Soviet Union. It was used in the attempted assassination in England two years ago of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer who spied for the British government.

Unlike Mr. Navalny, Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Julia, who was also poisoned, have basically vanished. Aside from a brief televised statement in which Ms. Skripal described a "slow and extremely painful" recovery, not a word has been heard from either of them since they were found unconscious and foaming at the mouth on a bench in Salisbury, England, in March 2018.

Their disappearance from public view has fueled conspiracy theories – many originating with Russian officials or Kremlin-controlled media – that the Skripals have been killed or perhaps were never poisoned to begin with.

While Mr. Navalny's resurrection in life and online has not stopped the Kremlin's propagandists from churning out

reams of alternative theories about his poisoning, it has forced Russian officials to reckon with him in a way they had long sought to avoid. Before the poisoning, most top officials, including President Vladimir V. Putin, refused to even utter his name in public.

Last week, both Mr. Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, and the head of Russia's foreign intelligence service, Sergei Naryshkin, held news conferences in which they were forced to address the poisoning. Both dismissed accusations from Mr. Navalny's supporters and the German government that the Russian state was involved, and suggested without evidence that the Germans had poisoned him.

With the European Union beginning deliberations over possible financial sanctions against Russia, Moscow's diplomatic mission to the bloc published a list of awkwardly written questions last week meant to raise doubts about the poisoning. The first question: Why would Russia bother poisoning Mr. Navalny when, according to polls, his popularity rating is 2 percent?

How the poisoning might affect Mr. Navalny's standing among Russians is unclear, though it has certainly raised his profile, with seemingly interminable news media coverage for nearly a month both inside and outside the country.

Mr. Navalny, himself, has yet to address the political implications of his poisoning, aside from vowing to return to Russia upon his recovery to continue his work. His two messages to supporters so far have mostly concerned his recovery.

In Saturday's message, which was accompanied by a photo of a gaunt Mr. Navalny walking down a flight of stairs, the opposition leader said that while he had been able to regain some faculties, his recovery would be a long one. "The telephone in my hand is useless, like a rock, and pouring myself a glass of water becomes a total scene," he said. "Right now I'm a guy whose legs shake when he goes up the stairs, but one who thinks, 'Oh, that's a stairwell. You're supposed to go up it. Perhaps, I need to look for an elevator.'"

"Before," he said, "I'd simply stand there stupidly and look at it."

Photograph

The Russian opposition leader Aleksei Navalny at Charité hospital in Berlin, in an undated photo taken from a video posted by Mr. Navalny on his Instagram account. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Social Media, via Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

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Document 7 of 176

Navalny Was Poisoned at Hotel in Siberia, Not at Airport, His Aides Say

Schwartz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]18 Sep 2020: A.11.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Aides of the Russian opposition leader collected items from his hotel room in Siberia as soon as he fell ill, according to a video posted on his Instagram account.

Immediately after Aleksei A. Navalny, Russia's most prominent opposition leader, showed symptoms of poisoning

last month, members of his team rushed to the Siberian hotel where he had been staying and grabbed anything that could possibly be used as evidence – including a water bottle that tests showed was tainted with a highly toxic nerve agent.

Even as Russia maintains that it played no role in the poisoning of Mr. Navalny, the new details – released on Thursday in a post on Mr. Navalny's Instagram account – underscore his team's deep concerns for his well-being and their fears that he could fall victim to the kind of attacks directed at other Kremlin critics.

In a video posted on Instagram, members of Mr. Navalny's team swiftly donned rubber gloves and scoured his room at the Xander Hotel in Tomsk, packing evidence into blue plastic bags.

The plastic water bottle, Mr. Navalny's team and German investigators say, eventually helped German military scientists determine that the opposition leader had been poisoned with a class of chemical weapon called a Novichok, a Soviet-designed poison that Russian operatives have used in at least one previous assassination attempt.

The rush to grab evidence suggests that Mr. Navalny and his team had been prepared for the eventuality that there would be an attempt on his life. Indeed, at meetings with supporters around Russia, he was frequently asked how he remained alive, given his vicious criticism of the Kremlin and Russia's most powerful figures.

His continued existence even fueled conspiracy theories that he was in fact a government puppet, paid to play the role of an opposition figure, while never actually seeking power himself.

On Aug. 20, those doubts were put to rest when Mr. Navalny began choking and screaming on a flight to Moscow from the Siberian city of Tomsk.

Immediately after Mr. Navalny's plane made an emergency landing, his aides spoke with members of the team who had stayed in Tomsk to tell them what had happened, according to Mr. Navalny's Instagram post.

"At that moment, they did the one thing that was possible," the statement said. "They called a lawyer, went to the hotel room, which Navalny had just left, and began to identify, record and pack up everything that they found, including bottles of water from the hotel."

When Mr. Navalny was flown from a Siberian hospital to Berlin on Aug. 22, the evidence went with him. It is unclear how Mr. Navalny's team was able to sneak the bottle and other items out of the country without the Russian officials knowing.

Russia has insisted since Mr. Navalny first fell ill that he was not poisoned, and has instead offered a number of alternative theories, like he had been using cocaine or that he had low blood sugar and simply needed to eat some candy. Such statements convinced Mr. Navalny's team that the Russian authorities had no interest in conducting a real investigation.

"It was absolutely clear to us that Navalny was not lightly ill or got overheated and that a Raffaello candy would not help," the Instagram post read. "So we decided to grab everything that might hypothetically be of use and give that to the doctors in Germany."

An analysis by German military scientists at the Institute for Pharmacology and Toxicology in Munich found traces of a nerve agent in the Novichok family in Mr. Navalny's blood and urine, as well as on one of the bottles. Based on the German findings, Mr. Navalny's team, according to the Instagram post, now believes that he was poisoned in that hotel room, not at the airport as they had originally suspected.

Laboratories in France and Sweden this week confirmed the German findings that Mr. Navalny had been poisoned with a nerve agent from the Novichok family. A similar poison was used by Russian military intelligence operatives who traveled to Britain in 2018 to attack Sergei V. Skripal, a former intelligence officer who had served prison time in Russia for spying for the British before being traded in a spy swap.

Given the substance used, the German authorities and others say there is no doubt that the Russian government was behind the poisoning, a breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention to which it is a signatory.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the world's chemical weapons watchdog, is expected to release in the coming days the results of its own analysis of biomedical samples collected from Mr. Navalny by its team of experts, the agency said in a statement on Thursday.

If those results confirm the German, French and Swedish findings, the German government would move quickly to impose financial sanctions on Russia through the European Union, according to a senior German security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

"We don't doubt our own result," the official said. "It's just to give it even more political legitimacy."

On Thursday, the European Parliament passed a nonbinding resolution calling for an international investigation into Russia's possible use of a chemical weapon as well as "ambitious restrictive" measures, including financial sanctions against "corrupt individuals."

"The attempted assassination of Navalny was part of a systemic effort to silence dissident voices in Russia," a statement by the European Parliament said.

Aleksei A. Navalny, a prominent Kremlin critic, in Moscow in 2019. He and his team seemed to be bracing for an attempt on his life. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Peter Kassin/Sipa, via Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

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Document 8 of 176

Navalny Said to Be Intent On Going Back to Russia

Bennhold, Katrin; Schwirtz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]15 Sep 2020: A.12.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Mr. Navalny talked with a German prosecutor about being poisoned. Word of his improvement came as France and Sweden confirmed that he had been sickened by Novichok, a Russian nerve agent.

BERLIN -- Aleksei A. Navalny, the Russian opposition leader who is recovering from being poisoned, has spoken to a German prosecutor about the attempt on his life and says he plans to return to Russia as soon as he has recovered, a senior German security official said on Monday.

Mr. Navalny had been in a medically induced coma at the Charité hospital in Berlin and it was not clear what condition he would be in once he regained consciousness. But the security official, who was briefed on his condition, said Mr. Navalny seemed mentally sharp.

"He's fully aware of his condition, he's fully aware of what happened and he's fully aware of where he is," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity to talk candidly about the case.

The news came hours after the German government announced that laboratories in France and Sweden had confirmed that the substance used to poison Mr. Navalny was a form of the nerve agent Novichok, results that match Berlin's own findings and provide additional confidence that the Russian state was involved.

"Three laboratories have now independently provided evidence of a substance from the Novichok group as the cause of Mr. Navalny's poisoning," a German government spokesman, Steffen Seibert, said in a statement. "We

renew the call for Russia to explain what has happened."

Mr. Navalny remains heavily guarded by German police in the hospital. In his conversation with the German prosecutor, he refused to cooperate with a Russian request to jointly investigate the case with Germany, the security official said, adding that once he recovers, Mr. Navalny plans to return to Russia.

"He's not planning to go into exile in Germany," the official said. "He wants to go home to Russia and he wants to continue his mission."

Russian officials were not immediately informed of Mr. Navalny's refusal to cooperate, and did not initially respond to news of the French and Swedish tests. They have insisted that there was no proof Mr. Navalny had been poisoned. They have suggested several alternative theories, including a drug overdose and low blood sugar. In his statement, Mr. Seibert described the use of Novichok – a class of potent nerve agents developed by the Soviet Union and used at least once before in an assassination attempt by Russian intelligence operatives – as a violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, of which Russia is a signatory.

But even as patience with President Vladimir V. Putin is running thin, Berlin is struggling to determine how to respond. Some have suggested canceling the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, a nearly completed, \$11 billion project to carry natural gas from Russia to Germany. So far, however, the German government, its European allies and the United States have not taken any action aside from raising the prospect of additional sanctions on Russia.

The poisoning of Mr. Navalny is the latest in a long string of killings or attempted killings of Kremlin opponents in recent years. On Aug. 20, after campaigning in Siberia for antigovernment candidates for local offices, he collapsed, was hospitalized and flown to Germany for treatment two days later.

Local elections were held across Russia over the weekend, and Mr. Navalny and his allies made modest gains. In the opposition's biggest victory, Mr. Putin's United Russia party lost its majority on the City Council in Novosibirsk, a Siberian industrial hub and Russia's third-largest city.

The attack on Mr. Navalny increases the strain on the close, complicated and increasingly contradictory German-Russian relationship.

Chancellor Angela Merkel has been unusually clear in her sharp condemnation of Moscow's brazen actions and lack of cooperation. Less than a year ago, a former Chechen rebel leader was assassinated in broad daylight in a Berlin park, a killing that German federal prosecutors say was orchestrated by the Russian state.

Ms. Merkel, who normally speaks with Mr. Putin by phone at least once a week, has not spoken to him since Mr. Navalny's poisoning, a senior German security official said. On Monday, Russia's foreign minister, Sergei V. Lavrov, canceled a meeting scheduled for this week with his German counterpart, Heiko Maas. In a statement, the Russian foreign ministry did not mention the Navalny poisoning and said the cancellation had to do with a scheduling conflict.

President Emmanuel Macron of France raised the poisoning in a phone call with Mr. Putin on Monday, affirming the French laboratory results and asking that "all light be shed, without delay, on the circumstances and responsibilities of this attempted assassination," according to a readout provided by the French government. The readout did not include Mr. Putin's response.

Ms. Merkel has been one of the tougher leaders in Europe when it comes to Russia, demanding a strong line on maintaining economic sanctions imposed after Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine, even in the face of pushback at home and in other capitals.

But she has also worked hard to keep diplomatic lines to Moscow open. The two countries have deep economic links, not least in the energy market, and a sizable faction in German politics believes that Russia should be an important partner.

Ms. Merkel appears to be treading carefully once again -- at least for now. German officials did not raise Mr. Navalny's poisoning last week, when Dmitri Kozak, a close confidant of Mr. Putin, was allowed to land in Berlin for talks related to the war in Ukraine, despite a travel ban.

Germany has refused to rule out a re-evaluation of Nord Stream 2, but Ms. Merkel has long defended the project and experts say it is unlikely to be scrapped.

The German response so far contrasts sharply with Britain's reaction in 2018, after the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, in the English city of Salisbury. Once the British government announced that Russian operatives had used Novichok in that case, it gave the Kremlin 24 hours to respond, after which it imposed sanctions and rallied allies to expel dozens of Russian diplomats.

But German officials insist that the poisoning of Mr. Navalny is not a bilateral issue between Germany and Russia. Unlike Mr. Skripal, who held British citizenship and was attacked on British soil, Mr. Navalny is a Russian who was in Russia when he was poisoned.

German officials are considering a variety of possible sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes against individuals, and are hoping for a response backed by all European Union member states.

"We want this to be a European sanctions regime to show that this is about our values when a leading opposition politician is poisoned," said one senior German security official involved in the discussions.

The official said that while it was important to send a message that Russia's behavior was out of line, it should not come at the expense of continued negotiations on issues like the wars in Ukraine and Syria, where Russia is a key player.

"This is a terrible thing, we have to sanction it, but it will not lead to a totally new Russia policy," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to talk candidly about internal deliberations. "The hard reality is: We need Russia on Ukraine, Libya, Syria. We don't want everything to collapse."

Mr. Navalny's recovery could also influence the eventual response, but doctors now expect him to make a full recovery, the senior official said.

Traces of the poison were found in samples taken from Mr. Navalny at the hospital in Berlin but also, crucially, on a water bottle that had traveled with him from Russia, German officials said. They have rejected Moscow's demand for "proof" that Mr. Navalny was poisoned inside Russia, noting that the Russian authorities had taken their own samples and confiscated dozens of objects before he was flown to Germany.

"They have their proof," one official said.

Within Russia, Mr. Navalny hoped to capitalize on discontent over Russia's economic slump and the coronavirus pandemic. Support for Mr. Putin has softened in recent years and dropped even further this year, said Denis Volkov, deputy director of Levada, an independent polling organization.

Russia's political system enforces support for Mr. Putin on a national level but allows more diversity in local elections – an opening Mr. Navalny tried to seize to loosen the grip of the governing United Russia party. He encouraged the fractious opposition to unite behind a single candidate in each race.

In Novosibirsk, United Russia won 22 or 23 seats of 50 council seats, according to preliminary results, with one race still contested. That is down from 33 seats. Mr. Navalny's regional representative there, Sergei Boiko, and other opposition figures won council seats despite the poisoning of their leader, a stink bomb attack on Mr. Navalny's office in the city and allegations of ballot stuffing.

Mr. Navalny is aware of the results and said he is pleased, the senior German official said.

Mr. Navalny's allies also won a smattering of seats on other councils, including two in Tomsk, the last city he visited on his campaign swing.

But no mass movement in sympathy with Mr. Navalny has emerged, and there is no sign that the poisoning has shaken up Russian politics. United Russia's failings were already well known and some losses had been expected, said Dmitri Trenin, the director of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

"I am surprised by how little impact the poisoning" has had, he said.

Katrin Bennhold reported from Berlin, and Michael Schwirtz from London. Reporting was contributed by Andrew E. Kramer from Moscow and Aurelien Breeden from Paris.

Photograph

Angela Merkel, above, has not spoken with Vladimir Putin since Aleksei Navalny was poisoned. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL KAPPELER/DPA, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS); Mr. Navalny in 2018 in Moscow. His condition has improved since his poisoning last month, but complications are still possible. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KIRILL

DETAILS

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LINKS

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Document 9 of 176

Congress Should Pass A Navalny Act

Stephens, Bret . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]08 Sep 2020:
A.23.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The latest poisoning of a Russian critic requires expanded sanctions and accountability for Kremlin leadership. In 2012, in the face of quiet resistance from the Obama administration, Congress passed the Magnitsky Act, named for a Russian lawyer, Sergei Magnitsky, who was left to die in a Moscow prison in 2009 for blowing the whistle on a \$230 million scam perpetrated by government officials.

In 2020, in the face of what would be likely resistance from the Trump administration, Congress has a chance to do something useful by passing a Navalny Act, named for the Russian opposition leader Aleksei Navalny, who is only now emerging from a coma in a German hospital after being poisoned in Russia last month with the military grade nerve agent Novichok.

To be clear, a "Navalny Act" doesn't yet exist beyond this column. But it shouldn't be hard to sketch the essentials of what ought to be necessary legislation.

What did the Magnitsky Act do? In its original form (it has since been expanded in the United States and adopted by other countries) it imposed travel bans and asset freezes on a small number of people -- relatively low-level officials -- implicated in the swindle that Magnitsky uncovered, and in the cover-up that led to his grisly death. Yet the act had a neuralgic effect on the Russian government, because it hit where it hurt. As Julia Ioffe noted in *The Atlantic*, "What made Russian officialdom so mad about the Magnitsky Act is that it was the first time that there was some kind of roadblock to getting stolen money to safety" -- safety often meaning a condo in Miami, a townhouse in Belgravia or a Channel Island bank account. By threatening to unmask some of the faceless apparatchiks whose goal in life is to loot Russia so they may leave it, the Magnitsky Act threatened the incentive structure of the regime itself. Why work for a pirate if you don't get to share in the booty?

A Navalny Act would take the Magnitsky Act several steps further. When I proposed the idea to Bill Browder, the American-born investor who once employed Magnitsky and who's been the prime mover of Magnitsky legislation in the United States and elsewhere, he jumped at the possibilities.

"There needs to be a list compiled of government officials who were complicit in the poisoning or cover-up of poisoning," he told me. "And the list should be long. And the list should include people with command responsibility. And the sanctions should be simultaneously put in place by the United States, the U.K., Canada, the E.U. and Australia."

What Browder has in mind is an extension of the Magnitsky concept -- maintaining the principle of holding individuals to account by targeting their assets and their rights to travel, only this time for a political crime. The same principle could be extended beyond the Navalny poisoning to establish a standing bipartisan commission to investigate other Putin-era political crimes: the murders of Boris Nemtsov, Natalya Estemirova, Anna Politkovskaya and Sergei Yushenkov; the poisonings of Sergei Skripal, Vladimir Kara-Murza and Viktor Yushchenko. A similar

inquiry in Britain, led by the retired High Court judge Robert Owen, presented compelling evidence that the 2006 polonium murder of the dissident Russian agent Alexander Litvinenko in London was "probably approved" at the highest level in the Kremlin.

Moral accountability is step one. Step two is factual accountability.

Among the reasons Navalny was so hated by the Kremlin was his tireless campaign to expose secret assets (allegedly including a pair of yachts and a vineyard in Italy) belonging to top leaders like the former prime minister Dmitri Medvedev. The Senate already has a bill -- Lindsey Graham's Defending American Security From Kremlin Aggression Act, or DASKA -- that would require the intelligence community to publicize what it knows about Vladimir Putin's personal wealth.

Retaliating for Russia's disinformation campaign in the West with a Western information campaign for Russia seems like an ideally symmetrical response, but Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has not brought DASKA up for a vote. Draw your own conclusions.

The third step is economic accountability.

Navalny may be fighting for his life in Germany. But, thanks to Chancellor Angela Merkel's dogged support for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia, Germany has become Putin's greatest enabler in Europe.

Merkel's position that the European Union should keep separate economic and political accounts with Russia was never justifiable. Now it's outrageous: In the face of yet another Russian chemical-weapons attack against a human being, Merkel is proposing to provide a financial lifeline to the likely culprit while increasing Europe's strategic vulnerability to a criminal and aggressive regime. While it will undoubtedly enrage many in Germany, a properly written Navalny Act would formalize sanctions against companies from any country that does business with Nord Stream, prohibiting them from doing business in the United States -- and barring their corporate officers, including Gerhard Schröder, the chairman of the Russian energy company Rosneft and a former German chancellor, from traveling to the United States.

For now, Donald Trump says there is no proof who poisoned Navalny, while he boasts about trying to get along with Russia. If ever one needed another reminder of why he's unfit to be president, this is it. A Navalny Act will have to await a Biden administration and a Democratic Senate -- for which it should be the first order of foreign-policy business.

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Photograph

Aleksei Navalny in 2018. The Russian opposition leader is now lying comatose in a German hospital after a poisoning attack.
 \(PHOTOGRAPH BY Mladen Antonov/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/24/world/europe/aleksei-navalny-poison.html)

DETAILS

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As Navalny Improves, Case Pits Germany Against Russia

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Doctors treating the Russian opposition leader said his condition had improved, but they could not rule out lasting effects of "severe poisoning." Germany said it was from a military-grade nerve agent.

BERLIN -- The Russian opposition leader Aleksei A. Navalny is no longer in a medically induced coma and is responsive, doctors treating him at the Charité hospital in Berlin said on Monday. But they did not rule out lasting damage from what they called his "severe poisoning" with what the German government has said was a military-grade nerve agent.

Mr. Navalny was flown to Germany on Aug. 22 for treatment after a suspected poisoning. Specialists from the German Army later determined the poison came from the Novichok family of substances developed by the Soviet Union and used at least once before on an opponent of the Kremlin.

Ties between Berlin and Moscow, already strained over Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea and suspected involvement in the slaying of a Chechen rebel commander in a Berlin park last year, have been further eroded by the poisoning of Mr. Navalny.

The German government has demanded an explanation from Russia, but the Kremlin does not seem inclined to offer one, saying it has not yet been shown proof that Mr. Navalny was poisoned.

Mr. Navalny has been brought out of the medically induced coma and is being weaned from a respirator, the hospital said in a statement. "He is responsive to verbal stimuli," the statement said. "It remains too early to gauge the potential long-term effects of his severe poisoning."

Russia has a long history of using poison in assassination attempts, including Novichok agents.

Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian intelligence officer living in England, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, were poisoned by a Novichok agent in March 2018, and the British authorities accused operatives from Russia's military intelligence service of carrying out the attack. Both Skripals survived, but they are in hiding and little is known about their condition.

The British government said on Monday that the Russian ambassador had been summoned and informed that London views Mr. Navalny's poisoning as "absolutely unacceptable," and stressed the demand from the German government for a full and transparent investigation.

Mr. Navalny fell violently ill on Aug. 20 as he made his way back to Moscow after meetings with opposition politicians in Siberia, ahead of nationwide local elections to be held on Sunday. Two days later, he was evacuated to Berlin, where he has been receiving treatment in one of the country's leading research hospitals. Experts from the German Army were asked to run tests that detected a substance from the Novichok group in Mr. Navalny's system.

News of Mr. Navalny's improved health came amid a debate in Berlin over how to respond to the poisoning. There have been calls for the German government to cancel the Russian-led Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea, a project that is nearly complete.

The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, has not ruled out any measures at this point, her spokesman said on Monday, as calls increased for construction of the final 90 miles of the \$11 billion pipeline project to be halted in response to the poisoning. Ms. Merkel led the push for the European Union to impose economic sanctions on Russia after the Crimea invasion and has maintained support of the effort, despite some calls to ease them. Ms. Merkel had defended completion of the pipeline as in Germany's interest, even days after Mr. Navalny was flown by air ambulance to Berlin. But that was before the agent of his poisoning had been determined.

"It is up to Russia how Nord Stream 2 will continue," said Jens Spahn, a senior member of Ms. Merkel's conservative party who serves as minister for health. "There are no economic issues that can be more important than Germany's and Europe's foreign and security interests."

In official statements, Russian officials have said they wish the best for Mr. Navalny while lamenting that German doctors have not shared more details about how they ascertained he had been poisoned.

Mr. Navalny's supporters say the tactic is intended to bog down any investigation in an endless -- and fruitless -- diplomatic process, while possibly gleaning private medical data about Mr. Navalny's still uncertain condition.

Over the weekend, a prominent doctor known for pro-government political activities, Dr. Leonid Roshal, a pediatrician, suggested that Russian and German national medical boards work together to determine the cause of Mr. Navalny's illness.

Mr. Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya, who flew with him to Berlin and has been consulting with German doctors about the treatment, their findings and what information is released to the public, flatly refused. And she chided Dr. Roshal for assuming that he could obtain patient data without first consulting her.

"First off, dear doctor, maybe you don't read the news but the cause of my husband's coma is known -- it is poisoning," Ms. Navalnaya wrote on Instagram. "You are behaving not as a doctor, but as a voice of the government and don't want to help a sick person, who you don't care about, but to ferret out information and curry favor."

Andrew E. Kramer contributed reporting from Moscow, and Mark Landler from London.

Photograph

The Russian opposition leader Aleksei A. Navalny at a march in Moscow in February. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Pavel Golovkin/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

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The Spin From Moscow: Germany Did It, He Did, Or There Was No Poison

Kramer, Andrew E . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]04 Sep 2020: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

As they have in the past when Russia was accused of misconduct, officials and state media commentators responded to news of a nerve agent attack with an array of improbable explanations.

MOSCOW — To the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, what befell the Russian opposition leader, Aleksei A. Navalny, was alarmingly simple: He was poisoned with a weapons-grade nerve agent in an attempted murder. To Russian officials and commentators on state news media, anxious to deny any Kremlin role and offer a wide range of alternative theories, it was not nearly so straightforward — the Germans had poisoned Mr. Navalny, or he had poisoned himself, or he was not poisoned at all.

Though dismissed by critics of the Russian government as dust thrown up to cover the truth, such flurries of evidence-free theories have become a standard response to accusations of Moscow's malfeasance, whether it is election meddling, military interventions, assassinations or the repression of the domestic opposition.

Mr. Navalny "and his supporters are putting on a big theater play," a Russian scientist, Leonid Rink, said in an interview on Russian state television.

Mr. Rink, identified as one of the developers of the Novichok group of nerve agents, ventured that Mr. Navalny had poisoned himself – though the poison is believed to be closely held by the Russian security services and almost impossible for a civilian to obtain.

In other explanations offered on state media, an enemy of Russia could have poisoned Mr. Navalny, or fabricated a poisoning that never occurred, with the nefarious goal of embarrassing the Kremlin and harming relations with Germany.

And so it went on Thursday, a day after German officials announced that after thorough analysis, their military's chemical weapons specialists had reached the unequivocal conclusion that Mr. Navalny had been poisoned with Novichok. That finding laid responsibility squarely at the Kremlin's doorstep.

The by-now-familiar Russian tactic is to fill the media with so many possibilities that people do not know what to believe. A range of theoretically possible but improbable alternative explanations turns up on prime-time Russian television, churning out a thick fog of uncertainty.

It was possible, Mr. Rink said, given the expertise of German chemists, that they copied the Russian nerve agent and poisoned Mr. Navalny after he had arrived in Germany. In that scenario, Mr. Navalny was either poisoned first with another substance in Russia or, again, poisoned himself as part of the ruse, Mr. Rink said.

"Somebody is sitting at a table now celebrating a successful operation," he concluded.

Another familiar participant in the media circus, Margarita Simonyan, the editor in chief of Russia Today, expressed a wide-eyed uncertainty about the case, suggesting that there was no way to form an impartial view.

"I don't know who poisoned Navalny and if he was poisoned at all," she wrote in a Twitter post on Thursday. "In the absence of hard facts, a person always chooses who to believe, based exclusively on personal sympathy and preference."

In 2014, President Vladimir V. Putin denied that men in unmarked uniforms turning up on the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea were Russian soldiers, saying they were local militia or members of a motorcycle gang. Some time later, he coyly conceded that they were Russian soldiers, the vanguard of Russia's military seizure of the territory.

That same year, Russia denied backing a separatist insurgency in an area of eastern Ukraine called Donbass, and denied supplying the rebels with the anti-aircraft missile system that shot down a Malaysia Airlines plane, killing 298 people – despite ample evidence to the contrary and the conclusions of Western governments.

The Kremlin and state media floated an array of alternative explanations and conspiracy theories about the flight – for example, that the Ukrainian military had shot it down. Russian state television broadcast a theory that the Central Intelligence Agency had downed a plane filled with corpses to justify the imposition of economic sanctions.

After the former double agent Sergei V. Skripal was poisoned with Novichok in Britain in 2018, the British government identified two Russian military intelligence officers as the attackers. The pair went on Russia Today to deny being spies and say they had visited the English city where Mr. Skripal lived just to see the spire of Salisbury Cathedral.

Ms. Simonyan, who conducted the interview, did not mention glaring weaknesses in their story and suggested Western governments might be homophobic for raising suspicions about young men traveling together. Other Russian media reports suggested that the British had poisoned Mr. Skripal.

In the case of Mr. Navalny's illness, the formal Russian government response has been to ask Germany for additional evidence.

"We are hoping it's possible to establish the cause of what happened," Dmitri S. Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, told journalists on Thursday. "We are interested in this, we want this, and for this we need information from Germany."

The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement essentially accusing Germany of making reckless claims.

"Yet again, we become witnesses of a situation where in place of careful work, based on facts and evidence and

cooperation between law enforcement organs and medical institutions, our partners prefer loud, public announcements," the statement said. The Germans had not produced "any facts at all," the statement said. Within a few hours of the German revelation, more elaborate responses came from commentators on Russian media.

Mr. Rink said the German statement was untrue because Mr. Navalny could not have survived a Novichok poisoning, despite documented cases of such survival. "The comrade would be resting in a different place now," he said.

Olga Skabieva, a state television talk show host, noting that Mr. Navalny first took ill on an airline flight, questioned in a post on social media why, if such a dangerous poison were used, no other passengers and none of the doctors who treated him were sickened. "Novichok, they told us after Salisbury, is very dangerous."

Mr. Navalny's family and supporters have surmised that the poison was dropped into some tea he bought in the airport in Novosibirsk, in Siberia – the only thing he consumed that morning. He was flown to Germany for treatment two days later.

On Thursday, the president of Belarus, Aleksandr G. Lukashenko, who has been currying favor with the Russian government to win support against street protesters, contributed his own theory.

He told the visiting Russian prime minister that his security service had intercepted a telephone call of Ms. Merkel admitting the poisoning was falsified.

"We caught an interesting conversation," he said in comments carried by the Tass news agency. "It speaks about this falsification. There was no poisoning of Navalny."

Russian doctors have suggested that Mr. Navalny lapsed into a coma because of low blood sugar.

"If the Kremlin wants its denials to be taken seriously, it ought not to have lied about Crimea, about Donbass," the Malaysian airliner and previous poisonings, Sam Greene, the director of the Russia Institute at King's College London, wrote on Twitter. "Whatever else may be going on in the world, Moscow's credibility problem is of its own making."

Photograph

Top, Aleksei A. Navalny at a Moscow rally last summer. Above, officers in protective gear in Salisbury, England, in 2018 to investigate the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAXIM ZMEYEV/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES; JACK TAYLOR/GETTY IMAGES)

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Document 12 of 176

Russia Spins Alternative Theories in Poisoning of Navalny

Kramer, Andrew E . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]03 Sep 2020.

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FULL TEXT



Enlarge this image.

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Navalny "and his supporters are putting on a big theater play," a Russian scientist, Leonid Rink, said in an interview on Russian state television.

Rink, identified as one of the developers of the Novichok group of nerve agents, ventured that Navalny had poisoned himself —though the poison is closely held by the Russian military and almost impossible for a civilian to obtain.

In other explanations offered on state media, an enemy of Russia could have poisoned Navalny, or fabricated a poisoning that never occurred, with the nefarious goal of embarrassing the Kremlin and harming relations with Germany.

And so it went on Thursday, a day after German officials announced that after thorough analysis, their military's chemical weapons specialists had reached the unequivocal conclusion that Navalny had been poisoned with Novichok. That finding laid responsibility squarely at the Kremlin's doorstep.

The by-now-familiar Russian tactic is to fill the media with so many possibilities that people do not know what to believe. A range of theoretically possible but improbable alternative explanations turns up on prime-time Russian television, churning out a thick fog of uncertainty.

It was possible, Rink said, given the expertise of German chemists, that they copied the Russian nerve agent and poisoned Navalny after he had arrived in Germany. In that scenario, Navalny was either poisoned first with another substance in Russia or, again, poisoned himself as part of the ruse, Rink said.

"Somebody is sitting at a table now celebrating a successful operation," he concluded.

Another familiar participant in the media circus, Margarita Simonyan, the editor-in-chief of Russia Today, expressed a wide-eyed uncertainty about the case, suggesting that there was no way to form an impartial view.

"I don't know who poisoned Navalny and if he was poisoned at all," she wrote in a Twitter post on Thursday. "In the absence of hard facts, a person always chooses who to believe, based exclusively on personal sympathy and preference."

In 2014, President Vladimir Putin denied that men in unmarked uniforms turning up on the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea were Russian soldiers, saying they were local militia or members of a motorcycle gang. Some time later, he coyly conceded that they were Russian soldiers, the vanguard of Russia's military seizure of the territory.

That same year, Russia denied backing a separatist insurgency in an area of eastern Ukraine called Donbass, and denied supplying the rebels with the anti-aircraft missile system that shot down a Malaysia Airlines plane, killing 298 people —despite ample evidence to the contrary and the conclusions of Western governments.

The Kremlin and state media floated an array of alternative explanations and conspiracy theories about the flight —for example, that the Ukrainian military had shot it down. Russian state television broadcast a theory that the Central Intelligence Agency had downed a plane filled with corpses to justify the imposition of economic sanctions.

After the former double agent Sergei Skripal was poisoned with Novichok in Britain in 2018, the British government identified two Russian military intelligence officers as the attackers. The pair went on Russia Today to deny being spies and say they had visited the English city where Skripal lived just to see the spire of Salisbury Cathedral.

Simonyan, who conducted the interview, did not mention glaring weaknesses in their story and suggested Western governments might be homophobic for raising suspicions about young men traveling together. Other Russian media reports suggested that the British had poisoned Skripal.

In the case of Navalny's illness, the formal Russian government response has been to ask Germany for additional evidence.

"We are hoping it's possible to establish the cause of what happened," Dmitri Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, told journalists on Thursday. "We are interested in this, we want this, and for this we need information from Germany." The Russian Foreign Ministry issued a statement essentially accusing Germany of making reckless claims. "Yet again, we become witnesses of a situation where in place of careful work, based on facts and evidence and cooperation between law enforcement organs and medical institutions, our partners prefer loud, public announcements," the statement said. The Germans had not produced "any facts at all," the statement said. Within a few hours of the German revelation, more elaborate responses came from commentators on Russian media.

Rink said the German statement was untrue because Navalny could not have survived a Novichok poisoning, despite documented cases of such survival. "The comrade would be resting in a different place now," he said. Olga Skabueva, a state television talk show host, noting that Navalny first took ill on an airline flight, questioned in a post on social media why, if such a dangerous poison were used, no other passengers and none of the doctors who treated him were sickened. "Novichok, they told us after Salisbury, is very dangerous." Navalny's family and supporters have surmised that the poison was dropped into some tea he bought in the airport in Novosibirsk, in Siberia —the only thing he consumed that morning. He was flown to Germany for treatment two days later.

On Thursday, the president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, who has been currying favor with the Russian government to win support against street protesters, contributed his own theory.

He told the visiting Russian prime minister that his security service had intercepted a telephone call of Merkel admitting the poisoning was falsified.

"We caught an interesting conversation," he said in comments carried by the Tass news agency. "It speaks about this falsification. There was no poisoning of Navalny."

Russian doctors have suggested that Navalny lapsed into a coma because of low blood sugar.

"If the Kremlin wants its denials to be taken seriously, it ought not to have lied about Crimea, about Donbass," the Malaysian airliner and previous poisonings, Sam Greene, the director of the Russia Institute at King's College London, wrote on Twitter. "Whatever else may be going on in the world, Moscow's credibility problem is of its own making."



Enlarge this image.

DETAILS

Subject:	News media; Poisoning; Militia groups; Military personnel
Location:	Russia New York Crimea Ukraine Germany
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Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120
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A Guide to Novichok, the Soviet Neurotoxin Used in Navalny's Poisoning

Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]03 Sep 2020: A.14.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

For decades, scientists, spies and chemical weapons specialists have known about and feared the lethal substance.

Few people had heard of the nerve agent Novichok until 2018, when Western officials accused Russia of having used it in the attempted assassination of a former spy in Britain. It returned abruptly to the headlines on Wednesday, when Germany said the poison had sickened the Russian dissident Alexei A. Navalny.

But for decades, scientists, spies and chemical weapons specialists have known about and feared Novichok. It is a potent neurotoxin, developed in the Soviet Union and Russia in the 1980s and 90s, that can be delivered as a liquid, powder or aerosol, and is said to be more lethal than nerve agents that are better known in the West, like VX and sarin.

The poison causes muscle spasms that can stop the heart, fluid buildup in the lungs that can also be deadly, and damage to other organs and nerve cells. Russia has produced several versions of Novichok, and it is anyone's guess how often they have actually been used, experts say, because the resulting deaths can easily escape scrutiny, appearing like nothing more sinister than a fatal heart attack.

That may have been the plan in the case of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy living in Salisbury, England. When Mr. Skripal was found barely conscious in a park on March 4, 2018, there was no obvious reason to suspect poisoning -- except that his daughter, who was visiting, was with him, suffering the same symptoms.

British intelligence agencies identified the substance as Novichok and accused Russia. The attack became a major international scandal, further chilling relations between Moscow and the West. The British identified Russian agents who they said had flown into Britain, applied the poison to the front door handle of Mr. Skripal's house and left the country, leaving a trail of video and chemical evidence.

President Vladimir V. Putin's government has consistently denied any involvement in the incident, spinning a series of alternative theories, and just months before the Salisbury attack, Mr. Putin declared that Russia had destroyed all of its chemical weapons.

Mr. Skripal worked for Russian military intelligence until he was caught passing secrets to the British, and

imprisoned. After he was released in a 2010 prisoner swap and settled in England, he advised several countries' governments on Russian intelligence.

Time and time again, people seen as enemies of the Kremlin have been killed, both in Russia and abroad. Russian spies have a long history of using poisons in assassinations, and Western intelligence officials say Russia has spy units specially trained in the handling and deployment of the most dangerous substances.

Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, survived the poisoning, as did a police officer who had been exposed when he visited their home to investigate and a man who had found the discarded perfume bottle used to transport the poison. But the man's girlfriend, Dawn Sturgess, who had sprayed herself with the bottle, died. After the Soviet Union disintegrated in the early 1990s, scientists who had worked on its chemical weapons program – some of whom moved to the United States – spoke publicly about a nerve agent they had named Novichok, Russian for "new guy." One of them accidentally exposed himself to it 1987, suffering permanent and ultimately fatal muscle and organ damage. He told his story to a Russian newspaper in 1992, shortly before he died.

Novichok belongs to a broad class of compounds called cholinesterase inhibitors, which are used in a wide range of medicines as well as poisons. They attack the normal ebb and flow of neurotransmitters, chemicals in the body that nerve cells use to regulate essential functions.

Nerve agent poisoning can be treated with the chemicals atropine and oxime, but even if the treatment is successful, victims can suffer lasting damage.

The first field use of the poison may have been in 1995, when a Russian businessman and his secretary were killed. Officials said at the time that they had been poisoned with cadmium, a heavy metal, but Russian media have since reported that it was Novichok.

In 1999, the United States struck an agreement to help Uzbekistan dismantle a former Soviet chemical weapon lab that had produced and tested Novichok.

After that, it went all but unmentioned in news reports for almost 19 years – until two Russians were found near death in a park in Salisbury.

Photograph

The Charité hospital in Berlin, where Aleksei A. Navalny, Russia's opposition leader, remains in a medically induced coma. The German government said he had been poisoned with a deadly nerve agent from the Novichok family.

(PHOTOGRAPH BY Christoph Soeder/DPA, via Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

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Putin Adversary Was Poisoned With Nerve Agent

Schwartz, Michael; Eddy, Melissa . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y.]03 Sep 2020: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The German government said that toxicology tests showed the Russian opposition leader was poisoned with a nerve agent from the same class used in a 2018 attack in Britain on an ex-Soviet spy.

Soon after a private plane carrying the poisoned Russian opposition leader, Aleksei A. Navalny, touched down in

Berlin last month, doctors treating him at the prestigious Charité hospital there became so alarmed, they called in the Army.

Mr. Navalny was certainly not suffering from low blood sugar, as the Russian doctors who first treated his mysterious illness had claimed, or even a standard detective-novel poison like arsenic or cyanide.

It was, the German doctors suspected, something far more dangerous, requiring the attention of the Army's chemical weapons specialists, German officials said.

On Wednesday, the German government confirmed the doctors' fears: Mr. Navalny, 44, had been poisoned with a military-grade nerve agent from the Novichok family, a potent class of chemical weapon developed by the Soviet Union that was used at least once before in recent years in an attack on a Kremlin enemy. Mr. Navalny remains in critical but stable condition at the Charité hospital, in a medically induced coma.

The Novichok revelation, which the German government said was based on "unequivocal evidence," provided the strongest indication yet that the Kremlin, which has denied involvement, was behind the poisoning, as Western intelligence agencies have assessed that only the Russian government would likely have access to such a dangerous weapon.

That thrust what had begun as a domestic Russian political scandal into the international arena, with serious implications for Moscow's relations with the West.

Already, the German government has briefed its allies in the European Union and NATO, and plans to provide information about its findings to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the world's chemical weapons watchdog. All day Wednesday, Western governments issued condemnations of Russia, with the United States raising the possibility of imposing financial sanctions on those involved.

Chancellor Angela Merkel, who over the years has taken pains to preserve Germany's diplomatic relations with the Kremlin, took the unusual step on Wednesday of publicly calling Russia out.

"Mr. Navalny has been the victim of a crime," Ms. Merkel in a statement. "It raises very serious questions that only the Russian government can and must answer."

Russia is unlikely to provide such answers.

On Wednesday, the Kremlin said it had not been informed of Germany's findings before they were announced, the Russian state news outlet Tass reported.

"No, such information was not conveyed to us," said the presidential spokesman, Dmitri S. Peskov. He added that Russian doctors had found no evidence of any poisonous substances in Mr. Navalny's system before he was moved to Germany.

German officials said the Russian ambassador had been briefed at around the same time the findings were made public.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said on Wednesday that American officials found the German conclusion about the use of Novichok "very credible" and "deeply concerning." He said Washington was discussing a response with Germany and other allies.

It is unclear what Western governments can do to curtail such behavior. Despite years of escalating sanctions, expulsions of diplomats and international isolation, the Kremlin, according to Western intelligence agencies, continues to act concertedly to undermine American and European institutions and violate international norms. The German revelation comes less than a month after U.S. intelligence officials declared that Russia was seeking to interfere in the 2020 presidential election in the United States, using a range of techniques designed to denigrate Joseph R. Biden Jr. and boost President Trump.

And it comes a day after Facebook and Twitter announced that they had disrupted a disinformation operation launched by the same Kremlin-backed group, the Internet Research Agency, that interfered in the 2016 election. Attacks against the Kremlin's enemies both in Russia and abroad have also become increasingly brazen. In 2015, Boris Nemtsov, who was Mr. Navalny's predecessor at the helm of Russia's opposition, was shot dead on a bridge near Red Square, just outside the Kremlin walls.

An attacker doused Mr. Navalny with a green liquid in 2017 that damaged his sight. Last December, a former

Chechen rebel commander was shot to death in a park in Berlin.

And in March 2018, operatives from Russia's military intelligence service, known as the G.R.U., traveled to Britain, where they poisoned Sergei V. Skripal, a former G.R.U. officer who had served prison time in Russia for spying for the British before being traded in a spy swap.

At the time, few in the world had heard of Novichok, a nerve agent that Soviet chemists devised for battlefield use. It was that substance, British authorities said, smuggled into the country in a perfume bottle, that sickened Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia.

The Skripals survived the attack, as did two other people who came into contact with the poison, but it killed one person, a woman who handled the perfume bottle after the would-be assassins had discarded it.

Mr. Navalny's team of doctors said in a statement that they expected a lengthy recovery and that they could not rule out lasting effects.

The United States stopped producing nerve agents in 1970, after the development of "third generation" nerve agents like sarin and VX. Soviet scientists kept at it for two more decades, developing a "fourth generation," the Novichok group of weapons. The United States still has some of its aging stockpile of nerve agents, while Russia claimed in 2017 to have eliminated all of its chemical weapons.

The Skripal poisoning provoked international fury, resulting in Britain and its allies expelling more than 120 Russian diplomats and intelligence officers as well as imposing punishing sanctions.

The poisoning also turned Novichok into something of a Russian calling card.

With the substance again being used, this time to poison the Russian government's most visible opponent, critics accused the Kremlin of thumbing its nose at its opponents both at home and abroad.

"In 2020, poisoning Navalny with Novichok is the same as leaving an autograph at the scene of the crime," Leonid Volkov, Mr. Navalny's chief of staff, wrote on Twitter.

The Navalny case also sends an unmistakable message from Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, at time when Russians are holding enormous protests in the country's Far East, and pro-democracy forces have flooded the streets in neighboring Belarus, said John Sipher, a former chief of station for the Central Intelligence Agency, who was once posted to Russia.

"In a country that's ruled by fear you need to send signals to the population about what's acceptable and what's not acceptable," Mr. Sipher said. "They want to make it clear to the people inside that if you screw with the czar, you're going to get killed."

Mr. Navalny, the most persistent critic of Mr. Putin, fell ill on Aug. 20, on a flight back to Moscow, after spending several days meeting with opposition candidates in Novosibirsk, Siberia's largest city. He had been promoting a strategy aimed at drawing support away from the dominant United Russia party before nationwide municipal elections on Sept. 13.

His plane made an emergency landing in Omsk, another Siberian city, where he was first hospitalized. He was flown to Berlin two days later.

On Wednesday new details emerged about the race to identify the source of his illness.

Shortly after Mr. Navalny arrived in Germany, on Aug. 22, his doctors requested the assistance of the German military's Institute for Pharmacology and Toxicology in Munich, where there are scientists with expertise in nerve agent attacks, said a senior German security official who was not authorized to provide details about the case and spoke on condition of anonymity.

It was only this week that military scientists made their final determination about the poison and informed the German leadership, the official said. The results were so highly classified, the official said, that even Mr. Navalny's doctors were not immediately informed, though they had been operating under the assumption of a nerve agent attack and providing the appropriate treatment.

The Novichok class of nerve agents contains many possible variations and the official would not provide the precise chemical formula of the substance found in Mr. Navalny, saying such information had received the highest German security classification.

German military scientists, the official said, "were 100 percent certain that it was Novichok."

"It's not nearly certain. It's not probably certain. It's absolutely certain," the official said.

The case is expected to further strain ties between Berlin and Moscow that have been tense since Russia annexed Crimea in 2014. Ms. Merkel said on Wednesday that Germany, which currently holds the European Union's rotating presidency, would consult with its European and NATO partners about a coordinated response.

"The world will wait for answers," she said.

Germany and Russia share deep cultural and economic ties, and Ms. Merkel, who is fluent in Russian, has insisted on maintaining a dialogue with Mr. Putin through regular calls and meetings.

But she has also resisted Moscow as it has pivoted against the West. She led Europe's move to impose economic sanctions in response to Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea, expelled two Russian embassy employees after the German federal prosecutor's office said it suspected Russia in the Berlin park killing less than one mile from her chancellery, and is seeking sanctions against the head of Russia's military intelligence agency over a 2015 cyberattack on the German Parliament.

Michael Schwirtz reported from New York and Melissa Eddy from Berlin. Michael Crowley contributed reporting from Washington, Andrew E. Kramer from Moscow, Megan Specia from London and Christopher F. Schuetze from Berlin.

Photograph

The Charité hospital in Berlin, where the Russian opposition leader Aleksei A. Navalny is being treated. He is in a medically induced coma after falling ill in August. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPH SOEDER/DPA, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS); Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany said the findings raise serious questions that "only the Russian government" can answer. (POOL PHOTO BY MARKUS SCHREIBER) (A14)

DETAILS

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Unspeakable for Putin: A Political Opponent Beyond His Control

Higgins, Andrew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]02 Sep 2020: A.12.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

President Vladimir V. Putin has never publicly mentioned the opposition leader's name in 20 years of speeches and interviews. Why? He is "completely out of their control," which is intolerable, one analyst says.

MOSCOW -- A pro-Kremlin propaganda film posted online before Russia's 2018 presidential election smeared Aleksei A. Navalny, the Russian opposition leader now lying comatose in a German hospital after a poisoning attack, as the reincarnation of Adolf Hitler.

A former prime minister, the target of Mr. Navalny's most vivid exposé of corruption, denounced him as a "political con man."

For President Vladimir V. Putin, however, the anticorruption campaigner looms like Lord Voldemort, a figure from nightmares who, like Harry Potter's archenemy, "must not be named."

During more than 20 years in power, Mr. Putin has never publicly uttered the name of his most high-profile

opponent, according to archives of his speeches and interviews on the Kremlin's website. When he did say his name after prodding from an American interlocutor during a private event in 2013, it became a national news story. Aside from references to Mr. Navalny included in official transcripts of news conferences, the Kremlin website deigned to use his name only last week – and thus acknowledge that Mr. Putin's most relentless critic actually exists.

"There is a weird taboo. It is sacral, mystical," said Dmitri Belousov, a former scriptwriter for state television who for years penned character assassinations of the Kremlin's foes. Fearing arrest over past private interest in anarchism, Mr. Belousov fled Russia last year and is currently seeking political asylum in the Netherlands. He said the targets of his television hit jobs – ordered up by officials in the Kremlin and produced with compromising surveillance footage provided by the security services – included Moscow's former mayor, once seen as a possible rival to Mr. Putin, and the self-exiled oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, but it was Mr. Navalny who drew the most vicious fire.

"They really hate Navalny," Mr. Belousov said, because "what he has done is completely out of their control. The Kremlin fights against any force that it cannot control, any opinion that it does not control. This is their guiding strategy."

Another source of their anger, he said, was that the security services, despite years of hunting, could never find any compromising material on him.

The fight has continued even as their enemy lies in a coma in a German hospital. Yevgeny Prigozhin, a businessman with the nickname of "Putin's cook" and a target of Mr. Navalny's anticorruption investigations, said last week that he had purchased some of Mr. Navalny's debts and would force him to pay up if given the chance. "Of course, if Comrade Navalny gives his soul to God, then personally I do not intend to persecute him in this world," Mr. Prigozhin added.

Even unconscious, Mr. Navalny has managed to needle the Kremlin and its allies. His organization, the Anti-Corruption Foundation, released a video on Monday that featured footage of Mr. Navalny denouncing corrupt pro-Kremlin politicians during a recent trip to the Siberian city of Novosibirsk. He named 18 local legislators who he said had suspiciously intimate ties to a construction industry notorious for corruption.

On his flight back to Moscow from Siberia on Aug 20, Mr. Navalny fell violently ill and would probably have died had the pilot not made a swift emergency landing in the city of Omsk, where he was hospitalized for two days before being flown to Berlin for treatment.

German doctors say Mr. Navalny was poisoned. Mr. Putin's spokesman, Dmitri Peskov, dismissed this judgment as "empty noise," and said Russia saw no reason to open an investigation into what had happened to "the patient," a new moniker that recently joined "the gentleman," "the person you mentioned," "the defendant" and other terms that the Kremlin uses to avoid mentioning Mr. Navalny's name.

The timing of the poisoning, following mass protests in neighboring Belarus over a disputed presidential election and weeks of street demonstrations in Russia's Far East, has generated a swirl of speculation. Why, after so many attacks over the years on Mr. Navalny's character and, in at least two instances, his person, did the threats suddenly escalate to what seems to have been attempted murder?

One popular theory is that the Kremlin, spooked by the protests to the west in Belarus and to the east in Khabarovsk, wanted Mr. Navalny out of the way to prevent him from mobilizing discontent closer to Mr. Putin and upsetting his plans for parliamentary elections next year.

An alternative theory, however, is that Mr. Navalny's poisoning pointed not to the strength of a ruthlessly efficient system of repression but to the weakness of a system whose response to potential threats has become so degraded that the state no longer functions as a single unit but rather as a jumble of rival clans and freelance enforcers with grudges, like Mr. Prigozhin.

"Every element of the system acts according to its own logic, not in the interests of the system as a whole," said Tatiana Stanovaya, the founder of a political analysis firm, R.Politika, and author of a recent article calling the poisoning the "act of a sickly regime." "Poisoning is not the most effective way of dealing with an opponent. It is

total idiocy."

Adding to the confusion is the fact that, unlike the victims of several other baroquely horrific poisoning cases linked to Russia, Mr. Navalny has never been classified as a traitor, an enemy category that Mr. Putin holds in particular contempt and that he has said deserves no mercy.

Aleksandr V. Litvinenko, who died in a London hospital in 2006 after being poisoned with a rare radioactive isotope, was a former intelligence officer who broke with the Kremlin. Sergei V. Skripal, who was attacked in Salisbury, England, in 2018 with a nerve agent, was a turncoat former spy.

But the border between treachery in service of a foreign power and domestic opposition has grown increasingly blurred of late. "All domestic politics are now seen as a reflection of foreign threats," said Ekaterina Schulmann, a political scientist and a former member of the Kremlin's human rights council who was ousted from the body last year in a purge of independent-minded members. "This perception is not entirely new, but has reached unprecedented dimensions in recent years."

She added: "The view that everything in the world is a battleground between great powers is the belief and religion of Russia's ruling elite at the moment."

While much of the world recoiled at video footage of riot police officers in Belarus violently beating protesters, Mr. Putin last week commended the police for their "restraint" against people whom Russian state television routinely describes as Western stooges or worse.

But at least some of the numerous attacks on Mr. Putin's opponents over the years seem to have caused surprise and even shock in the Kremlin.

One of these was the 2015 killing of Boris Nemtsov, a former deputy prime minister and prominent Kremlin critic, in the heart of Moscow. Investigators said a hit man and four accomplices from Chechnya had carried out the killing, but they never established, at least for public consumption, who ordered it.

The most likely culprit, many believe, was the Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov, a close Kremlin ally who has nonetheless enraged parts of the security apparatus by repeatedly taking the law into his own hands.

Mr. Putin and others in Russia's ruling elite don't so much fear Mr. Navalny, Ms. Stanovaya said, as despise him as a disruptive interloper.

"They are like residents of a luxury residential neighborhood who want to get rid of a tramp who starts sleeping next to their beautiful fountain," she said. "Navalny is not part of their world, and they want him gone."

Ms. Stanovaya added that Russia's ruling elite – particularly former K.G.B. officers like Mr. Putin and many of his close advisers – see the opposition leader "as an instrument" used by Russia's foreign enemies, "not as a rival or even a person."

"Our country is run by the logic of the K.G.B.," she said.

During the presidential election campaign in 2018 – a race from which Mr. Navalny was barred – a candidate who was allowed to run, Mr. Putin's goddaughter Ksenia Sobchak, asked the president why "being an opposition activist in Russia means that you will either be killed or imprisoned" and whether this indicated that "the government is afraid of fair competition."

Mr. Putin replied: "I assure you, the authorities are not afraid of anyone and have never been afraid of anyone." He was re-elected to a fourth term with 77 percent of the vote.

The landslide victory was preceded by an all-out offensive on Mr. Navalny in state-controlled outlets and social media. This included a crudely defamatory video, posted anonymously on YouTube, with the title "Hitler 1945 /Navalny 2018" – WE CAN REPEAT THAT!"

The video, which featured doctored photos of Mr. Navalny wearing swastika armbands, was widely shared, setting off a torrent of mockery from Mr. Navalny's fans and applause from his enemies.

The Kremlin, widely suspected of having commissioned the film, claimed that Mr. Navalny produced the video himself.

That Mr. Navalny has inspired such vividly improbable theories over the years is a measure of his success not only in getting under the skin of Russia's governing elite but in messing with its head, said Mark Galeotti, an expert on

the Russian security services.

His videos exposing the lavish lifestyles and apparent corruption of the pro-Kremlin elite, Mr. Galeotti said, have attracted huge viewership not only among rebellious youths and liberal intellectuals but also among members of the elite, who worry that some of Mr. Navalny's information was leaked by rival factions within the leadership and that they could be next.

"Nobody inspires such hostility and fear as Navalny," said Nikolai Petrov, a senior research fellow at Chatham House in London and an expert on Kremlin decision-making. This, he added, means there is a very long list of potential enemies who might want him dead, or least incapacitated.

But, he added, Mr. Navalny is such a high-profile target that no one with a personal grudge would move against him without at least the tacit assent of Mr. Putin.

"It is like the mafia: Nothing can be done without the approval and guarantee of impunity of the boss," he said. "I am not saying Putin gave a direct order to poison him, but nobody can act unless they are sure that the boss will be happy and won't punish them."

Sophia Kishkovsky contributed reporting from Moscow.

Photograph

Aleksei A. Navalny in 2014. One theory about Mr. Navalny's poisoning is that the Kremlin, spooked by the protests to the east in Khabarovsk, left, wanted him out of the way to prevent him from mobilizing discontent closer to President Vladimir V. Putin. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Social networks; Security services; Poisoning; Criminal investigations; Presidential elections; Demonstrations &protests; Murders &murder attempts; Politics; Corruption
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Germany Calls for Inquiry as Doctors Say Putin Critic Was Poisoned

Eddy, Melissa; Kramer, Andrew E . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]25 Aug 2020: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Once again, a prominent critic of Moscow has mysteriously fallen ill. And once again, poison appears to be the culprit.

BERLIN -- Aleksei A. Navalny, the outspoken Russian dissident who fell into a coma last week, was a victim of poisoning, German doctors said Monday, adding him to the ranks of Russians stricken by mystery illness after drawing the wrath of Moscow.

Mr. Navalny, who became ill on a domestic flight in Russia, was under round-the-clock guard at the Berlin hospital where his family transferred him Saturday after what now appears to be yet another attack signaling Russia's status as an outlaw nation.

While not able to pinpoint the exact poison, German doctors said tests showed it came from a group of chemicals known as cholinesterase inhibitors, which interfere with the nervous system. While they are used medically to treat

Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, in some forms they are also found in chemical weapons and pesticides. A Russian health ministry issued a statement challenging the German findings, saying Mr. Navalny's symptoms were not consistent with cholinesterase inhibitors. But a doctor at the Siberian hospital where the dissident was initially taken said after the German announcement that the patient had been given an antidote often used against nerve agents.

A state news agency, RIA, carried a statement from a pro-Kremlin group that took the opportunity to invoke World War II. The group, Strong Russia, criticized the German government for providing treatment for Mr. Navalny but not for elderly Russians who suffered as children during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

"Of course, as with any sick person, we wish Navalny a quick recovery," the statement said. "Has Berlin ever sent an air ambulance for a former detainee in the concentration camps?"

German doctors said that they expected Mr. Navalny to survive, but that it was too early to gauge the long-term effects of the attack.

Mr. Navalny, who has challenged President Vladimir V. Putin politically for nearly a decade, and has waged a long battle to publicize rampant official corruption, has been attacked at least twice before. One assault left him mostly blind in one eye.

This time, he fell ill while returning from a trip to Siberia, where he was organizing opposition candidates and strategy for regional and local elections. His plane made an emergency landing in the Siberian city of Omsk, where he was taken to a local hospital.

Mr. Navalny's family and supporters organized an air ambulance to take him to Germany, but Russian doctors delayed for nearly 48 hours, saying his medical condition was too unstable for him to be moved. That drew bitter criticism from the Navalny camp, which accused the doctors of stalling to give the toxins enough time to drain from his system.

Mr. Navalny was flown to Germany at the invitation of Chancellor Angela Merkel. Though Germany enjoys strong economic and cultural ties to Russia, it has not shied from criticizing Mr. Putin's policies, and even before Mr. Navalny arrived in Berlin, the German government appeared to be taking extra precautions to ensure his safety. After the doctors declared the case a poisoning, Ms. Merkel and her foreign minister, Heiko Maas, called on Russia to launch an immediate investigation but did not offer any harsher criticism.

"Given Mr. Navalny's prominent role in Russia's political opposition, the authorities there are now urgently called upon to investigate this crime to the last detail – and to do so in full transparency," they said in a statement. "Those responsible must be identified and held accountable."

Minutes before landing, his plane was rerouted from Schönefeld Airport to Tegel Airport, and the ambulance that brought him from the tarmac to the Charité hospital was escorted by the police. A police van and several officers have been stationed outside the hospital's main entrance since Saturday.

"It was clear that after he arrived here, security measures had to be put in place," Ms. Merkel's spokesman, Steffen Seibert, told reporters on Monday, before the hospital released its statement. "We are dealing with a patient who appears, with a certain level of probability, to have been the target of a poisoning attack."

"Unfortunately," Mr. Seibert noted, "there are one or more examples of such poisonings in recent Russian history." The Russian security services are suspected of having used a range of poisons in attempts to eliminate opponents, although Russian officials have consistently denied it.

Many of those victims have been stricken after drinking tea.

Anna Politkovskaya, an investigative journalist, fell ill after taking a cup of tea on a domestic flight. She survived, but was shot and killed in her apartment elevator two years later.

A former Russian agent turned Kremlin critic Alexander V. Litvinenko, succumbed after ingesting a radioactive isotope, Polonium 210, while having tea with two Russian agents. British investigators later determined that the killing had most likely been ordered by Mr. Putin.

Mr. Navalny, too, drank a cup of tea before falling ill, at an airport cafe before departure.

Numerous, less prominent figures have been felled under mysterious circumstances. In March 2018, a former

Russian spy named Sergei V. Skripal was found poisoned on a park bench in Salisbury, England, alongside his unconscious daughter. Both survived.

Sometimes, though, the weapon is not very mysterious.

In 2015, one of the most high-profile Putin critics, Boris Y. Nemtsov, was gunned down just a stone's throw from the Kremlin. And last August, an assassin riding a bicycle shot and killed a former Chechen rebel commander in a Berlin park; German officials suspect Russia was behind the killing, but Moscow has denied responsibility.

While miscellaneous hit men have been charged in some of the killings, those giving the orders have never been identified.

For the last decade, Mr. Navalny has been Mr. Putin's most unflinching critic, leading opposition rallies and publishing reports on high-level corruption among Mr. Putin and his cronies – most memorably a lengthy video showing the multiple mega-properties, yachts and other luxuries amassed up by the former prime minister Dimitri A. Medvedev.

Having persevered despite numerous arrests, he likes to call Mr. Putin's political party the party of "scoundrels and thieves" and has accused the president of trying to turn Russia into a "feudal state."

Mr. Navalny's needling criticism of Mr. Putin has never posed a serious electoral threat to the Russian leader, and Mr. Putin remains popular with many Russians. But Mr. Navalny has dominated Russian opposition politics since he led large antigovernment street protests in 2011.

And Mr. Navalny cannily used social media to build a tenacious movement even after much of the independent news media had been squelched and other critics were driven into exile or killed.

Like the German doctors, the Russian doctors who initially treated Mr. Navalny said they had looked at poisoning as the cause for his sudden collapse. Then they ruled it out, they said.

"Of course, we will sort this out," Anatoly Kalinichenko, the deputy head doctor of the Siberian hospital where Mr. Navalny was treated, said of the German findings. "Did we make a mistake, or did the laboratories, or is all of this disinformation?" he said.

Another doctor who consulted on Mr. Navalny's treatment in Siberia, Boris Teplykh, said the medical team had in fact considered a poison in the class of chemicals identified by the Germans, which includes nerve agents.

They ruled it out, he said – but before doing so had injected Mr. Navalny with an antidote for nerve toxins, atropine. German doctors said Monday they had also begun atropine treatment.

"Concerning atropine, which our colleagues prescribed for treatment, well, in the first minutes after arrival injections with this substance were made," Dr. Teplykh told the news agency Interfax.

While Mr. Navalny was still in Russia, the hospital's head doctor, Aleksandr Murakhovsky, released a statement offering a different diagnosis. He said Mr. Navalny was most likely suffering from a metabolic disorder brought on by low blood sugar.

Men who appeared to be with the security services but were not in uniform had milled about the hospital hallways, and came and went from Dr. Murakhovsky's office, videos and pictures showed.

Their presence alarmed Mr. Navalny's wife, his personal physician and a spokeswoman, who said they worried the security services were dictating his care.

Asked about these plainclothes men in his office, Dr. Murakhovsky said that he did not know who they were, but that they had not influenced his treatment decisions.

"I had a lot of people in my office, but I cannot say what they were doing there," he said. "They came and asked, 'Is everything all right?' And I said, 'Everything is all right.' And they left."

"They were just interested."

Melissa Eddy reported from Berlin and Andrew E. Kramer from Moscow.

Photograph

The Charité hospital in Berlin, where the Russian activist Aleksei A. Navalny is being treated. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ODD ANDERSEN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE – GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Hospitals; Security services; Poisoning; Criminal investigations; Murders &murder attempts; Critics; Physicians; Criticism
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Sickened Putin Critic Is Treated in Germany

Eddy, Melissa; Kramer, Andrew E . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]23 Aug 2020: A.11.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

His sudden, unexplained illness comes amid political uprisings in Russia's Far East, and just weeks before municipal elections take place across the country.

BERLIN -- Russia's most prominent opposition figure, Aleksei A. Navalny, arrived in Berlin for treatment on Saturday after falling into a coma in Siberia in what his family and supporters suspect was a deliberate poisoning weeks before nationwide local elections.

Mr. Navalny was admitted to Charité, one of Germany's leading medical research facilities, where he is undergoing extensive diagnostic tests, the hospital said after a plane transporting him from Russia touched down. He arrived more than 48 hours after he first lost consciousness, a delay his supporters bitterly criticized Russian officials for having caused.

"Patient stable, mission accomplished," said Jaka Bizilj, who runs the Cinema for Peace, the foundation that organized the air transport at the urging of Mr. Navalny's friends and family.

Mr. Navalny became violently ill on Thursday shortly after a Moscow-bound flight he had boarded took off, forcing an emergency landing in the Siberian city of Omsk.

The sudden illness struck Mr. Navalny, the most persistent critic of President Vladimir V. Putin, just as popular uprisings have sprung up in Russia's Far East and in neighboring Belarus – and only weeks before Russians vote in municipal elections on Sept. 13.

How it will affect the political scene, analysts in Russia said, will hinge in part on Mr. Navalny's longer-term condition and whether he will be able to return home.

"Sometimes, instances that are publicly perceived as political terror do demoralize the opposition," Ekaterina Schulmann, a Moscow-based political analyst, said in an interview, "and at other times they motivate people to protest, or at the least, to vote in protest."

If Mr. Navalny remains in Germany for a lengthy recovery, or indefinitely as a political exile, the Kremlin stands to benefit politically, she said.

"It is very useful to have an opposition figure in exile," Ms. Schulmann said. "He can be cast in the state media as a person who fled Russia. They can present it as unpatriotic behavior."

In the days before he fell ill, Mr. Navalny had been meeting with opposition candidates in Novosibirsk, Siberia's largest city, promoting a strategy he called "smart voting" that encourages multiple, small opposition movements to back a single candidate on a local ballot.

The strategy seeks to chip away at the dominance of the pro-government party, United Russia, in city councils and regional parliaments.

Mr. Putin's popularity has been in decline for the past two years as nationalist fervor over the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine has faded and the economy has slumped under sanctions and then coronavirus lockdowns.

Upon landing in Berlin, Mr. Navalny's plane was met by an ambulance that brought him, under police escort, to the hospital, where doctors began extensive testing to determine what may have caused the illness and how to treat it. Several police officers were stationed outside the hospital throughout the day.

The examinations, said Manuela Zingl, a spokeswoman for Charité, "will take some time."

Mr. Navalny is being treated at the same hospital where Pyotr Verzilov, a member of the Russian protest group Pussy Riot, was admitted in 2018. Doctors said at the time that he likely had been poisoned.

Speaking to reporters via video link on Friday, Mr. Verzilov said his own symptoms had mirrored those of Mr. Navalny, including a loss of consciousness and his slipping into a coma several hours after the suspected poisoning.

"The similarities are striking, not only in the medical condition, but in the behavior of the Russian government and doctors," Mr. Verzilov said, pointing out that his own transfer from Russia was delayed more than two days.

Such delays by Russian officials, critics say, are intended to make it harder to determine what substance has been ingested.

Mr. Navalny collapsed in agonizing pain on Thursday shortly after takeoff on what was to have been a 2,000-mile flight to Moscow. His family suspects that poison may have been added to a cup of tea he drank in the airport before boarding that flight.

His evacuation came only after long hours of wrangling with Russian doctors and officials, who had insisted that a transfer to Germany would endanger Mr. Navalny's health. But a team of German doctors, who had arrived in Omsk on the air ambulance, were granted access to Mr. Navalny Friday afternoon and stated unequivocally that it was safe for him to travel.

Mr. Navalny's wife, Yulia, who had sent Mr. Putin a letter on Friday requesting permission to evacuate her husband, was allowed to accompany him to Germany.

The Russian authorities said tests for toxins in Mr. Navalny's blood were all negative, indicating they found no evidence he was poisoned. At a news conference on Friday, Dr. Aleksandr Murakhovsky said Mr. Navalny had suffered an "imbalance in carbohydrates, that is, metabolic disorder," possibly caused by low blood sugar.

Mr. Navalny's wife and personal doctor quickly dismissed this account, saying the idea that an otherwise healthy 44-year-old would collapse and fall into a days-long coma from low blood sugar was ridiculous.

If Mr. Navalny is found to have ingested dangerous toxins, he would become the latest prominent Kremlin critic to have been the victim of a poisoning.

A fatal dose of the radioactive substance polonium 210 was used against Alexander Litvinenko, and a nerve agent called Novichok against Sergei Skripal, both former Russian intelligence officers attacked in England. The former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko fell ill from a dioxin, and Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian journalist who lobbied in the West for sanctions against Kremlin operatives, said unknown toxins were used against him.

The people who ordered the attacks have never been identified, despite efforts to take cases to higher courts, including the European Court of Human Rights.

Officials in Berlin did not comment on Mr. Navalny's arrival. But in offering this past week to allow the opposition leader into Germany for medical treatment, Chancellor Angela Merkel called for a thorough investigation.

"What is particularly important is that the circumstances behind this are cleared up very quickly," Ms. Merkel said. "We insist on this, because what we have heard so far is very unfavorable."

Mr. Navalny has been treated abroad previously, after an attack in 2017 in which a caustic liquid was thrown in his face, partially blinding him in one eye. He resumed his political activities almost without interruption. Dozens of arrests and short spells in jail have also failed to deter him.

Still, violence by pro-Kremlin activists and arrests for administrative offenses have kept him out of sight for important protests and elections. Mr. Navalny will now be absent from campaigning before the September local elections.

Melissa Eddy reported from Berlin, and Andrew E. Kramer from Moscow.

Photograph

Aleksei A. Navalny, Russia's most prominent opposition figure, may have been poisoned. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HILL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); The plane carrying Mr. Navalny landed in Berlin on Saturday and was met by an ambulance that transported him to a hospital. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL KAPPELER/DPA, VIA

DETAILS

Subject:	Local elections; Poisoning; Coma; Political activism; Physicians; Hospitals; Hypoglycemia; Rebellions; Negative campaigning; Consciousness
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LINKS

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Why Poison Aleksei Navalny Now?

Kashin, Oleg . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]22 Aug 2020:
A.21.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The unchanging leader of the regime is Mr. Putin; the unchanging leader of the opposition is Mr. Navalny. But everything changes.

On Thursday, as the Russian opposition leader Aleksei A. Navalny was returning to Moscow from the Siberian city of Tomsk, where he had been meeting with opposition candidates ahead of local elections, he began to feel ill. A heart-rending video was later posted online – one of the passengers on the plane had managed to capture Mr. Navalny's groans and cries of pain. They sounded like the screams of a dying man.

Almost immediately, it appeared that Mr. Navalny had been slipped a strong poison. The airplane was forced to make an emergency landing in the Siberian city of Omsk. Mr. Navalny was transported to the hospital and fell into a coma.

The Russian authorities initially seemed prepared to facilitate Mr. Navalny's transfer to a specialist clinic in Germany. But they now appear to have changed their minds: According to Mr. Navalny's spokeswoman, doctors at the hospital where he is being treated are refusing to allow him to board the waiting plane. He remains unconscious.

In recent years, Mr. Navalny's undeniable leadership of the Russian opposition has also become a kind of sign of President Vladimir V. Putin's stability. The unchanging leader of the regime is Vladimir Putin; the unchanging leader of the opposition is Aleksei Navalny. It was hard to imagine him being arrested or killed. But everything changes.

If the Russian government has now decided to get rid of Mr. Navalny, that suggests it is constructing some new political configuration in which there is no longer a need for any kind of an opposition.

Mr. Navalny is no stranger to toxins. Three years ago, Kremlin loyalists threw a triarylmethane dye on his face, temporarily staining him green and permanently damaging his vision in one eye. At the time, Mr. Putin's chief of staff, Anton Vaino, personally signed a document allowing Mr. Navalny to travel to Spain for treatment. (Mr. Navalny, who had been convicted of embezzlement, among other crimes, was legally prohibited from leaving Russia.) This was a humane act on the part of the Kremlin, although it would have been more humane to restrict the activities of the pro-Kremlin activists who regularly attack opposition figures.

But there is a difference between spraying someone with poison dye and a classic political murder. The most notorious of the latter, in recent years, was the 2015 killing of the opposition politician Boris Y. Nemtsov. Mr. Nemtsov was gunned down in the center of Moscow. A group of Russian policemen from Chechnya were charged with his murder, but the court – improbably – named the driver of a Chechen military officer as the one who ordered the killing.

After Mr. Nemtsov's killing, Mr. Navalny found himself in the role of the sole and most important leader of the

Russian opposition. Even the Kremlin acknowledged his special status. In the most grotesque sign of this acknowledgment, Mr. Putin and his people never refer to Mr. Navalny by his name, preferring the faceless "that person." They don't like "that person": He has been tried and convicted in a number of politically motivated criminal cases. But he has never received a real prison sentence or faced other unpleasant punishments that would exclude him from participating in politics.

Today, breathless updates on Mr. Navalny's health dominate the headlines in Russia and my social media feeds. If he dies, Mr. Putin will lose his leading opponent and the system will lose its balance. But peace and stability are no longer the values that the Kremlin holds above all else. In January, Mr. Putin introduced constitutional amendments that essentially change the structure of the state and allow him to be president for life. The Russian authorities often warn of the dangers of oppositionist extremism, but Russia's chief extremist is Mr. Putin himself, with his willingness and ability to radically change the rules of the game.

We may not know what happened to Mr. Navalny, but we do know that immediately following his hospitalization, pro-Kremlin bloggers and media outlets began claiming that his sickness may have been caused by drinking bad home-brewed liquor. This is a lie: His doctors have refuted the presence of alcohol in his system and, as someone who has been friends with Mr. Navalny for many years, I can personally attest that he has never been much of a drinker.

The eagerness with which the pro-Kremlin press is denying it being an attack suggests the authorities are interested in concealing the true perpetrators. This can be read as a public confession that Mr. Navalny was indeed poisoned by people working for the government.

As in the case of Sergei Skripal, a Russian intelligence officer who defected to Britain and was poisoned with a nerve agent in 2018, the authorities will now surely cover their tracks so noisily and clumsily that they will leave no doubt of their involvement. There is really no version of the story that doesn't involve the Kremlin. After all, the Putin era of Russian politics has been governed by the laws of a secret service operation.

Mr. Navalny has truly held an important place in the political system for many years with his unique monopoly over the segment of the opposition that refuses to compromise with the Kremlin. But the new reality of Mr. Putin's lifelong rule demands new conditions. A critic of the regime must now acknowledge that he is not risking a seat in Parliament or even his freedom -- but his very life.

The problem is that the system in which you're either for Mr. Putin or you die seems much more unstable than what came before it. Political terror precludes the possibility of political stability. The person least comfortable in a Navalny-free Russia is bound to be Mr. Putin himself.

Oleg Kashin (@kshn) is the author of "Fardwor, Russia! A Fantastical Tale of Life Under Putin." This essay was translated from the Russian by Bela Shayevich.

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Photograph

(PHOTOGRAPH BY DMITRY SEREBRYAKOV/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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Navalny Hospitalized in Russia in Suspected Poisoning

Higgins, Andrew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]20 Aug 2020.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT



[Enlarge this image.](#)

MOSCOW — Groaning in agony from a suspected poisoning before losing consciousness, Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was rushed to a Siberian hospital Thursday after the plane he was flying on made an

emergency landing because of his sudden illness.

Doctors at the No. 1 Clinical Hospital in Omsk, the Siberian city where the plane landed, initially said that Navalny, a fierce critic of President Vladimir Putin, was on a ventilator in "serious condition" but later reported that his condition, though still grave, had stabilized.

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told journalists that the Kremlin wished Navalny a swift recovery, "as we would for any citizen of Russia," and would, if asked, provide help to get the opposition leader transferred to a hospital abroad.

Navalny is the latest in a long line of Kremlin opponents to be suddenly afflicted by bizarre and sometimes fatal medical emergencies.

Navalny's spokeswoman, Kira Yarmysh, who was traveling with the anti-corruption campaigner on a flight destined for Moscow from Tomsk, said on Twitter, "We assume that Alexei was poisoned with something mixed with his tea."

Pavel Lebedev, a passenger who posted a picture of Navalny drinking tea at the Omsk airport before departure, said on Instagram that the opposition activist "went to the toilet at the beginning of the flight and didn't return. He started feeling very bad. They could barely revive him and he's still crying out in pain."

Videos posted by Russian news outlets showed an apparently unconscious Navalny being wheeled on a gurney to an ambulance waiting on the tarmac at the Omsk airport.

The state-owned news agency Tass quoted an unidentified law enforcement source as saying that authorities were not yet considering the possibility of a deliberate poisoning. It said that Navalny could have "taken something himself" before boarding the plane.

Yarmysh, Navalny's spokeswoman, responded on Twitter by asking, "If law enforcement agencies are not looking into intentional poisoning, why are there so many cops in the hospital?"

Anatoly Kalinichenko, a doctor at the Omsk hospital who was interviewed by state television, said poisoning was being considered as a possible cause of Navalny's sudden illness.

Yaroslav Ashikhmin, a cardiologist who has served as Navalny's personal doctor, told Meduza, a Russian news outlet, that he was trying to get the opposition leader flown from Omsk to a hospital in either Hanover, Germany, or Strasbourg, France, with more experienced toxicology specialists.

Toxicology, he said, is a very specialized field and there are very few institutions that can "handle a patient who has probably been poisoned by some kind of toxin."

He said he had not seen Navalny since the latest illness so he could not say whether poison was the cause, but, he added, "it looks like it."

Navalny was traveling in Siberia on one of his regular trips to far-flung regions in an effort to expand Russia's weak and often Moscow-centric opposition movement beyond the capital.

Before boarding his flight in Tomsk on Thursday, Navalny met with opposition candidates in a coming election for the local council. He arrived in Tomsk from Novosibirsk, Siberia's largest city, where he had met with his supporters and discussed plans to field independent candidates in a city council election next month.

A Siberian news outlet, Taiga, reported that Navalny had also filmed an investigative report for his Anti-Corruption Foundation on local officials affiliated with United Russia, a Kremlin-backed political party that dominates most regional parliaments in Russia as well as the national parliament.

Last year, Navalny was hospitalized with a "severe allergic reaction" in jail, which his doctor at the time suggested could have been the result of a poisoning, after he was detained for leading an unauthorized election protest.

He had been arrested and sentenced to 30 days in jail for calling a rally to protest a decision by election authorities to bar several opposition candidates from running for Moscow's City Council.

Navalny was doused with a bright green liquid in the Siberian city of Barnaul in 2017 by an unknown assailant who had pretended to shake his hand.

Navalny later said that a doctor had told him he lost 80% of the sight in one eye after suffering a chemical burn from the green liquid.

While there was no independent confirmation that Navalny had been poisoned before falling ill Thursday, the Russian security services have been suspected of targeting a number of dissidents and others before. Among those are Sergei Skripal, a former Russian double agent who was poisoned in England in 2018; Boris Nemtsov, a former deputy prime minister who in 2015 was gunned down in the shadow of the Kremlin; and Alexander Litvinenko, a KGB officer turned Kremlin critic who was poisoned in London in 2006.

The Kremlin and its supporters have for years regarded Navalny as an enemy because of the investigations into graft by officials —including, most vividly, the former prime minister, Dmitry Medvedev —carried out by his Anti-Corruption Foundation. Unlike Putin, who for security reasons almost never uses the internet, Navalny has exploited social media to mobilize a large following.

Navalny, who often refers to Putin as the head of “a party of crooks and thieves,” largely appeals to younger Russians, particularly in larger cities like Moscow, but he has built up a network of offices across the country. Putin never mentions Navalny’s name in public, and state-controlled news outlets generally ignore him and his work.

But while feigning indifference, the Kremlin has repeatedly tried to silence Navalny, jailing him, accusing him of money laundering, and searching the homes and offices of his supporters.

The Russian Justice Ministry last October classified the Anti-Corruption Foundation as a “foreign agent,” a label frequently used by the Kremlin to stigmatize its critics as traitors.

Navalny, like many other Kremlin critics, has reveled in the recent unrest in neighboring Belarus and also in the Russian Far East, seeing a sudden burst of protests in those places as a sign that Moscow, too, will emerge from its long, enforced political slumber under Putin, now in power for more than two decades.

Putin recently engineered constitutional changes that remove term limits requiring him to step down in 2024 and allow him to rule potentially until 2036. Navalny denounced the changes, endorsed in a tightly controlled nationwide vote, as a constitutional coup.

Navalny announced plans to run against Putin in the 2018 presidential election, but authorities blocked his candidacy by entangling him in a criminal case involving corruption charges widely seen as trumped up for political reasons.

Putin would almost certainly have won any election against Navalny but wanted to avoid a straight contest that would have forced him to acknowledge the existence of a rival with different ideas.

Each assault on Navalny’s person and reputation, however, has only reaffirmed his position as the country’s best-known opposition leader and stirred sympathy for him even among those who do not trust or like him.



[Enlarge this image.](#)

DETAILS

Subject:	Local elections; Poisoning; Councils; Law enforcement; Term limitations; Corruption; Hospitals; Toxicology; Consciousness; Poisons; Prime ministers; Critics
Location:	Russia New York Siberia
People:	Navalny, Alexei
Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120
Identifier / keyword:	World Science And Technology Computers And The Internet Murders And Attempted Murders Terrorism Frauds And Swindling Hazardous And Toxic Substances Transportation Medicine And Health Criminal Justice Crime And Criminals Local Government Strasbourg (France) Siberia Russia Novosibirsk (Russia) London (England) Hanover (Germany) Germany France England Belarus Twitter United Russia Meduza (Medusa Project Sia) Kgb Instagram Inc Anti Corruption Foundation Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir V Nemtsov, Boris Y Navalny, Aleksei A Medvedev, Dmitri A Litvinenko, Alexander V Higgins, Andrew Allergies City Councils Quarantines Computer Security Assaults Social Media Bribery And Kickbacks Hospitals Airlines And Airplanes Assassinations And Attempted Assassinations Term Limits (Political Office) Poisoning And Poisons Corruption (Institutional) Politics And Government
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Document 20 of 176

Pompeo Says He Warned Russia About Bounties for Killing Western Troops

Savage, Charlie . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]14 Aug 2020: A.14.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The secretary of state's acknowledgment came as a new detail surfaced about the intelligence that led to the C.I.A. assessment.

WASHINGTON -- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he warned Russia against offering bounties for killing American and coalition troops in Afghanistan, even as President Trump has denigrated as a "hoax" a C.I.A. assessment that Russia carried out such a covert operation.

Mr. Pompeo's remarks in an interview on Wednesday came as new details emerged about one aspect of evidence, involving Russian passport numbers, that led C.I.A. analysts to link the suspected bounty operation to the elite Unit 29155 of Russia's military intelligence agency, known as the G.R.U.

The secretary of state also disclosed that the Pentagon similarly cautioned Russian military leaders about the suspected bounties as he acknowledged that he had delivered his own warning to Russia's foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov.

"If the Russians are offering money to kill Americans or, for that matter, other Westerners as well, there will be an enormous price to pay. That's what I shared with Foreign Minister Lavrov," Mr. Pompeo told Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty during a trip to the Czech Republic, according to a State Department transcript. "I know our military has talked to their senior leaders, as well. We won't brook that. We won't tolerate that."

By contrast, Mr. Trump said late last month that he had not brought up the suspected operation when he spoke with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, dismissing it as "an issue that many people said was fake news." Russian officials have denied the accusations.

Mr. Pompeo provided few details about the warnings. He did not, for example, say whether it was a vague and abstract warning or threatened specific consequences. He also did not specify who had delivered the Pentagon's message and to whom, or when.

However, a rare channel of direct, high-level communication between the two militaries involves Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who spoke with his Russian counterpart, Gen. Valery Gerasimov, six weeks ago, shortly after The New York Times first reported on the C.I.A. assessment.

Asked whether General Milley raised bounties with General Gerasimov, Pentagon officials have responded by insisting that such conversations remain private so that the two men can maintain close contacts for use in times of strife.

Mr. Pompeo also did not say when he had warned Mr. Lavrov, but his remarks confirmed a New York Times report last week that he delivered such a message in a July 13 call, according to people briefed on the matter. They said Mr. Pompeo had couched the warning as a hypothetical, even as he implied that he was referring to the reports about the C.I.A.'s assessment on Russian bounties in Afghanistan.

The Times first reported in June that the C.I.A. had concluded that the Russian operatives had covertly offered and paid bounties to a Taliban-linked criminal network to incentivize more frequent attacks on American and other coalition troops in Afghanistan amid peace talks to end the long-running war there. But even though the National Security Council assembled a range of potential responses, like a diplomatic warning or sanctions, months had passed and the White House authorized none of them.

The revelations have prompted a bipartisan outcry. "A 'stern message' from the secretary of state isn't enough – although it does discredit Trump's claim that these intelligence reports are a 'hoax,'" said Senator Tammy Duckworth, Democrat of Illinois.

The White House has defended its months of inaction by falsely suggesting that no one deemed the C.I.A. assessment worthy of sharing with Mr. Trump – in fact, it was in his written briefing in February, although officials have told Congress that his aides did not orally bring his attention to it – and by portraying the information as uncertain.

Amid the turbulence, details about its basis have trickled out. The constellation of evidence included the accounts of interrogated Afghan detainees, a large seizure of cash found in a raid, data showing transfers of funds from a bank account controlled by the G.R.U. to the Taliban, and travel records showing intermediaries going between Russia and Afghanistan.

There was an additional clue, two officials confirmed this week: At least one passport number used by someone suspected of involvement in the bounty operation was close to a narrow range of passport numbers that Western intelligence officials say are known to have been assigned to operatives from the G.R.U.'s Unit 29155, suggesting it came from the same batch.

The Times asked officials about passport numbers after an anonymously run blog called Nightingale, which focuses on Russian covert operations, reported on Tuesday that a businessman named Rahmatullah Azizi used a Russian passport number near that range. American and Afghan officials have identified Mr. Azizi as a key middleman believed to have handed out Russian money to Taliban-linked fighters for targeting coalition troops in Afghanistan. He is believed to be in Russia.

The officials confirmed that batch passport numbers were generally part of the intelligence that contributed to the C.I.A.'s assessment without discussing the blog's specific claims. But the disclosure of the additional type of evidence further undercut the White House's portrayal of the intelligence as too insubstantial to merit presidential attention.

Unit 29155 has primarily been known for its links to several partly botched covert operations that came to light in Europe, including the 2018 nerve agent poisoning in Salisbury, England, of Sergei Skripal, a former G.R.U. officer who had worked for British intelligence and then defected, and his daughter; an attempted coup in Montenegro in 2016; and the poisoning of an arms manufacturer in Bulgaria a year earlier.

The United States for years has accused Russia of sending arms and other support to the Taliban. Offering bounties to encourage more killings of American and coalition troops would be a significant escalation.

Mr. Pompeo was evasive when asked by Radio Free Europe whether his decision to deliver the warning to Mr. Lavrov meant that he believed the assessment was credible, shifting the topic to reports about Russian and Iranian assistance to arm the Taliban.

"We've made clear we know the history; we know that the Russians have armed the Taliban in the past, right," he said. "We know that the Iranians continue to arm them today. So we know these facts. We've made clear to each of

them our expectations, and we will do everything we need to do to protect and defend every American soldier and, for that matter, every soldier from the Czech Republic or any other country that's part of the" mission in Afghanistan.

Eric Schmitt, Helene Cooper and Michael Schwirtz contributed reporting.

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DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Covert operations
Location:	Czech Republic Russia New York Afghanistan Europe
People:	Pompeo, Mike
Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120; Name: Department of Defense; NAICS: 928110; Name: Taliban; NAICS: 813940
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/us/politics/russian-bounties-pompeo.html
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Document 21 of 176

Pompeo Says He and Military Warned Russia on Bounties for Killing U.S. Troops

Savage, Charlie . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]13 Aug 2020.

[🔗 ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT



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DETAILS

Subject:	Hoaxes; Poisoning; Covert operations
Location:	Czech Republic Russia United States--US New York Afghanistan Europe
People:	Trump, Donald J Pompeo, Mike
Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120; Name: Taliban; NAICS: 813940; Name: Department of Defense; NAICS: 928110; Name: Central Intelligence Agency--CIA; NAICS: 928110, 928120
Identifier / keyword:	World Criminal Justice Crime And Criminals Murders And Attempted Murders Science And Technology Computers And The Internet International Relations Hazardous And Toxic Substances Politics And Government Identification Devices War And Revolution United States Salisbury (England) Russia Montenegro Iran Europe England Czech Republic Bulgaria Afghanistan Taliban State Department Senate Radio Liberty Radio Free Europe New York Times National Security Council Joint Chiefs Of Staff House Of Representatives Defense Department Trump, Donald J Skripal, Sergei V Savage, Charlie Putin, Vladimir V Pompeo, Mike Milley, Mark A Lavrov, Sergey V Gerasimov, Valery V Azizi, Rahmatullah Blogs And Blogging (Internet) Radio Poisoning And Poisons Assassinations And Attempted Assassinations Defectors (Political) Passports Embargoes And Sanctions Espionage And Intelligence Services United States Politics And Government Terrorism Afghanistan War (2001) Defense And Military Forces

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Database:	Global Newsstream,U.S. Newsstream,ProQuest Central

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Document 22 of 176

Britain Accused Of Discounting Russian Attacks

Landler, Mark; Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]22 July 2020: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Russian efforts to interfere in the British political system were widely ignored by successive governments, according to a long-awaited report by Parliament.

LONDON -- Russia has mounted a prolonged, sophisticated campaign to undermine Britain's democracy and corrupt its politics, while successive British governments have looked the other way, according to a long-delayed report released on Tuesday by a British parliamentary committee.

From meddling in elections and spreading disinformation to funneling dirty money and employing members of the House of Lords, the Russians have tried to co-opt politicians and corrode institutions, often with little resistance from law enforcement or intelligence agencies that ignored years of warning signs.

The report, in many ways harder on British officials than the Russians, did not answer the question of whether Russia swayed one of the most consequential votes in modern British history: the 2016 referendum on leaving the European Union. But it was unforgiving about who is protecting British democracy.

"No one is," the report's authors said.

"The outrage isn't if there is interference," said Kevan Jones, a Labour Party member of Parliament who served on the intelligence committee that released the report. "The outrage is no one wanted to know if there was interference."

The release of the report came more than seven months after Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party racked up an 80-seat majority in Parliament and almost 18 months after the end of the inquiry by the Intelligence and Security Committee, a parliamentary body that oversees the country's spy agencies.

Still, it was eagerly awaited in Britain, where anxieties about Russia's behavior range from influence-peddling with oligarchs in London to the poisoning of a former Russian intelligence agent and his daughter in Salisbury, England. The report also landed in the heat of an American presidential election, shadowed by questions about ties between President Trump and Russia, as well as fears of renewed foreign tampering, not just by Russia, but also by China and Iran.

The committee's account characterized Russia as a reckless country bent on recapturing its status as a "great power," primarily by destabilizing those in the West. "The security threat posed by Russia is difficult for the West to manage as, in our view and that of many others, it appears fundamentally nihilistic," the authors said.

Experts said the report showed parallels between Britain and the United States in the failure to pick up warning signs, but also important differences. The F.B.I. and other American agencies, they said, had investigated election interference more aggressively than their British counterparts, while the British were ahead of the United States in scrutinizing how Russian money had corrupted politics.

"This is one of the pieces that is not really well understood in the U.S.," said Laura Rosenberger, director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy, which tracks Russian disinformation efforts in the United States. "Whether there is dirty Russian money that has flowed into our political system."

The report described how British politicians had welcomed oligarchs to London, allowing them to launder their illicit money through what it called the London "laundromat." A growth industry of "enablers" -- lawyers, accountants, real estate agents, and public relations consultants -- sprang up to serve their needs.

These people, the report said, "played a role, wittingly or unwittingly, in the extension of Russian influence which is often linked to promoting the nefarious interests of the Russian state."

Several members of the House of Lords, the report said, had business interests linked to Russia or worked for companies with Russian ties. It urged an investigation of them, though it did not name any names. That information, as well as the names of politicians who received donations, was redacted from the public report, along with other sensitive intelligence.

"The most disturbing thing is the recognition of what the Russian government has gotten away, under our eyes," said William F. Browder, an American-born British financier who has worked extensively in Russia and provided evidence to the committee. "The government, and particularly law enforcement, has been toothless."

The report painted a picture of years of Russian interference through disinformation spread by traditional media

outlets, like the cable-TV channel RT, and by the use of internet bots and trolls. This activity dated back to the Scottish independence referendum in 2014, but it was never confronted by the country's political establishment or by an intelligence community with other priorities.

Focused more on clandestine operations, the spy agencies were anxious to keep their distance from political campaigns, regarding them as a "hot potato," the report said. Nor was it clear who in the government was in charge of countering the Russian threat to destabilize Britain's political process. "It has been surprisingly difficult to establish who has responsibility for what," the report said.

Despite pressing questions, the report said the government had shown little interest in investigating whether the Brexit referendum was targeted by Russia. The government responded that it had "seen no evidence of successful interference in the E.U. referendum" and dismissed the need for further investigation.

But the committee suggested that the reason no evidence had been uncovered was because nobody had looked for it.

"In response to our request for written evidence at the outset of the inquiry, MI5 initially provided just six lines of text," the committee said. Had the intelligence agencies conducted a threat assessment before the vote, it added, it was "inconceivable" that they would not have concluded there was a Russian threat.

Among the report's most politically salient conclusions might be about a Russian influence campaign during the Scottish independence referendum. Nationalist sentiment is surging again in Scotland, partly because many voters consider the Scottish authorities to have handled the coronavirus pandemic better than the government in England. Based on its previous behavior, some experts said, Russia would try again to encourage the fracturing of the United Kingdom.

"That obviously has implications for next year's Scottish elections, and the polling on referendums," said Bronwen Maddox, director of the Institute for Government, a research institute in London. "All this is very, very relevant." Concerns about Russian meddling and aggression stretch back more than a decade to the death in 2006 of Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former K.G.B. officer and critic of the Kremlin, who was killed in London using a radioactive poison, polonium-210, believed to have been administered in a cup of tea. An inquiry concluded that his killing "was probably approved" by President Vladimir V. Putin.

In 2018, another former Russian spy, Sergei Skripal, and his 33-year-old daughter, Yulia, were found seriously ill on a bench in Salisbury, after a poisoning attack that left them hospitalized for weeks. Britain accused two Russians of using a rare nerve agent to try to kill Mr. Skripal, and expelled 23 Russian diplomats in retaliation.

Although the report was approved by Downing Street in 2019, its release was held up before the election that gave Mr. Johnson his decisive parliamentary majority. Critics said he had been compromised by donations to his party from wealthy Russians living in Britain and they argued that the report was delayed unnecessarily.

After the election, there was a second delay while Downing Street agreed on the membership of a new Intelligence and Security Committee.

While the publicly available part of the report unearthed little new material, one expert said that it underscored the need to widen the focus and improve the coordination of Britain's intelligence apparatus.

"We did know most of this," said Martin Innes, director of the Crime and Security Research Institute at Cardiff University, "but people were not joining the dots and seeing that quite a serious situation was developing."

"What Russia wants is to be able to play great power politics," Professor Innes said. "And one of the ways of doing that is by destabilizing the U.K. and some of its close allies to create that space to maneuver."

Photograph

Above, an anti-Brexit protest. Left, an inquiry into the 2018 poisoning of Sergei Skripal. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; CHRIS J RATCLIFFE/GETTY IMAGES) (A11)

DETAILS

Subject:	Evidence; Poisoning; Members of Parliament; Law enforcement; Politics; Intelligence gathering; Oligarchy; Committees; Criminal investigations; Democracy; Espionage; Intelligence services; Corruption in government; EU membership; Influence; National security; International relations-UK; False information; Political systems
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK
People:	Johnson, Boris Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Parliament-UK; NAICS: 921120; Name: House of Lords-UK; NAICS: 921120; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/21/world/europe/uk-russia-report-brexit-interference.html
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Document 23 of 176

'No One' Protected British Democracy From Russia, U.K. Report Concludes [With graphic(s)]

Castle, Stephen; Landler, Mark . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]21 July 2020.

[!\[\]\(ec6fb39d5963a2fd74a8d8b2b1f54a3f_img.jpg\) ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT



Enlarge this image.

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"The security threat posed by Russia is difficult for the West to manage as, in our view and that of many others, it appears fundamentally nihilistic," the authors said.

Experts said the report showed parallels between Britain and the United States in the failure to pick up warning signs, but also important differences. The FBI and other U.S. agencies, they said, had investigated election interference more aggressively than their British counterparts, while the British were ahead of the United States in scrutinizing how Russian money had corrupted politics.

"This is one of the pieces that is not really well understood in the U.S.," said Laura Rosenberger, director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy, which tracks Russian disinformation efforts in the United States. "Whether there is dirty Russian money that has flowed into our political system."

The report described how British politicians had welcomed oligarchs to London, allowing them to launder their illicit money through what it called the London "laundromat." A growth industry of "enablers"—lawyers, accountants, real estate agents, and public relations consultants—sprang up to serve their needs.

These people, the report said, "played a role, wittingly or unwittingly, in the extension of Russian influence which is often linked to promoting the nefarious interests of the Russian state."

Several members of the House of Lords, the report said, had business interests linked to Russia or worked for companies with Russian ties. It urged an investigation of them, though it did not name any names. That information, as well as the names of politicians who received donations, was redacted from the public report, along with other sensitive intelligence.

"The most disturbing thing is the recognition of what the Russian government has gotten away, under our eyes," said William F. Browder, a U.S.-born British financier who has worked extensively in Russia and provided evidence to the committee. "The government, and particularly law enforcement, has been toothless."

The report painted a picture of years of Russian interference through disinformation spread by traditional media outlets, like the cable-TV channel RT, and by the use of internet bots and trolls. This activity dated to the Scottish independence referendum in 2014, but it was never confronted by the country's political establishment or by an intelligence community with other priorities.

Focused more on clandestine operations, the spy agencies were anxious to keep their distance from political

campaigns, regarding them as a “hot potato,” the report said. Nor was it clear who in the government was in charge of countering the Russian threat to destabilize Britain’s political process.

“It has been surprisingly difficult to establish who has responsibility for what,” the report said.

Despite pressing questions, the report said the government had shown little interest in investigating whether the Brexit referendum was targeted by Russia. The government responded that it had “seen no evidence of successful interference in the EU referendum” and dismissed the need for further investigation.

But the committee suggested that the reason no evidence had been uncovered was because nobody had looked for it.

“In response to our request for written evidence at the outset of the inquiry, MI5 initially provided just six lines of text,” the committee said. Had the intelligence agencies conducted a threat assessment before the vote, it added, it was “inconceivable” that they would not have concluded there was a Russian threat.

Among the report’s most politically salient conclusions might be about a Russian influence campaign during the Scottish independence referendum. Nationalist sentiment is surging again in Scotland, partly because many voters consider the Scottish authorities to have handled the coronavirus pandemic better than the government in England. Based on its previous behavior, some experts said, Russia would try again to encourage the fracturing of the United Kingdom.

“That obviously has implications for next year’s Scottish elections, and the polling on referendums,” said Bronwen Maddox, director of the Institute for Government, a research institute in London. “All this is very, very relevant.”

Concerns about Russian meddling and aggression stretch back more than a decade to the death in 2006 of Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former KGB officer and critic of the Kremlin, who was killed in London using a radioactive poison, polonium-210, believed to have been administered in a cup of tea. An inquiry concluded that his killing “was probably approved” by President Vladimir Putin.

In 2018, another former Russian spy, Sergei Skripal, and his 33-year-old daughter, Yulia, were found seriously ill on a bench in Salisbury, after a poisoning attack that left them hospitalized for weeks. Britain accused two Russians of using a rare nerve agent to try to kill Skripal and expelled 23 Russian diplomats in retaliation.

Although the report was approved by Downing Street in 2019, its release was held up before the election that gave Johnson his decisive parliamentary majority. Critics said he had been compromised by donations to his party from wealthy Russians living in Britain and they argued that the report was delayed unnecessarily.

After the election, there was a second delay while Downing Street agreed on the membership of a new Intelligence and Security Committee.

While the publicly available part of the report unearthed little new material, one expert said that it underscored the need to widen the focus and improve the coordination of Britain’s intelligence apparatus.

“We did know most of this,” said Martin Innes, director of the Crime and Security Research Institute at Cardiff University, “but people were not joining the dots and seeing that quite a serious situation was developing.”

“What Russia wants is to be able to play great power politics,” Innes said. “And one of the ways of doing that is by destabilizing the U.K. and some of its close allies to create that space to maneuver.”



Enlarge this image.



Enlarge this image.

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisons; Parliaments
Location:	Russia United States--US United Kingdom--UK
Company / organization:	Name: Parliament-UK; NAICS: 921120
Identifier / keyword:	World Epidemics Presidential Elections (Us) Medicine And Health Science And Technology Computers And The Internet Culture (Arts) London (England) Iran China Security Service (Mi5) Rt (Tv Network) Labour Party (Great Britain) Cardiff University Trump, Donald J Browder, William F Ethics And Official Misconduct Quarantines Books And Literature Coronavirus (2019 Ncov) Artificial Intelligence Presidential Election Of 2020 Diplomatic Service, Embassies And Consulates Polls And Public Opinion Real Estate Brokers Rumors And Misinformation United States Politics And Government United States International Relations Secession And Independence Movements Russian Interference In 2016 Us Elections And Ties To Trump Associates Murders And Attempted Murders Hazardous And Toxic Substances Criminal Justice Crime And Criminals International Relations United States Scotland Salisbury (England) Russia Great Britain England Kgb House Of Lords (Great Britain) European Union Conservative Party (Great Britain) Skripal, Yulia S Skripal, Sergei V Raab, Dominic (1974) Putin, Vladimir V Litvinenko, Alexander V Landler, Mark Johnson, Boris Castle, Stephen Robberies And Thefts Great Britain Withdrawal From Eu (Brexit) Espionage And Intelligence Services Referendums Assassinations And Attempted Assassinations Campaign Finance Poisoning And Poisons Legislatures And Parliaments Elections
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For U.K. Science Advisers, Pressure, Anxieties and 'Pastoral Support'

Landler, Mark; Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]28 June 2020: A.12.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

As public scrutiny of a secretive panel of scientists heightened, its members nearly buckled under the strain. LONDON -- When 50 British scientists and government officials got on a Zoom call on May 7, emotions were running high, and not just because Britain had overtaken Italy for having the highest death toll from the coronavirus in Europe.

Two days earlier, a prominent epidemiologist on the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, Neil Ferguson, abruptly resigned after being confronted by a newspaper with evidence that he had breached Britain's lockdown rules by inviting a woman to visit him in his London apartment.

Dr. Ferguson was the undisputed star of the group, known by its acronym, SAGE. The models generated by his team at Imperial College London had guided the government's response to the crisis from the earliest days. Yet, he was being branded "Professor Lockdown," fodder for sneering tabloid headlines.

As the scientists vented their anxieties about their colleague's defenestration -- and the unrelenting pressure and scrutiny that comes with advising the government during a once-in-a-century pandemic -- they were urged to seek out "pastoral support" from a new member, Ian L. Boyd, according to minutes of the deliberations.

A 63-year-old Scottish zoologist who advised the government during an earlier outbreak of avian flu, Dr. Boyd is a veteran of the tense interplay between scientists and politicians. He was brought into SAGE by its chairman, Patrick Vallance, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's chief scientific adviser, to observe the group's debates and to be a sympathetic ear for the rattled scientists.

"There was an internal dynamic going on that needed to be treated," Dr. Boyd said, declining to get into details. "If it becomes pathological, it's for me to call it out. But I hope everybody feels they're listened to."

That SAGE would need the equivalent of an in-house therapist is less surprising than it might seem. No other group has attracted more attention or aroused more suspicion during Britain's pandemic than this elite panel of experts. At first, it operated under a veil of secrecy, refusing to disclose its members and offering only spare details of its deliberations. Then, under pressure from lawmakers, the government partly lifted the veil, naming all but a handful of the participants, who wished to remain anonymous, and posting redacted minutes of its meetings.

The group's academic firepower is impressive: It includes experts in fields from virology to behavioral science, from labs at Cambridge, Oxford, Imperial College and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. But transparency brought its own set of challenges. The role the scientists played in Britain's dilatory response to the virus has come under sharper scrutiny, especially because Mr. Johnson and his ministers repeatedly claim to be "guided by the science" in imposing or relaxing lockdowns. Some scientists worry that Mr. Johnson is setting them up to take the blame for the death toll, which now exceeds 43,000.

As the group's work has come increasingly into the public eye, the members' advice is now second-guessed on social media. Their academic quarrels are hinted at in the minutes of their meetings. And as Dr. Ferguson's indiscretions showed, not even their private lives are off limits.

"It was utterly horrible to see what happened to him," said Julia Gog, a professor of mathematical biology at the University of Cambridge. "It was also extremely unsettling to other modelers, especially to junior scientists. It was a huge shock to see one of our colleagues treated in this way, and it certainly had an effect on the researchers."

Dr. Gog described a pressure-cooker atmosphere, in which the scientists are handed complex assignments on very tight deadlines and have to make recommendations in a rapidly changing environment – all while holding down their day jobs and dealing with the stresses of the lockdown in their personal lives.

"I am desperately worried about the well-being of lots of the scientists involved," Dr. Gog said. "It has been so immersive. You can't get away. Even when you are trying to not be working, everything on the news is this, everything anyone wants to talk about, and your life is also controlled by this."

Academics relish debating with their colleagues. But debating while on a government panel in the heat of a public-health emergency is another matter. Members of SAGE said they had fierce arguments over whether to recommend that the government urge people to wear face masks. A glimpse of that back-and-forth is evident in the minutes.

At its April 21 meeting, the panel concluded, "on balance, there is enough evidence to support community use of cloth face masks, for short periods in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not possible." But a week later, it amended its minutes to add a line noting that the "evidence is weak, and it would be unreasonable to claim a large benefit from wearing a mask."

It is not clear what triggered the reversal, but it coincided with an issue where Britain has been an outlier among European countries. Although the government recently required people to wear face coverings on buses and subways, Mr. Johnson and his ministers have never actively encouraged their use, expressing doubts about their efficacy. As a result, relatively few Britons wear them.

One of Dr. Boyd's mandates, he said, was to review SAGE's minutes to make sure they accurately reflected the scientific advice. He declined to elaborate further on his role and Dr. Vallance turned down a request for an interview.

But Dr. Boyd clearly arrived at a charged moment. At its May 7 meeting, the panel said it needed "a better mechanism for filtering commissions and requests" from the government. Weeding out extraneous or convoluted requests would "help the resilience of participants of SAGE who will continue to work under intense pressure in the Covid-19 response for many more months." It added that the "need for pastoral support to be available to participants was noted."

In addition to their mental health, the government offered the scientists counseling on how to deal with abuse on social media, according to an official, who noted that a few even faced shouted epithets on the street early in the crisis, when the government was still debating how to respond to the virus.

Dr. Ferguson, who did not respond to requests for comment, had his detractors in the group. Some bridled at his

appetite for media coverage, which they said interfered with its work. Rivals noted that his early models underestimated how fast the virus spread. But others argued that changes in projections -- even radical ones -- were inevitable, given how little was known about this virus.

The constant uncertainty has posed a challenge to Dr. Vallance and Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer, who serves as co-chairman of the panel. They must navigate between politicians like Mr. Johnson, who often turn to them for validation of their policies, and the scientists, who are often divided about the proper response.

"The evidence is not clear even now," said David Spiegelhalter, a statistics professor at the University of Cambridge and a member. "That means that there are hugely different interpretations of almost the same information. And there are presumably some strong personalities that can be dominant."

Other scientists said some degree of dysfunction was understandable, given the panel's history. Its last major assignment was to advise the government in the aftermath of the poisoning of a Russian former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, in Salisbury, England. That work was conducted at a high level of secrecy, involved narrow questions of security and intelligence and got very little public exposure.

"SAGE went from being this internal advisory group to something that is much bigger in the public domain," Dr. Boyd said.

Some scientists worry that their advice is cherry-picked and politicized. Susan Michie, a professor of health psychology at University College London, noted that a SAGE committee on which she serves produced a detailed study of the risks of cutting the social distancing rule from two meters (six feet) to one meter.

It concluded that shortening to one meter raised the risk of transmission by twice to 10 times, though it said the dangers could be mitigated with protective measures like ventilation, plastic dividers and face coverings. Mr. Johnson said little about the heightened risks when, after considerable pressure from the hospitality industries, he announced the loosened rules earlier this week.

"The overwhelming majority of our advice is ignored," Dr. Michie said, "but the pieces are picked up and used for political purposes."

As the government moves to reopen Britain's economy, it may rely less on the advice of its scientific advisers and more on a new Joint Biosecurity Center, which it set up last month to detect outbreaks of the virus and advise the government on how to respond to them -- for example, by closing schools or offices. The center is led by Clare Gardiner, a cybersecurity expert who worked at Government Communications Headquarters, or GCHQ, Britain's secretive electronic surveillance agency.

Mr. Johnson cited the center's Covid-19 alert system, which measures the prevalence of the virus, as one reason to ease the lockdown. The threat level was recently lowered from four, signifying high or exponentially increasing transmission, to three, signifying general circulation in the population.

For some scientists, the new center is a necessary recognition that the coronavirus will be around for a year or more, and the government cannot rely on SAGE's ad hoc, overworked members to analyze every outbreak. Others, though, worry that politicians could use it to circumvent unwelcome advice.

"Now that the government doesn't seem to like SAGE's advice so much, they can set up their own review," Dr. Michie said. "They can handpick their own scientists."

Photograph

Shoppers in London this month. As the government moves to reopen the economy, it may rely less on the advice of its health experts. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOLGA AKMEN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Social networks; Social distancing; Scientists; Coronaviruses; Politics; Pandemics; COVID-19
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Location:	United Kingdom--UK
Company / organization:	Name: Cambridge University; NAICS: 611310
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/world/europe/sage-britain-coronavirus-ferguson.html
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Database:	Global Newsstream,U.S. Newsstream,ProQuest Central

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Russia Offered Afghans Bounty To Kill U.S. Troops, Officials Say

Savage, Charlie; Schmitt, Eric; Schwirtz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]27 June 2020: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The Trump administration has been deliberating for months about what to do about a stunning intelligence assessment.

WASHINGTON -- American intelligence officials have concluded that a Russian military intelligence unit secretly offered bounties to Taliban-linked militants for killing coalition forces in Afghanistan -- including targeting American troops -- amid the peace talks to end the long-running war there, according to officials briefed on the matter.

The United States concluded months ago that the Russian unit, which has been linked to assassination attempts and other covert operations in Europe intended to destabilize the West or take revenge on turncoats, had covertly offered rewards for successful attacks last year.

Islamist militants, or armed criminal elements closely associated with them, are believed to have collected some bounty money, the officials said. Twenty Americans were killed in combat in Afghanistan in 2019, but it was not clear which killings were under suspicion.

The intelligence finding was briefed to President Trump, and the White House's National Security Council discussed the problem at an interagency meeting in late March, the officials said. Officials developed a menu of potential options -- starting with making a diplomatic complaint to Moscow and a demand that it stop, along with an escalating series of sanctions and other possible responses, but the White House has yet to authorize any step, the officials said.

An operation to incentivize the killing of American and other NATO troops would be a significant and provocative escalation of what American and Afghan officials have said is Russian support for the Taliban, and it would be the first time the Russian spy unit was known to have orchestrated attacks on Western troops.

Any involvement with the Taliban that resulted in the deaths of American troops would also be a huge escalation of Russia's so-called hybrid war against the United States, a strategy of destabilizing adversaries through a combination of such tactics as cyberattacks, the spread of fake news and covert and deniable military operations. The Kremlin had not been made aware of the accusations, said Dmitry Peskov, the press secretary for President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. "If someone makes them, we'll respond," Mr. Peskov said.

Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Taliban, denied that the insurgents have "any such relations with any intelligence agency" and called the report an attempt to defame them.

"These kinds of deals with the Russian intelligence agency are baseless -- our target killings and assassinations were ongoing in years before, and we did it on our own resources," he said. "That changed after our deal with the Americans, and their lives are secure and we don't attack them."

Spokespeople at the National Security Council, the Pentagon, the State Department and the C.I.A. declined to comment.

The officials familiar with the intelligence did not explain the White House delay in deciding how to respond to the intelligence about Russia.

While some of his closest advisers, like Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have counseled more hawkish policies

toward Russia, Mr. Trump has adopted an accommodating stance toward Moscow.

At a summit in 2018 in Helsinki, Finland, Mr. Trump strongly suggested that he believed Mr. Putin's denial that the Kremlin interfered in the 2016 presidential election, despite broad agreement within the American intelligence establishment that it did. Mr. Trump criticized a bill imposing sanctions on Russia when he signed it into law after Congress passed it by veto-proof majorities. And he has repeatedly made statements that undermined the NATO alliance as a bulwark against Russian aggression in Europe.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the delicate intelligence and internal deliberations. They said the intelligence had been treated as a closely held secret, but the administration expanded briefings about it this week – including sharing information about it with the British government, whose forces are among those said to have been targeted.

The intelligence assessment is said to be based at least in part on interrogations of captured Afghan militants and criminals. The officials did not describe the mechanics of the Russian operation, such as how targets were picked or how money changed hands. It is also not clear whether Russian operatives had deployed inside Afghanistan or met with their Taliban counterparts elsewhere.

The revelations came into focus inside the Trump administration at a delicate and distracted time. Although officials collected the intelligence earlier in the year, the interagency meeting at the White House took place as the coronavirus pandemic was becoming a crisis and parts of the country were shutting down.

Moreover, as Mr. Trump seeks re-election in November, he wants to strike a peace deal with the Taliban to end the Afghanistan war.

Both American and Afghan officials have previously accused Russia of providing small arms and other support to the Taliban that amounts to destabilizing activity, although Russian government officials have dismissed such claims as "idle gossip" and baseless.

"We share some interests with Russia in Afghanistan, and clearly they're acting to undermine our interests as well," Gen. John W. Nicholson Jr., the commander of American forces in Afghanistan at the time, said in a 2018 interview with the BBC.

Though coalition troops suffered a spate of combat casualties last summer and early fall, only a few have since been killed. Four Americans were killed in combat in early 2020, but the Taliban have not attacked American positions since a February agreement.

American troops have also sharply reduced their movement outside military bases because of the coronavirus, reducing their exposure to attack.

While officials were said to be confident about the intelligence that Russian operatives offered and paid bounties to Afghan militants for killing Americans, they have greater uncertainty about how high in the Russian government the covert operation was authorized and what its aim may be.

Some officials have theorized that the Russians may be seeking revenge on NATO forces for a 2018 battle in Syria in which the American military killed several hundred pro-Syrian forces, including numerous Russian mercenaries, as they advanced on an American outpost. Officials have also suggested that the Russians may have been trying to derail peace talks to keep the United States bogged down in Afghanistan. But the motivation remains murky.

The officials briefed on the matter said the government had assessed the operation to be the handiwork of Unit 29155, an arm of Russia's military intelligence agency, known widely as the G.R.U. The unit is linked to the March 2018 nerve agent poisoning in Salisbury, England, of Sergei Skripal, a former G.R.U. officer who had worked for British intelligence and then defected, and his daughter.

Western intelligence officials say the unit, which has operated for more than a decade, has been charged by the Kremlin with carrying out a campaign to destabilize the West through subversion, sabotage and assassination. In addition to the 2018 poisoning, the unit was behind an attempted coup in Montenegro in 2016 and the poisoning of an arms manufacturer in Bulgaria a year earlier.

American intelligence officials say the G.R.U. was at the center of Moscow's covert efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election. In the months before that election, American officials say, two G.R.U. cyberunits, known as

26165 and 74455, hacked into Democratic Party servers and then used WikiLeaks to publish embarrassing internal communications.

In part because those efforts were aimed at helping tilt the election in Mr. Trump's favor, his handling of issues related to Russia and Mr. Putin has come under particular scrutiny. The special counsel investigation found that the Trump campaign welcomed Russia's intervention and expected to benefit from it, but found insufficient evidence to establish that his associates had engaged in any criminal conspiracy with Moscow.

Operations involving Unit 29155 tend to be much more violent than those involving the cyberunits. Its officers are often decorated military veterans with years of service, in some cases dating to the Soviet Union's failed war in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Never before has the unit been accused of orchestrating attacks on Western soldiers, but officials briefed on its operations say it has been active in Afghanistan for many years.

Though Russia declared the Taliban a terrorist organization in 2003, relations between them have been warming in recent years. Taliban officials have traveled to Moscow for peace talks with other prominent Afghans, including the former president, Hamid Karzai. The talks have excluded representatives from the current Afghan government as well as anyone from the United States, and at times they have seemed to work at crosscurrents with American efforts to bring an end to the conflict.

The disclosure comes at a time when Mr. Trump has said he would invite Mr. Putin to an expanded meeting of the Group of 7 nations, but tensions between American and Russian militaries are running high.

In several recent episodes, in international territory and airspace from off the coast of Alaska to the Black and Mediterranean Seas, combat planes from each country have scrambled to intercept military aircraft from the other. Mujib Mashal contributed reporting from Kabul, Afghanistan.

Photograph

American troops in Afghanistan have been the target of some Taliban operations backed by Russia, intelligence officials found. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM HUYLEBROEK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); President Trump has adopted an accommodating stance toward President Vladimir V. Putin and Russia, even as some of his closest advisers have counseled more hawkish policies toward Moscow. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HOST PHOTO AGENCY VIA GETTY IMAGES) (A13)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; National security; Militancy; Peace negotiations; Presidential elections; Military intelligence; Coronaviruses; Covert operations; Murders &murder attempts; Assassinations &assassination attempts; Armed forces; Intelligence services; COVID-19
Location:	Russia United States-US Afghanistan Europe
Company / organization:	Name: Taliban; NAICS: 813940; Name: National Security Council; NAICS: 928110; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO; NAICS: 928120
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Behind the Scenes at SAGE: Pressure, Anxieties and 'Pastoral Support' [With graphic(s)]

Landler, Mark; Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]26 June 2020.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT



Enlarge this image.

LONDON — When 50 British scientists and government officials got on a Zoom call on May 7, emotions were

running high, and not just because Britain had overtaken Italy for having the highest death toll from the coronavirus in Europe.

Two days earlier, a prominent epidemiologist on the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, Neil Ferguson, abruptly resigned after being confronted by a newspaper with evidence that he had breached Britain's lockdown rules by inviting a woman to visit him in his London apartment.

Ferguson was the undisputed star of the group, known by its acronym, SAGE. The models generated by his team at Imperial College London had guided the government's response to the crisis from the earliest days. Yet, he was being branded "Professor Lockdown," fodder for sneering tabloid headlines.

As the scientists vented their anxieties about their colleague's defenestration —and the unrelenting pressure and scrutiny that comes with advising the government during a once-in-a-century pandemic —they were urged to seek out "pastoral support" from a new member, Ian L. Boyd, according to minutes of the deliberations.

A 63-year-old Scottish zoologist who advised the government during an earlier outbreak of bird flu, Boyd is a veteran of the tense interplay between scientists and politicians. He was brought into SAGE by its chairman, Patrick Vallance, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's chief scientific adviser, to observe the group's debates and to be a sympathetic ear for the rattled scientists.

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But transparency brought its own set of challenges. The role the scientists played in Britain's dilatory response to the virus has come under sharper scrutiny, especially because Johnson and his ministers repeatedly claim to be "guided by the science" in imposing or relaxing lockdowns. Some scientists worry that Johnson is setting them up to take the blame for the death toll, which now exceeds 43,000.

As the group's work has come increasingly into the public eye, the members' advice is now second-guessed on social media. Their academic quarrels are hinted at in the minutes of their meetings. And as Ferguson's indiscretions showed, not even their private lives are off limits.

"It was utterly horrible to see what happened to him," said Julia Gog, a professor of mathematical biology at the University of Cambridge. "It was also extremely unsettling to other modelers, especially to junior scientists. It was a huge shock to see one of our colleagues treated in this way, and it certainly had an effect on the researchers." Gog described a pressure-cooker atmosphere, in which the scientists are handed complex assignments on very tight deadlines and have to make recommendations in a rapidly changing environment —all while holding down their day jobs and dealing with the stresses of the lockdown in their personal lives.

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Academics relish debating with their colleagues. But debating while on a government panel in the heat of a public health emergency is another matter. Members of SAGE said they had fierce arguments over whether to recommend that the government urge people to wear face masks. A glimpse of that back-and-forth is evident in the minutes.

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benefit from wearing a mask."

It is not clear what triggered the reversal, but it coincided with an issue where Britain has been an outlier among European countries. Although the government recently required people to wear face coverings on buses and subways, Johnson and his ministers have never actively encouraged their use, expressing doubts about their efficacy. As a result, relatively few Britons wear them.

One of Boyd's mandates, he said, was to review SAGE's minutes to make sure they accurately reflected the scientific advice. He declined to elaborate further on his role and Vallance turned down a request for an interview. But Boyd clearly arrived at a charged moment. At its May 7 meeting, the panel said it needed "a better mechanism for filtering commissions and requests" from the government. Weeding out extraneous or convoluted requests would "help the resilience of participants of SAGE who will continue to work under intense pressure in the COVID-19 response for many more months." It added that the "need for pastoral support to be available to participants was noted."

In addition to their mental health, the government offered the scientists counseling on how to deal with abuse on social media, according to an official, who noted that a few even faced shouted epithets on the street early in the crisis, when the government was still debating how to respond to the virus.

Ferguson, who did not respond to requests for comment, had his detractors in the group. Some bridled at his appetite for media coverage, which they said interfered with its work. Rivals noted that his early models underestimated how fast the virus spread. But others argued that changes in projections —even radical ones —were inevitable, given how little was known about this virus.

The constant uncertainty has posed a challenge to Vallance and Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer, who serves as co-chairman of the panel. They must navigate between politicians like Johnson, who often turn to them for validation of their policies, and the scientists, who are often divided about the proper response.

"The evidence is not clear even now," said David Spiegelhalter, a statistics professor at the University of Cambridge and a member. "That means that there are hugely different interpretations of almost the same information. And there are presumably some strong personalities that can be dominant."

Other scientists said some degree of dysfunction was understandable, given the panel's history. Its last major assignment was to advise the government in the aftermath of the poisoning of a Russian former spy, Sergei Skripal, in Salisbury, England. That work was conducted at a high level of secrecy, involved narrow questions of security and intelligence and got very little public exposure.

"SAGE went from being this internal advisory group to something that is much bigger in the public domain," Boyd said.

Some scientists worry that their advice is cherry-picked and politicized. Susan Michie, a professor of health psychology at University College London, noted that a SAGE committee on which she serves produced a detailed study of the risks of cutting the social distancing rule from 2 meters (6 feet) to 1 meter.

It concluded that shortening to 1 meter raised the risk of transmission by twice to 10 times, though it said the dangers could be mitigated with protective measures like ventilation, plastic dividers and face coverings. Johnson said little about the heightened risks when, after considerable pressure from the hospitality industries, he announced the loosened rules earlier this week.

"The overwhelming majority of our advice is ignored," Michie said, "but the pieces are picked up and used for political purposes."

As the government moves to reopen Britain's economy, it may rely less on the advice of its scientific advisers and more on a new Joint Biosecurity Center, which it set up last month to detect outbreaks of the virus and advise the government on how to respond to them —for example, by closing schools or offices. The center is led by Clare Gardiner, a cybersecurity expert who worked at Government Communications Headquarters, or GCHQ, Britain's secretive electronic surveillance agency.

Johnson cited the center's COVID-19 alert system, which measures the prevalence of the virus, as one reason to ease the lockdown. The threat level was recently lowered from four, signifying high or exponentially increasing

transmission, to three, signifying general circulation in the population.

For some scientists, the new center is a necessary recognition that the coronavirus will be around for a year or more, and the government cannot rely on SAGE's ad hoc, overworked members to analyze every outbreak. Others, though, worry that politicians could use it to circumvent unwelcome advice.

"Now that the government doesn't seem to like SAGE's advice so much, they can set up their own review," Michie said. "They can handpick their own scientists."

DETAILS

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Location:	United Kingdom--UK
People:	Johnson, Boris Vallance, Patrick
Company / organization:	Name: Cambridge University; NAICS: 611310
Identifier / keyword:	World Epidemics Transportation Hazardous And Toxic Substances Telephones And Telecommunications Education Influenza Medicine And Health Computers And The Internet Computer Security Scotland Salisbury (England) Russia Oxford (England) Italy Great Britain Europe England Cambridge (England) University College London Scientific Advisory Group For Emergencies (Great Britain) London School Of Hygiene And Tropical Medicine Imperial College London Government Communications Headquarters (Great Britain) Cambridge University Vallance, Patrick J T Spiegelhalter, David Skripal, Sergei V Landler, Mark Johnson, Boris Ferguson, Neil M Castle, Stephen Rumors And Misinformation Assassinations And Attempted Assassinations Espionage And Intelligence Services Social Media Poisoning And Poisons Relocation Of Business Transit Systems Deaths (Fatalities) Protective Clothing And Gear Videophones And Videoconferencing Coronavirus Reopenings Masks Shutdowns (Institutional) Quarantines Avian Influenza Coronavirus (2019 Ncov) Science And Technology Colleges And Universities
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Prague, Calling Ricin Plot a Russian Embassy Hoax, Moves to Expel 2 Diplomats

Higgins, Andrew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]06 June 2020: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Prime Minister Andrej Babis of the Czech Republic said a feud between employees of the Russian Embassy had led to "made-up information about a planned attack on Czech politicians."

MOSCOW – Russia on Friday denounced a decision by the Czech Republic to expel two Russian diplomats over an alleged ricin poison plot that Czech officials now believe was a hoax engineered as part of internal quarrels in Moscow's embassy in Prague.

The Russian Embassy described the Czech order giving the diplomats 48 hours to leave as a "fabricated provocation." But the embassy did not challenge an assertion by Prime Minister Andrej Babis of the Czech Republic that "one embassy employee sent deliberately made-up information about a planned attack on Czech politicians" to the Czech intelligence service.

The claim that Russia itself was responsible for fabricating the poison plot story – denounced as a "sick fantasy" by Russia's Foreign Ministry when it first surfaced in April – added a bizarre new twist to an episode that has roiled already strained relations between Moscow and Prague.

The two countries have been bitterly at odds for months over the removal from a Prague park of a statue celebrating the Soviet wartime hero Marshal Ivan Konev. Moscow reveres the marshal for his role in the defeat of Nazi Germany, but many Czechs consider him an architect of their country's subjugation to Moscow after the end of World War II.

The poison plot affair began in late April, when *Respekt*, a Czech weekly, reported that a suspected Russian intelligence officer traveling on a diplomat passport had arrived in Prague carrying the lethal toxin ricin in his luggage.

The poison, the report said, was to be used to kill the mayor of the Prague district who had pushed to have Marshal Konev's statue taken down and other Czech officials whom Moscow viewed as hostile to its interests. Czech officials declined at the time to confirm or deny the report.

A month later, other Czech news outlets identified the suspected ricin-carrying intelligence officer as Andrei Konchakov, the director of the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Prague.

Mikhail Bryukhanov, the deputy head of Rossotrudnichestvo, the Russian state organization that sent Mr. Konchakov to Prague, told the Tass news agency on Friday that Mr. Konchakov and a second employee in Prague identified only as Ryabakov had both been ordered to leave the Czech Republic within 48 hours. Both had diplomatic status.

Unconfirmed reports on social media in Russia said that Mr. Konchakov and the second employee were fierce rivals and that their office feud had generated the ricin hoax. Mr. Babis, the prime minister, said, "This whole affair was initiated as a consequence of an internal fight between employees of the Russian Embassy in Prague." He did not elaborate.

Like the Russian Embassy, Mr. Bryukhanov did not comment directly on Czech claims that the ricin story had resulted from an internal Russian feud, saying only, "We have no reason not to trust our employees." He added that the "Czech side has not presented a single significant qualitative fact that allows us to agree with their position." He described the Czech account as "low-grade material for cheap detective novels."

Speaking to journalists on Friday in Prague, Mr. Babis, the Czech prime minister, said an embassy staff member whom he did not name had fabricated the ricin story and passed it on to the Czech intelligence service, known as BIS, which spent weeks investigating the alleged plot.

"It imposed unnecessary burden on our information and security service, complicated Czech-Russian relations and damaged the good name of the Russian Federation in the Czech Republic," Mr. Babis said. "We are a sovereign state, and such actions are unacceptable."

The alleged ricin conspiracy had echoes of what Britain said was a 2018 attempt by Russian operatives to kill a former Soviet spy, Sergei V. Skripal, in the English town of Salisbury with a powerful nerve agent known as novichok. Russia strenuously denied any role in that, too.

The Czech government's claim of a hoax generated by a quarrel between Russians in Prague clears Moscow of plotting to murder Czech politicians, but it is, nonetheless, a severe embarrassment. Russia invariably blames foreign reports of murder plots and other shenanigans by its spies on "anti-Russia hysteria" and Russophobia.

The Czech Republic's insistence that the Prague ricin story was fabricated by Russians makes it difficult to blame malicious foreigners.

Ignoring the substance of the Czech government's reasons for expelling the two Russians, the Foreign Ministry in Moscow said on Friday in a statement that the Czech authorities had "acted dishonestly and dishonorably in taking this unfriendly step." Threatening what it called "an adequate response," it said the Czech Republic must answer "for such provocations."

Hana de Goeij contributed reporting from Prague, and Oleg Matsnev from Moscow.

Photograph

The removal of a Soviet marshal's statue from a park in Prague set off a bitter dispute between Russia and the Czech Republic. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAL CIZEK/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

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3 Russians Are Accused In Poisoning Of Bulgarians

Schwartz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]24 Jan 2020: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The trio, members of a secretive group within Russia's military intelligence agency, are accused of trying to kill an arms dealer, his son and one of his top executives in 2015.

Prosecutors in Bulgaria announced criminal charges on Thursday against three Russian spies from a secretive assassination unit for the 2015 poisoning of a prominent Bulgarian arms manufacturer.

The three men slipped into the country using fake passports and, according to prosecutors, used an organophosphate poison in an attempt "to deliberately kill" the arms manufacturer, Emilian Gebrev, along with his son and a top executive in his company.

Though the victims survived, the poisoning in central Sofia, Bulgaria's capital, endangered the lives of numerous people, the Prosecutor General's office said in a statement.

Prosecutors released few details about the Russian spies on Thursday. But an investigation published in The New York Times last month identified them as operatives from Unit 29155, an elite group within Russia's military intelligence agency that carries out assassinations and disruption operations in Europe.

Members of the unit have also been involved in an attempted coup in Montenegro and an operation in Moldova, as well as the poisoning in 2018 of a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, in the English town of Salisbury.

The Skripal poisoning touched off a geopolitical showdown between Russia and the West that continues to reverberate. In response, more than 120 Russian diplomats were expelled from the European Union and the United States, and Britain filed criminal charges against two operatives later identified as officers with Unit 29155.

Bulgaria had initially been reluctant to confront Russia, though experts and officials say Russian spies often use Bulgaria as a staging ground for operations throughout Europe. The Bulgarian government declined to expel any diplomats in the wake of the Skripal poisoning and had closed the inquiry into the Gebrev poisoning years earlier because of a lack of evidence.

But after the British presented evidence of Unit 29155's activities on Bulgarian soil, the authorities there reopened the case.

The Times identified six operatives from Unit 29155 who appear to have been involved in the operation to kill Mr. Gebrev and the others. The three charged on Thursday arrived in Bulgaria shortly before Mr. Gebrev fell ill at a dinner with business partners in late April 2015.

Though the men were not named by prosecutors, using travel information, The Times was able to identify them by their aliases: Sergei Fedotov, Sergei Pavlov and Georgi Gorshkov. (The operatives using the names Fedotov and Pavlov were also involved in overseeing and planning the Skripal poisoning, according to European security officials.)

In Sofia, the operatives checked into a hotel near Mr. Gebrev's offices and insisted on rooms with windows facing the entrance of an underground parking garage, investigators said. One of the men then slipped into the garage, and, according to grainy surveillance video, appears to smear a substance on the door handles of cars belonging

to the victims.

That was just the first poisoning. Investigators say that after failing to kill Mr. Gebrev and the others, Mr. Fedotov and another operative returned a month later and poisoned him and his son again while they were convalescing at their home on the Black Sea. Again, they failed to kill their victims, though Mr. Gebrev says his business continues to suffer.

In the statement on Thursday, the Prosecutor General's office said European arrest warrants and Interpol red notices -- requests that other countries arrest suspects -- had been filed for the three men involved in the first poisoning. It is not clear whether investigators plan to charge the other men involved in the operation.

The Kremlin is unlikely to hand over its operatives to face prosecution. After Britain announced charges against the two officers accused of involvement in the Skripal case, the men went on Russian state television to explain that they were merely sports nutritionists who had visited Salisbury to tour its famous cathedral.

Dmitri S. Peskov, a spokesman for Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, did not immediately respond on Thursday to a request for comment, though in the past he has dismissed reporting on Unit 29155 as "pulp fiction."

At times, though, Mr. Putin, who signed a law in 2006 allowing Russian operatives to carry out assassinations abroad, has been less equivocal. When asked last month about Russian involvement in the assassination of a former Chechen rebel commander in Berlin last year, he pointedly declined to deny it, calling the victim "an absolutely bloodthirsty murderer."

Photograph

Emilian Gebrev, a Bulgarian arms dealer who was poisoned, in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 2017. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Nikolay Doychinov/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Investigations; Military intelligence; Assassinations &assassination attempts; Poisons; Intelligence services; Executives
Location:	Moldova Russia United States-US New York Black Sea United Kingdom-UK Montenegro Bulgaria France Europe
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'Aha' Moment In Poisonings Led to Russia

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

For years, members of a secret team, Unit 29155, operated without Western security officials having any idea about their activities. But an attack on an arms dealer in Sofia helped blow their cover.

SOFIA, Bulgaria -- The Russian assassin used an alias, Sergei Fedotov, and slipped into Bulgaria unnoticed, checking into a hotel in Sofia near the office of a local arms manufacturer who had been selling ammunition to Ukraine.

He led a team of three men.

Within days, one man sneaked into a locked parking garage, smeared poison on the handle of the arms manufacturer's car, then left, undetected, except for blurry images captured by surveillance video.

Shortly after, the arms manufacturer, Emilian Gebrev, was meeting with business partners at a rooftop restaurant when he began to hallucinate and vomit.

The poisoning left Mr. Gebrev, now 65, hospitalized for a month. His son was poisoned, and so was another top executive at his company. When Mr. Gebrev was discharged, the assassins poisoned him and his son again, at their summer home on the Black Sea. They all survived, though Mr. Gebrev's business has yet to recover fully. The assassination attempts in 2015 were remarkable not only for their brazenness and persistence, but also because security and intelligence officials in the West initially did not notice. Bulgarian prosecutors looked at the case, failed to unearth any evidence and closed it.

Now Western security and intelligence officials say the Bulgaria poisonings were a critical clue that helped expose a campaign by the Kremlin and its sprawling web of intelligence operatives to eliminate Russia's enemies abroad and destabilize the West.

"With Bulgaria, there was an 'aha' moment," said one European security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss classified intelligence matters. "We looked at it and thought, damn, everything aligned." Entering his third decade in power, President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia is pushing hard to re-establish Russia as a world power. Russia cannot compete economically or militarily with the United States and China, so Mr. Putin is waging an asymmetric shadow war. Russian mercenaries are fighting in Syria, Libya and Ukraine. Russian hackers are sowing discord through disinformation and working to undermine elections.

Russian assassins have also been busy.

In October, The New York Times revealed that a specialized group of Russian intelligence operatives – Unit 29155 – had for years been assigned to carry out killings and political disruption campaigns in Europe. Intelligence and security officials say the unit is responsible for the assassination attempt last year against Sergei V. Skripal, a Russian former spy in Britain; a failed operation in 2016 to provoke a military coup in Montenegro; and a campaign to destabilize Moldova.

Western intelligence agencies now know the name of the unit's commanding officer, Maj. Gen. Andrei V. Averyanov, and the location of its headquarters in Moscow. Based on interviews with officials in Europe and the United States, it is also now clear that the assassination attempts against Mr. Gebrev served as a kind of Rosetta Stone that helped Western intelligence agencies to discover Unit 29155 – and to decipher the kind of threat it presented.

Since the original Times story, more information has come to light, including the true identities of some of the unit's members and other possible activities in Spain and France. This month, Germany expelled two Russian diplomats as punishment for the daylight assassination in Berlin of a former Chechen rebel commander, though it is unclear whether operatives from 29155 were involved.

Security and intelligence officials are still working to understand how and why the unit is assigned certain targets. Even now, investigators have not determined the precise motive in the Gebrev case. Most likely, intelligence officials say, Mr. Gebrev was a target because of the way his business rankled the Kremlin: his arms sales to Ukraine, his company's intrusion into markets long dominated by Russia, and his efforts to purchase a weapons factory coveted by a Russian oligarch.

Mr. Gebrev says he also believes that local business rivals or politicians might somehow be involved.

"I have been thrown to the wolves," Mr. Gebrev said in an interview. "But why and how, I'm still asking myself."

A Visit to the Afterlife

The poison took effect slowly.

Mr. Gebrev first realized something was wrong on the evening of April 27, 2015, when his right eye suddenly turned "as red as the red on the Russian flag." It felt, he said, as if someone had dumped a bucket of sand into his pupil. The next evening, Mr. Gebrev went to his favorite restaurant on the 19th floor of the Hotel Marinela, a luxury hangout in Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, where the clientele can pose for selfies with the peacocks wandering freely around the bar. At dinner, Mr. Gebrev began to vomit violently and was rushed to a military hospital. There, he began to see explosions of vivid colors. Then, his field of vision suddenly turned to black and white.

As his hallucinations intensified, he imagined angry, fantastical creatures that threatened to drag him away. "I visited the afterlife three times, by my estimate," he said in one of a series of interviews conducted over the past half year. "The doctors said they almost lost me." A day later, the company's production manager, Valentin Tahchiev, was hospitalized, too. Days after that, Mr. Gebrev's son, Hristo, who was being groomed to lead Mr. Gebrev's company, Emco, was also rushed to intensive care.

"When they get rid of me and my son, the company will be destroyed," Mr. Gebrev said later. "Who would sign contracts? Who has the rights?"

For the next month, as Mr. Gebrev recuperated in the hospital, the Bulgarian authorities made little progress on the case. In a former Soviet satellite country with a long history of contract killings, the Bulgarian news media barely paid attention. The prosecutor general suggested that Mr. Gebrev had been sickened by tainted arugula. Eventually, though, officials concluded that all three men had been poisoned.

In late May, Mr. Gebrev was released from the hospital and joined his son at the family vacation home on the Black Sea. There, the two men were poisoned again. This time, the symptoms were less dramatic and they drove themselves back to Sofia and checked into the same hospital for about two weeks.

Despite two poisonings, Bulgarian prosecutors failed to unearth any leads or evidence. Bulgarian intelligence agencies never reported detecting a Russian assassination team in the country, and possibly never realized it had been there.

"Anytime it's linked to something with Russia, Bulgarian intelligence is very impotent," said Rosen Plevneliev, who was Bulgaria's president at the time of the poisonings. "Bulgarian intelligence is not willing to counter Russian intelligence and hybrid warfare."

When the hospital failed to determine the substance used in the poisoning, Mr. Gebrev enlisted a Finnish laboratory, Verifin, which detected two chemicals in his urine, including diethyl phosphonate, which is found in pesticides. The other chemical could not be identified.

By the following summer, the Bulgarian authorities had dropped the case. They apparently had no idea that Unit 29155 even existed. Neither did intelligence and security officials in the rest of Europe.

Yet as Mr. Gebrev's case remained colder than cold, members of Unit 29155 were very busy, according to partial travel records reviewed by The Times. From 2016 to 2018, operatives made at least two dozen trips from Moscow to different European countries.

Their operation in Bulgaria most likely would never have been detected.

Then there was another poisoning.

An Unexpected Breakthrough

In March 2018, a former Russian spy named Sergei V. Skripal was poisoned by a lethal nerve agent in the English town of Salisbury. He began ranting at a restaurant and fell into a coma before clawing his way back to life. It was the first recorded use of a chemical weapon in Europe since World War II, and it touched off a frantic investigation to determine the extent of the threat.

British prosecutors attributed the attack to assassins working for Russia's military intelligence agency, known widely as the G.R.U. Working with European allies, the British authorities analyzed travel records of known Russian operatives. One stood out, a man using a Russian passport with the name of Sergei Fedotov.

For five years, he had traveled extensively in Europe, visiting Serbia, Spain and Switzerland. He was in London a few days before Mr. Skripal was poisoned, leaving shortly after that attack, and British authorities have now identified him as the commander of the team that poisoned Mr. Skripal.

It also turned out that he had been in Bulgaria in 2015, making three visits: in February; in April, when Mr. Gebrev was first poisoned; and again in late May, coinciding with the second poisoning.

Investigators from the Britain-based open-source news outlet Bellingcat have identified the man using the Fedotov alias as Denis V. Sergeev, a high-ranking G.R.U. officer and a veteran of Russia's wars in the North Caucasus. The British authorities confirmed the accuracy of the report.

The revelation that he was connected to the poisonings in both England and Bulgaria was critical in helping Western officials conclude that these were not one-off Russian attacks but rather part of a coordinated campaign run by Unit 29155.

In recent weeks, another operation possibly involving the man known as Mr. Fedotov has emerged in Spain. The highest criminal court there is investigating whether Mr. Fedotov and other Russian operatives might have had some involvement in the protests that destabilized Catalonia in October 2017. Travel records show that he arrived in Barcelona a few days before the region held an independence referendum that month.

During his visits to Bulgaria two years earlier, Mr. Fedotov was joined by other officers. For the April 2015 poisoning, it was two men using the aliases Georgi Gorshkov and Sergei Pavlov, according to two European security officials, who requested anonymity to discuss sensitive intelligence matters. The man using the Pavlov identity also visited London a year before the Skripal poisoning, possibly in preparation for the attack.

Armed with new evidence provided by the British, the Bulgarian prosecutor general, Sotir Tsatsarov, reopened the case in October 2018. Almost immediately, investigators discovered fresh clues. Before the initial poisoning, Mr. Fedotov and two other operatives from Unit 29155 had checked into the Hill Hotel, in the same complex where Mr. Gebrev has his office. They insisted, prosecutors now say, on rooms with views of the entrance to an underground parking garage where Emco executives kept their cars.

In the garage, prosecutors discovered grainy surveillance video that showed a well-dressed figure approaching Mr. Gebrev's gray Nissan, as well as the cars owned by Mr. Gebrev's son and by the production manager. The figure appears to smear something on the handles of all three cars. Western intelligence officials have surmised that the substance was a poison.

The surveillance video was described to The Times by two security officials familiar with its contents, but who had not watched it themselves. They requested anonymity to discuss a live investigation. This month, the office of Mr. Tsatsarov, the prosecutor general, confirmed the existence of the video -- but said that its poor quality prevented investigators from identifying the well-dressed figure. Mr. Tsatsarov, whose term ended on Wednesday, has sent the video for analysis by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Travel information shared with The Times shows that all three assassins with Unit 29155 left Bulgaria on April 28, as Mr. Gebrev lay in the hospital imagining monsters trying to tear him apart.

Bad Arugula

There is little doubt that Mr. Gebrev's profession -- the manufacture and sale of munitions and light weapons -- places him in a risky field, especially in Bulgaria.

In recent years, the Kremlin has grown increasingly alarmed as smaller countries have nibbled away at Russia's dominance in the arms industry. At a meeting in June with high-ranking security officials, Mr. Putin warned that Russia's position in the industry was threatened.

"New factors, complicating our work with our partners in military and technical cooperation -- including competitive fights and increasingly aggressive use of unscrupulous methods of political blackmail, and sanctions -- demand attention and an adequate response," Mr. Putin said. "We need to do everything we can to preserve Russia's leading position in the world arms market."

Bulgaria now sells more than 1.2 billion euros, about \$1.3 billion, in weapons annually, a relatively modest figure for the sector, but a sum that has not gone unnoticed by Moscow. Tihomir Bezlov, a security analyst, says he believes that is what made Mr. Gebrev a target.

"This is really big trouble for Russia," said Mr. Bezlov, of the Center for the Study of Democracy in Sofia. "We don't produce planes and tanks, but in this area of light weapons, this is serious competition."

Mr. Gebrev's business grew out of the collapse of communism. When a scramble ensued for control of weapons factories, the new Bulgarian government blocked Russian buyers and doled out export licenses to men like Mr. Gebrev.

He has since moved into areas long dominated by Russia, including the Indian market, where he describes himself as "a niche player."

"While Russia is exporting ammo worth billions of euros, we are exporting for millions or hundreds of millions," Mr. Gebrev said. "But never mind, we're winning tenders and they're dreaming and thinking that the markets belong to them."

Emco, Mr. Gebrev's company, also made sales to Ukraine, Russia's enemy.

At the outset of Ukraine's war with Russian-backed separatists in 2014, Emco signed a contract with the Ukrainian government to supply artillery ammunition, according to Sergii Bondarchuk, a former head of one of Ukraine's state-controlled arms companies.

After Russian protests, the Bulgarian government canceled the contract in 2015, Mr. Bondarchuk said. In a statement to The Times on Wednesday, Emco made no mention of Russian pressure but said it had unilaterally halted sales to Ukraine in November 2014. Mr. Gebrev described his contracts in Ukraine as "peanuts."

Mr. Gebrev was also entangled with another project that might have displeased Moscow. Shortly before he was poisoned, Mr. Gebrev tried to buy Dunarit, a large arms production plant in Bulgaria coveted by a Kremlin-backed oligarch. A secret memo written around the same time (and since made public by Bulgarian prosecutors) detailed a Russian plan to transfer Dunarit to the oligarch, Konstantin Malofeev.

The United States and the European Union have imposed sanctions on Mr. Malofeev for funding Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Today, Mr. Gebrev has recovered physically, though his business is still ailing. In August 2017, the Bulgarian Economic Ministry temporarily revoked his export license. The ministry is headed by Emil Karanikolov, who was nominated to his post by the far-right Ataka party, which has long faced scrutiny over its close ties with Moscow. Unlike many wealthy businessmen in Bulgaria, Mr. Gebrev has no bodyguard and prefers to drive himself. But he remains jumpy. Last fall, a surveillance camera at his home captured infrared images of a spectral figure with a mask snooping around outside.

"I would be the happiest man on earth if the poisoning didn't take place and I felt sick because I had eaten some bad arugula," he said later. "I don't see myself as so important that someone would try to kill me."

Boryana Dzhambazova contributed reporting and research.

Emilian Gebrev, above, in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 2017. He was poisoned twice in 2015. Left, President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia in Moscow this month. Below, military personnel investigating the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal in Salisbury, England, last year. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NIKOLAY DOYCHINOV/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES; ALEKSEY NIKOLSKYI/SPUTNIK, VIA REUTERS; CHRIS J RATCLIFFE/GETTY IMAGES) (A12)

DETAILS

Subject:	Men; Poisoning; Investigations; Restaurants; Assassinations & assassination attempts; Poisons; Intelligence services
Location:	Spain Russia United States--US Black Sea United Kingdom--UK Bulgaria Ukraine Europe
People:	Skripal, Sergei V
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/22/world/europe/bulgaria-russia-assassination-squad.html
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LINKS

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Document 30 of 176

Russia Suspected in Berlin Assassination, Germany Says

Eddy, Melissa; Bennhold, Katrin . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]05 Dec 2019: A.4.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Germany's federal prosecutor took over an inquiry into the murder of a former commander of Chechen separatists, and the authorities expelled two Russian diplomats.

BERLIN – The German authorities declared on Wednesday that Russia was suspected of being behind the daylight assassination in Berlin this summer of a former fighter with Chechen separatists. Berlin also expelled two Russian diplomats, adding new strains to relations with Moscow.

The announcement deepened concerns about Russian contract killings in Europe, after last year's nerve agent poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy who was living in Britain. Western countries responded to that by expelling more than 100 Russian diplomats from their countries, and German lawmakers called for a similar joint European response to the killing in Berlin.

Peter Frank, Germany's federal prosecutor, said his office would take over the case, identifying the suspect, who is believed to be a Russian contract killer, only as Vadim K., in keeping with German privacy laws.

The Dossier Center, a London-based research group founded by Mikhail B. Khodorkovsky, a Russian former oil billionaire, and other investigation groups had previously identified the suspect as Vadim N. Krasikov.

The Dossier Center shared with the German authorities what it described as compelling evidence linking the killing to the Russian government, a spokesman said last month. Many of the details cited by the federal prosecutor on Wednesday checked against those previously released by the center.

The German authorities had struggled to identify the suspect since he was taken into police custody in August, after witnesses said they had seen him ride a bicycle up to the victim and shoot him once in the torso and twice in the head before fleeing the scene.

Although the authorities considered Russian involvement virtually from the start, it was only in recent weeks that sufficient evidence was gathered to back those suspicions, Mr. Frank said in a statement.

The additional evidence elevated the killing of the former fighter, a Russian-Georgian citizen identified by prosecutors only as Tornike K., from a simple murder case to a state security threat.

"There are sufficient, real indications that the killing of Tornike K. was carried out either on orders by the officials in the Russian Federation or those in the autonomous Chechen Republic, as part of the Russian Republic," Mr. Frank's office said in a statement.

The victim was previously identified by the German authorities by an alias, Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, a former commander of a Chechen separatist force whom the Russian state news media has depicted as a terrorist.

The prosecutor cited photographs of the suspect that matched images of a Vadim K. who had been sought by the Russian authorities for a 2013 murder in Moscow that was also carried out by an assassin on a bicycle. The Russian authorities later withdrew the warrant, although the investigation remained open, German prosecutors said.

Immediately after the announcement, the Foreign Ministry in Berlin ordered two diplomats stationed at the Russian Embassy expelled, citing Moscow's unwillingness to cooperate with the investigation.

The Russian foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, said that Russia would take "a little time" to work out its countermeasures, the news agency Interfax reported.

Maria V. Zakharova, spokeswoman for the Russian Foreign Ministry, denounced what she called Germany's "politicized approach" to the murder investigation. "We view the German claims regarding the expulsion of two employees of the Russian Embassy in Berlin to be groundless and unfriendly," Ms. Zakharova said, according to Russian news agencies. "We will be forced to implement a set of measures in response."

The German authorities' frustration with their Russian counterparts built over three months as investigators in Berlin investigated the case but received no help from Moscow in identifying the man in their custody.

Eventually, the office of Chancellor Angela Merkel became involved and a complaint was made to the Kremlin about the lack of cooperation. On Wednesday, Ms. Merkel defended the decision to expel the Russian diplomats as a consequence of the inaction. "We took this step because we did not see that Russia was supporting our investigation of this murder," she told reporters in Watford, England, where Western leaders are gathered to

celebrate NATO's 70th anniversary.

According to the prosecutor, the suspect was carrying a Russian passport when arrested on Aug. 23 that the Russian authorities confirmed as authentic. Although the document identified him as Vadim Andreevich Sokolov, investigators said at the time that they believed the name was fake.

The suspect had arrived in Europe on a flight from Moscow to Paris and entered on a visa previously issued by French authorities that allowed him to work and move freely throughout the European Union, the prosecutor added. Three days later, he continued to Warsaw, where he checked into a hotel for a five-night stay. After only three nights, however, he left and did not return. The following day he was arrested in Berlin.

The man's visa said he had been employed as an engineer since 2017 at a company called Zao Rust, based in St. Petersburg. But according to records in Russia, the company was in "reorganization" in 2019 and had only one employee in 2018, according to the prosecutor.

When the German authorities tried to contact the company, they discovered that the fax number listed for it was the same as that of two other companies, both belonging to the Russian Defense Ministry, the prosecutor said. Mr. Khodorkovsky, the founder of the Dossier Center, said in an interview that, "The Kremlin is no longer ashamed of reasonable suspicions that it carries out murders in Western Europe."

"No democracy can allow this," he added, warning that "indulging" Russia would not pay off in the long term.

Many German lawmakers have said that they believe the evidence implicating Russia from the Dossier Center -- as well as from the German newsmagazine Der Spiegel and from Bellingcat, an investigative group -- is strong enough to merit the case being treated as a matter of state security.

"The federal prosecutor taking over is a good sign that should have come weeks ago," said Konstantin von Notz, a lawmaker for the opposition Greens and deputy leader of the parliamentary committee that oversees the country's intelligence services.

Roderich Kiesewetter, a foreign affairs expert for Ms. Merkel's Christian Democratic Union party, said the new evidence justified sanctions against Moscow.

"Russia has repeatedly ignored Germany's request, as a partner, for an explanation and to help identify the suspected perpetrator," Mr. Kiesewetter said.

"The evidence we have now points to the involvement of a Russian state actor," he added. "Therefore, it is correct to respond to the lack of cooperation with diplomatic sanctions to make clear our intention for a swift clarification."

The one compelling lead the Germans had early on -- a mysterious email sent shortly after the shooting that identified the killer as a former St. Petersburg police officer imprisoned for murder -- turned out to be a dead end. The German authorities now believe that the officer in question, who was first publicly identified by The New York Times, remains in a Russian prison, 1,500 miles from Berlin.

In a letter sent to The Times, someone claiming to be the St. Petersburg police officer, Vladimir Stepanov, denied that he had anything to do with the killing in Berlin and insisted he was still in prison.

The return address was IK-11, a penal colony in the Russian town of Bor that is said to be reserved for former law enforcement and intelligence officers convicted of serious crimes.

A stamp indicated the letter had been inspected by the prison authorities.

Other countries are watching the Berlin investigation closely.

"We find it sad that a Georgian citizen was killed in the middle of the day in central Berlin and so many questions remain open," said Elguja Khokhrishvili, the Georgian ambassador to Germany. "We hope that the German authorities will pursue this case until we know the truth."

Anton Troianovski contributed reporting from Moscow.

Anton Troianovski contributed reporting from Moscow.

Clockwise from top: Protesters in Georgia holding portraits of Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, a Chechen killed in Berlin; officers at the site of the killing on Aug. 23; and the suspect. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ZURAB KURTSIKIDZE/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK; FABRIZIO BEN SCH/REUTERS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Evidence; Passports &visas; Photographs; Diplomatic &consular services; Public prosecutors; Cooperation; Criminal investigations; Assassinations &assassination attempts; Murders &murder attempts
Location:	Western Europe Russia United Kingdom–UK Georgia England Europe New York Germany
People:	Merkel, Angela Skripal, Sergei V Lavrov, Sergei V Khangoshvili, Zelimkhan
Company / organization:	Name: Environmental Protection Agency–EPA; NAICS: 924110; Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120; Name: Der Spiegel; NAICS: 511120; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization–NATO; NAICS: 928120; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120
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Kremlin Delayed Departure of Plane Evacuating an Ailing U.S. Attaché

Crowley, Michael; Schmitt, Eric . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]03 Nov 2019: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The American was safely evacuated, but the episode was the latest indication that Russian intimidation of American officials has reached levels unseen since the Cold War.

WASHINGTON -- Russian officials in August held up the evacuation from Moscow of a sick American military attaché to a hospital in Germany in the latest episode of a long-running campaign of harassment against American diplomats in Russia.

Diplomatic protocols allow for the fast evacuation of diplomats facing medical emergencies. But the departure of the plane sent to evacuate the attaché was delayed for hours for no apparent reason despite protests from embassy officials and the State Department in Washington, according to several Trump administration officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive diplomatic issue that some other officials prefer to play down.

The Russians eventually relented, and the American, a uniformed officer, was safely evacuated, the officials said. While State and Defense Department officials confirmed there was a medical incident in Russia, they declined to identify the officer and would not provide any details of the case or why he was being evacuated.

"There was a Department of Defense official from the U.S. Embassy in Russia that had to be medevacked from the U.S. Embassy out of Russia," said Carla Gleason, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

Military attaché offices operate openly in most American Embassies, and are managed by the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon's intelligence arm. A webpage for the office in Moscow says that it "serves as the primary point of contact for all joint U.S.-Russia military activities and communications on defense matters."

The State Department's under secretary of state for management, Brian Bulatao, raised the episode with Russian officials in early September during a meeting in Vienna convened to discuss what one of the Trump administration officials called "bilateral irritants," including the harassment of Americans. But it is not clear how the Russian officials responded.

Former American officials with experience in Russia said they could not recall a similar incident happening before and viewed the episode as potentially representing an escalation by Moscow. But they said it would also be

consistent with years of intimidation tactics against American diplomats in the Russian capital.

"If we were bringing in a plane, that means this was really serious. That does not happen very often," said Michael A. McFaul, who served as the American ambassador to Moscow during the Obama administration.

"When I was ambassador, we felt like we were under siege all the time," Mr. McFaul said. He said that delaying a medical flight would fit "the kind of classic harassment that for many years now our people have been putting up with. It's inexcusable, it's horrible."

Russia's internal security service, which Vladimir V. Putin once directed, "wants foreign officials and their families to feel like they're on enemy soil inside Russia," said Daniel Hoffman, a former C.I.A. station chief who spent five years in Moscow. "They want officials and their families to be under duress," and unable to focus on their jobs.

"The idea that they would interfere with medical care or put someone's life or well-being at risk is taking the harassment for which Russia has been known since the days of the K.G.B. to a new and dangerous level," Mr. Hoffman added.

Adding to the diplomatic strain is the Russian detention since December of Paul N. Whelan, a former United States Marine whom the Russians arrested in Moscow and charged with spying. Mr. Whelan, who denies the charges, faces up to 20 years in prison.

And in mid-October, Russian authorities removed three American diplomats from a train headed to an Arctic town near the site of a recent nuclear accident. The State Department said they "were on official travel and had properly notified Russian authorities of their travel."

It is also a sensitive moment for the American Embassy in Moscow. The American ambassador to Russia, Jon M. Huntsman Jr., left his post last month, and President Trump has nominated John Sullivan, the deputy secretary of state, to succeed him.

In a statement, Russia's Foreign Ministry played down the delay of the attaché's departure. It said that the ailing American military officer had passed "right through" border control while still in an ambulance, and that a "slight delay" of about 20 minutes occurred during boarding because the diplomat's "foreign doctors" were mistakenly declared as crew members and required boarding passes, which took time to process.

"We also inform you that the illness of the American diplomat was not serious. He recovered a long time ago and returned to his place of work in Moscow," the statement added.

But an American official said the Russians insisted that the ailing employee undergo "needless" security screening, which required separating him from his doctors and medical equipment.

"It was eventually smoothed over through diplomatic channels," said the American official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to address delicate diplomatic interactions.

The official said the officer returned to Moscow and his duties at the embassy soon after "a medical appointment" in Germany. The official said the officer's condition was not urgent, but could not immediately explain why he needed a medevac aircraft rather than a commercial flight.

The Russian statement also pointed a finger back at the United States, charging that it had interfered several years ago with the medical care of Russia's former prime minister and foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov. A Russian diplomat in the United States was detained by American authorities after going to a pharmacy to buy medicine for Mr. Primakov, who was gravely ill with cancer in Moscow, the statement said,

"The medicine was delivered to Russia only after the U.S. Secretary of State, J. Kerry, got involved," the Russian statement charged, referring to John Kerry, who served in that role under President Barack Obama. "But time was wasted."

Mr. Primakov died of cancer in June 2015 at age 85. Several United States officials familiar with the episode said the Russians had been illegally procuring the drugs, drawing the attention of F.B.I. officials who were unaware of Mr. Primakov's connection to the matter.

Despite Mr. Trump's outreach to Mr. Putin, relations between Washington and Moscow remain generally hostile, and Russian intimidation of American officials in their country has reached levels unseen since the Cold War, current and former American officials say.

And while Mr. Trump continues to speak in forgiving tones about Mr. Putin -- and even suggesting that Russia might rejoin the Group of 7 -- many senior Trump administration officials are furious over the Russian harassment campaign.

Harassment of American officials has increased in recent years as relations between the United States and Russia have steadily deteriorated, particularly after the imposition of sanctions to punish Russian aggression against Ukraine and the Kremlin's 2016 election interference. The problem grew serious enough that Mr. Kerry personally raised the issue with Mr. Putin during a March 2016 meeting.

That exchange did little good. Three months later, a Russian security guard stationed outside the American Embassy in Moscow tackled an American diplomat trying to enter the building, breaking his shoulder before the American managed to get inside. Russia's Foreign Ministry insisted the diplomat was a spy.

"The more the US damages relations, the harder it will be for US diplomats to work in Russia," the official account for Russia's Foreign Ministry tweeted soon afterward.

Russian officials in America are not harassed or intimidated in the United States, current and former American officials say, although they are closely monitored.

"We debated whether we should respond in kind," Mr. McFaul said, including by more conspicuously tailing Russian officials or staging protests outside the Russian Embassy in Washington. No such actions were ever taken, Mr. McFaul added, "because we didn't want to become them."

But the United States did expel dozens of Russian diplomats after the poisoning last year of the former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter in Britain.

The Russians responded by kicking out dozens of American embassy employees and shutting down the American Consulate in St. Petersburg. Both the American and Russian government are interested in returning some of their employees, but officials described the summer episode as a potential obstacle.

Mr. Hoffman warned that, without pushback from Washington, American diplomats in Russia would continue to suffer harassment and intimidation.

"When Russia has in rare circumstances crossed the line, it has been important to hold them accountable and make it a part of our bilateral relationship," he said. "If we fail to do so, then we will risk Russia continuing to do so."

Photograph

From above: The American Embassy in Moscow; John Sullivan, who has been nominated to be ambassador to Russia; and Michael A. McFaul, who said: "When I was ambassador, we felt like we were under siege all the time."

(PHOTOGRAPHS BY MLADEN ANTONOV/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES; ANNA MONEYMAKER/THE NEW YORK TIMES; MAXIM SHemetov/REUTERS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Cold War; Security services; Employees; Diplomatic & consular services; Armed forces
Location:	Russia United States--US Arctic region Germany United Kingdom--UK Ukraine
People:	Trump, Donald J Sullivan, John Whelan, Paul Kerry, John F Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Obama, Barack
Company / organization:	Name: Department of Defense; NAICS: 928110; Name: Group of Seven; NAICS: 926110; Name: Defense Intelligence Agency; NAICS: 928110
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Document 32 of 176

Secret Spy Unit In Russia Aims To Jolt Europe

Schwartz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]09 Oct 2019: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

First came a destabilization campaign in Moldova, followed by the poisoning of an arms dealer in Bulgaria and then a thwarted coup in Montenegro. Last year, there was an attempt to assassinate a former Russian spy in Britain using a nerve agent. Though the operations bore the fingerprints of Russia's intelligence services, the authorities initially saw them as isolated, unconnected attacks.

Western security officials have now concluded that these operations, and potentially many others, are part of a coordinated and ongoing campaign to destabilize Europe, executed by an elite unit inside the Russian intelligence system skilled in subversion, sabotage and assassination.

The group, known as Unit 29155, has operated for at least a decade, yet Western officials only recently discovered it. Intelligence officials in four Western countries say it is unclear how often the unit is mobilized and warn that it is impossible to know when and where its operatives will strike.

The purpose of Unit 29155, which has not been previously reported, underscores the degree to which the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, is actively fighting the West with his brand of so-called hybrid warfare – a blend of propaganda, hacking attacks and disinformation -- as well as open military confrontation.

"I think we had forgotten how organically ruthless the Russians could be," said Peter Zwack, a retired military intelligence officer and former defense attaché at the United States Embassy in Moscow, who said he was not aware of the unit's existence.

In a text message, Dmitri S. Peskov, Mr. Putin's spokesman, directed questions about the unit to the Russian Defense Ministry. The ministry did not respond to requests for comment.

Hidden behind concrete walls at the headquarters of the 161st Special Purpose Specialist Training Center in eastern Moscow, the unit sits within the command hierarchy of the Russian military intelligence agency, widely known as the G.R.U.

Though much about G.R.U. operations remains a mystery, Western intelligence agencies have begun to get a clearer picture of its underlying architecture. In the months before the 2016 presidential election, American officials say two G.R.U. cyber units, known as 26165 and 74455, hacked into the servers of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign, and then published embarrassing internal communications.

[Our correspondent Matt Apuzzo reported on Russia's blueprint for foreign disruption on "The Weekly," The Times's TV show . Watch on FX and Hulu.]

Last year, Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel overseeing the inquiry into Russian interference in the 2016 elections, indicted more than a dozen officers from those units, though all still remain at large. The hacking teams mostly operate from Moscow, thousands of miles from their targets.

By contrast, officers from Unit 29155 travel to and from European countries. Some are decorated veterans of Russia's bloodiest wars, including in Afghanistan, Chechnya and Ukraine. Its operations are so secret, according to assessments by Western intelligence services, that the unit's existence is most likely unknown even to other G.R.U. operatives.

The unit appears to be a tight-knit community. A photograph taken in 2017 shows the unit's commander, Maj. Gen. Andrei V. Averyanov, at his daughter's wedding in a gray suit and bow tie. He is posing with Col. Anatoly V. Chepiga, one of two officers indicted in Britain over the poisoning of a former spy, Sergei V. Skripal.

"This is a unit of the G.R.U. that has been active over the years across Europe," said one European security official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe classified intelligence matters. "It's been a surprise that the Russians, the G.R.U., this unit, have felt free to go ahead and carry out this extreme malign activity in friendly countries. That's been a shock."

To varying degrees, each of the four operations linked to the unit attracted public attention, even as it took time for the authorities to confirm that they were connected. Western intelligence agencies first identified the unit after the failed 2016 coup in Montenegro, which involved a plot by two unit officers to kill the country's prime minister and

seize the Parliament building.

But officials began to grasp the unit's specific agenda of disruption only after the March 2018 poisoning of Mr. Skripal, a former G.R.U. officer who had betrayed Russia by spying for the British. Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, fell grievously ill after exposure to a highly toxic nerve agent, but survived.

(Three other people were sickened, including a police officer and a man who found a small bottle that British officials believe was used to carry the nerve agent and gave it to his girlfriend. The girlfriend, Dawn Sturgess, died after spraying the nerve agent on her skin, mistaking the bottle for perfume.)

The poisoning led to a geopolitical standoff, with more than 20 nations, including the United States, expelling 150 Russian diplomats in a show of solidarity with Britain.

Ultimately, the British authorities exposed two suspects, who had traveled under aliases but were later identified by the investigative site Bellingcat as Colonel Chepiga and Alexander Mishkin. Six months after the poisoning, British prosecutors charged both men with transporting the nerve agent to Mr. Skripal's home in Salisbury, England, and smearing it on his front door.

But the operation was more complex than officials revealed at the time.

Exactly a year before the poisoning, three Unit 29155 operatives traveled to Britain, possibly for a practice run, two European officials said. One was Mr. Mishkin. A second man used the alias Sergei Pavlov. Intelligence officials believe the third operative, who used the alias Sergei Fedotov, oversaw the mission.

Soon, officials established that two of these officers – the men using the names Fedotov and Pavlov – had been part of a team that attempted to poison the Bulgarian arms dealer Emilian Gebrev in 2015. (The other operatives, also known only by their aliases, according to European intelligence officials, were Ivan Lebedev, Nikolai Kononikhin, Alexey Nikitin and Danil Stepanov.)

The team would twice try to kill Mr. Gebrev, once in Sofia, the capital, and again a month later at his home on the Black Sea.

Speaking to reporters in February at the Munich Security Conference, Alex Younger, the chief of MI6, Britain's foreign intelligence service, spoke out against the growing Russian threat and hinted at coordination, without mentioning a specific unit.

"You can see there is a concerted program of activity – and, yes, it does often involve the same people," Mr. Younger said, pointing specifically to the Skripal poisoning and the Montenegro coup attempt. He added: "We assess there is a standing threat from the G.R.U. and the other Russian intelligence services and that very little is off limits."

The Kremlin sees Russia as being at war with a Western liberal order that it views as an existential threat.

At a ceremony in November for the G.R.U.'s centenary, Mr. Putin stood beneath a glowing backdrop of the agency's logo – a red carnation and an exploding grenade – and described it as "legendary." A former intelligence officer himself, Mr. Putin drew a direct line between the Red Army spies who helped defeat the Nazis in World War II and officers of the G.R.U., whose "unique capabilities" are now deployed against a different kind of enemy.

"Unfortunately, the potential for conflict is on the rise in the world," Mr. Putin said during the ceremony.

"Provocations and outright lies are being used and attempts are being made to disrupt strategic parity."

In 2006, Mr. Putin signed a law legalizing targeted killings abroad, the same year a team of Russian assassins used a radioactive isotope to murder Aleksander V. Litvinenko, another former Russian spy, in London.

Unit 29155 is not the only group authorized to carry out such operations, officials said. The British authorities have attributed Mr. Litvinenko's killing to the Federal Security Service, the intelligence agency once headed by Mr. Putin that often competes with the G.R.U.

Although little is known about Unit 29155 itself, there are clues in public Russian records that suggest links to the Kremlin's broader hybrid strategy.

A 2012 directive from the Russian Defense Ministry assigned bonuses to three units for "special achievements in military service." One was Unit 29155. Another was Unit 74455, which was involved in the 2016 election interference. The third was Unit 99450, whose officers are believed to have been involved in the annexation of the

Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

A retired G.R.U. officer with knowledge of Unit 29155 said that it specialized in preparing for "diversionary" missions, "in groups or individually – bombings, murders, anything."

"They were serious guys who served there," the retired officer said. "They were officers who worked undercover and as international agents."

Photographs of the unit's dilapidated former headquarters, which has since been abandoned, show myriad gun racks with labels for an assortment of weapons, including Belgian FN-30 sniper rifles, German G3A3s, Austrian Steyr AUGs and American M16s. There was also a form outlining a training regimen, including exercises for hand-to-hand combat. The retired G.R.U. officer confirmed the authenticity of the photographs, which were published by a Russian blogger.

The current commander, General Averyanov, graduated in 1988 from the Tashkent Military Academy in what was then the Soviet Republic of Uzbekistan. It is likely that he would have fought in both the first and second Chechen wars, and he was awarded a Hero of Russia medal, the country's highest honor, in January 2015. The two officers charged with the Skripal poisoning also received the same award.

Though an elite force, the unit appears to operate on a shoestring budget. According to Russian records, General Averyanov lives in a run-down Soviet-era building a few blocks from the unit's headquarters and drives a 1996 VAZ 21053, a rattletrap Russia-made sedan. Operatives often share cheap accommodation to economize while on the road. British investigators say the suspects in the Skripal poisoning stayed in a low-cost hotel in Bow, a downtrodden neighborhood in East London.

But European security officials are also perplexed by the apparent sloppiness in the unit's operations. Mr. Skripal survived the assassination attempt, as did Mr. Gebrev, the Bulgarian arms dealer. The attempted coup in Montenegro drew an enormous amount of attention, but ultimately failed. A year later, Montenegro joined NATO. It is possible, security officials say, that they have yet to discover other, more successful operations.

It is difficult to know if the messiness has bothered the Kremlin. Perhaps, intelligence experts say, it is part of the point.

"That kind of intelligence operation has become part of the psychological warfare," said Eerik-Niiles Kross, a former intelligence chief in Estonia. "It's not that they have become that much more aggressive. They want to be felt. It's part of the game."

Photograph

Western officials say a Russian intelligence unit led by Maj. Gen. Andrei V. Averyanov, far left, carried out the poisoning of the ex-Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal in England last year. Col. Anatoly V. Chepiga, left, is one of two officers indicted over the attack. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS J RATCLIFFE/GETTY IMAGES; AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES); The Russian unit plotted to kill the prime minister of Montenegro, center, and seize power, Western intelligence agencies said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SAVO PRELEVIC/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A10)

DETAILS

Subject:	Photographs; Biological &chemical weapons; Awards &honors; Intelligence services
Location:	Montenegro England Russia United States--US United Kingdom--UK Europe
People:	Skripal, Sergei V
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/08/world/europe/unit-29155-russia-gru.html
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Database:	Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

LINKS

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Document 33 of 176

Berlin Police Caught a Killer, but Don't Know His Name

Bennhold, Katrin; Schwirtz, Michael; Triebert, Christiaan . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]27 Sep 2019: A.4.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

BERLIN -- At the outset, the German officers investigating the brazen daylight assassination of a former Chechen separatist commander were lucky.

The killer, a man in a wig who had gunned down the victim in a Berlin park, was spotted by two teenagers, who called the police. Officers arrested the suspect near the Spree River as he stepped from a clump of shrubbery, with his wig gone, his clothes changed, his beard shaved off, and a Russian passport in his pocket.

Days after the Aug. 23 killing, investigators received an email from an anonymous sender. It suggested that the suspect was a hit man who had been released from prison by the Russian authorities in order to carry out the assassination in Berlin. It claimed his real name was Vladimir Alekseevich Stepanov, though authorities worried the email could be a hoax.

Since then, that early luck appears to have run out. Investigators have a suspect in custody, but they aren't certain who he is. The man with a shaved head, a hangdog face and arm tattoos, has mostly stayed silent, meeting only consular officers from the Russian Embassy.

"We have the guy, but he isn't talking and Russia isn't helping -- so we are stuck with this mystery," said Patrick Sensburg, a conservative lawmaker who sits on the parliamentary committee that oversees the intelligence services.

"Russia should have an interest in helping if they are not involved," Mr. Sensburg added. "The fact that they are stonewalling us inevitably looks suspicious."

For Germany, the case has rekindled fears of Russian assassins roving freely around Europe, just over a year after Moscow was blamed for the poisoning in Britain of a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal. The geopolitical stakes also are high, given Germany's tumultuous but important diplomatic and economic relationship with Russia.

The Kremlin has denied any connection to the Berlin suspect, but it has also ignored German investigators' requests for help. The victim, Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, fought against Russian troops in at least two wars in the early 2000s and had survived other assassination attempts before settling in Germany in 2016.

The German authorities have proceeded cautiously. The Berlin police are still in charge of the case. Putting it in the hands of federal investigators would signal official suspicions that the Russian state might be involved in the killing. Law enforcement officials briefed some German lawmakers about the suspect's possible identity two weeks ago, but have yet to make that name public.

When the suspect was arrested, he was carrying 3,000 euros in cash, two hotel cards and a newly issued non-biometric Russian passport that identified him as Vadim Andreevich Sokolov. Investigators believe the name is fake.

The anonymous email, sent via the encrypted service ProtonMail, was short and written in poor English, European and American officials said. At least one foreign intelligence agency rated the tip as credible, and several are aware of it.

The email predicted that the suspect would not talk and described him as a Russian contract killer who had done time in a penal colony identified as IK-11. The prison, located in the town of Bor, 270 miles east of Moscow, is said to be reserved for former law enforcement and intelligence officers convicted of grave crimes, according to news reports.

Officials say the email also linked to a news article from the Russian-language aggregator Obzorcity about a 2005 trial in Moscow in which Vladimir Alekseevich Stepanov was sentenced to 24 years in prison. He was not scheduled to be released for another decade. The email's implication was that he had been released early in order to carry out the mission in Berlin.

Independently, The New York Times reviewed court and government records in Russia and Russian-language news outlets and corroborated the main elements of the email tip. Vladimir Alekseevich Stepanov is a former major in the St. Petersburg police department.

In court records, Russian prosecutors said that Mr. Stepanov had used his position as a senior police official to provide cover and logistical support for a criminal gang that carried out a number of contract killings around Russia.

Mr. Stepanov was convicted of direct involvement in only one murder. In October 2003, he and an associate went to the home of Yelena Neshcheret, the owner of a St. Petersburg company that produced power tools. They waited in the courtyard and stabbed her to death. According to Russian investigators, Mr. Stepanov used a large trophy knife given to him as an award for his service during one of the wars in Chechnya.

German investigators interviewed by The Times said they could not be certain that the man they have in custody is the same as the St. Petersburg cop who moonlighted as a hit man. They have submitted a request to Russian officials to verify whether Mr. Stepanov was still in the specified prison and whether his file matched that of the Berlin suspect. So far, it is unanswered.

Times reporters also ran searches through millions of images on numerous photo databases and located two potential photographs of Mr. Stepanov from his trial in Moscow, one with his face partially obscured by the bars of a steel cage in the courtroom, the other in profile.

The Times provided a copy of the photographs to a European police officer who specializes in facial recognition. Asked to compare those photographs with recent pictures of the suspect in Berlin, the officer told The Times that he was 90 percent certain it was the same man.

But German investigators remain uncertain. Attempts to reach the sender of the mysterious email have been futile. Investigators are wary of being lured into a trap, possibly as part of an effort by Russia or others to muddy the waters with disinformation.

Indeed, on Thursday, there was another twist. After The Times published details about the case, Fontanka.ru, a Russian news website, reported that Mr. Stepanov, the convicted St. Petersburg police officer, was still locked away in his Russian prison, and had in fact reported for roll-call and breakfast Thursday morning.

The outlet did not provide the source of the information, but did publish what it said was a current photo of Mr. Stepanov, which does not seem to resemble the suspect in custody in Berlin.

It is not uncommon for Russian intelligence services to recruit prisoners and former criminals, experts say. Earlier this year, Oleg Smorodinov, a former police officer turned professional crook, told The New York Times of being recruited by Russian intelligence operatives and sent into Ukraine to kill a retired special forces commander. A 2006 assassination attempt on Mr. Khangoshvili appears to fit that pattern and could shed some light on his killing in Berlin 13 years later.

That 2006 case also involved a former inmate who had been released early and ordered to kill Mr. Khangoshvili in the Republic of Georgia, where he was living at the time, according to Zurab Maisuradze, the former chief of Georgia's antiterrorism center. Before he could do so, the Georgian authorities intercepted him, and arranged for him to record an encounter with his Russian handler, who was believed to be an officer with Russia's domestic intelligence service, the F.S.B.

On the video recording, Mr. Maisuradze said, the handler is heard ordering the assassin to murder Mr. Khangoshvili. He hands over \$20,000 in cash and a Makarov pistol with a silencer.

Experts say that outsourcing assassinations helps the Russian government avoid the sort of geopolitical blowback that followed the poisoning of Mr. Skripal last year. Shortly after the British authorities determined that Moscow was most likely responsible for the attack, two dozen countries, including the United States, expelled more than 100 Russian diplomats in retaliation. The British authorities have indicted, in absentia, two decorated officers of the Russian military intelligence service known as the G.R.U. over the case.

"A professional kills with someone else's hands," said Oleksiy Arestovych, a retired officer in Ukraine's military intelligence service. "A staff officer would never take part in a liquidation, except for the case of the G.R.U. in Salisbury, though that was total idiocy."

In the Berlin killing, the suspect flew from Moscow to Paris on Aug. 17, traveling under the alias Vadim Sokolov and an expedited French visa that gave him freedom of travel in much of the European Union. He spent one or two

nights in Paris, officials said, and then flew to Warsaw and checked into a hotel for five nights. But after only three nights, on the eve of the murder, he departed for Berlin, leaving behind his luggage with clothes and a cellphone. Investigators believe he intended to return to Warsaw within 48 hours and travel back to Russia from there.

Officials say the killer almost certainly received logistical support -- including the bike he was riding when he shot Mr. Khangoshvili; the electric scooter that was strategically parked to allow for a quick getaway; and the murder weapon. He was also probably briefed by accomplices on Mr. Khangoshvili's movements.

Shortly before noon on Aug. 23, the killer tracked Mr. Khangoshvili to Kleiner Tiergarten, a public park in central Berlin. Mr. Khangoshvili was on his way to the mosque for Friday Prayer when the gunman approached him from behind on a bicycle and fired three shots with a silenced Glock 26 pistol, hitting him twice in the head and once in the torso.

The killer then hopped on his bike and rode away.

Katrin Bennhold reported from Berlin; Michael Schwirtz from New York and Washington; and Christiaan Triebert from New York.

Photograph

Clockwise from top, investigators in Berlin last month, after a former Chechen separatist was killed; police don't know the name of the suspect; the funeral for the victim, Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, in Duisi, Georgia, last month; and demonstrators holding portraits of Mr. Khangoshvili in Tbilisi, Georgia, this month. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CLEMENS BILAN/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK; BERLIN POLICE DEPARTMENT; ZURAB TSERTSVADZE/ASSOCIATED PRESS; ZURAB KURTSIKIDZE/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

Subject:	Photographs; Passports &visas; Poisoning; Geopolitics; Diplomatic &consular services; Russian language; Trials; Criminal sentences; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Murders &murder attempts; Assassinations &assassination attempts; Espionage; Intelligence services
Location:	Russia New York Germany Georgia (country)
People:	Khangoshvili, Zelimkhan
Company / organization:	Name: Environmental Protection Agency--EPA; NAICS: 924110
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/26/world/europe/berlin-murder-russia.html
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LINKS

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Document 34 of 176

Rescue of C.I.A. Spy Left Blind Spot at Kremlin

Barnes, Julian E; Goldman, Adam; Sanger, David E . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 Sep 2019: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- Decades ago, the C.I.A. recruited and carefully cultivated a midlevel Russian official who began rapidly advancing through the governmental ranks. Eventually, American spies struck gold: The longtime source landed an influential position that came with access to the highest level of the Kremlin.

As American officials began to realize that Russia was trying to sabotage the 2016 presidential election, the informant became one of the C.I.A.'s most important -- and highly protected -- assets. But when intelligence officials revealed the severity of Russia's election interference with unusual detail later that year, the news media picked up on details about the C.I.A.'s Kremlin sources.

C.I.A. officials worried about safety made the arduous decision in late 2016 to offer to extract the source from

Russia. The situation grew more tense when the informant at first refused, citing family concerns – prompting consternation at C.I.A. headquarters and sowing doubts among some American counterintelligence officials about the informant's trustworthiness. But the C.I.A. pressed again months later after more media inquiries. This time, the informant agreed.

The move brought to an end the career of one of the C.I.A.'s most important sources. It also effectively blinded American intelligence officials to the view from inside Russia as they sought clues about Kremlin interference in the 2018 midterm elections and next year's presidential contest.

CNN first reported the 2017 extraction on Monday. Other details – including the source's history with the agency and the cascade of doubts set off by the informant's refusal of the initial exfiltration offer – have not been previously reported. This article is based on interviews in recent months with current and former officials who spoke on the condition that their names not be used discussing classified information.

Officials did not disclose the informant's identity or new location, both closely held secrets. The person's life remains in danger, current and former officials said, pointing to Moscow's attempts last year to assassinate Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian intelligence official who moved to Britain as part of a high-profile spy exchange in 2010.

The Moscow informant was instrumental to the C.I.A.'s most explosive conclusion about Russia's interference campaign: that President Vladimir V. Putin ordered and orchestrated it himself. As the American government's best insight into the thinking of and orders from Mr. Putin, the source was also key to the C.I.A.'s assessment that he affirmatively favored Donald J. Trump's election and personally ordered the hacking of the Democratic National Committee.

The informant, according to people familiar with the matter, was outside of Mr. Putin's inner circle, but saw him regularly and had access to high-level Kremlin decision-making – easily making the source one of the agency's most valuable assets.

Handling and running a Moscow-based informant is extremely difficult because of Mr. Putin's counterintelligence defenses. The Russians are known to make life miserable for foreign spies, following them constantly and at times roughing them up. Former C.I.A. employees describe the entanglements as "Moscow rules."

The informant's information was so delicate, and the need to protect the source's identity so important, that the C.I.A. director at the time, John O. Brennan, kept information from the operative out of President Barack Obama's daily brief in 2016. Instead, Mr. Brennan sent separate intelligence reports, many based on the source's information, in special sealed envelopes to the Oval Office.

The information itself was so important and potentially contentious in 2016 that top C.I.A. officials ordered a full review of the informant's record, according to people briefed on the matter. Officials reviewed information the source had provided years earlier to ensure that it had proved accurate.

Even though the review passed muster, the source's rejection of the C.I.A.'s initial offer of exfiltration prompted doubts among some counterintelligence officials. They wondered whether the informant had been turned and had become a double agent, secretly betraying his American handlers. That would almost certainly mean that some of the information the informant provided about the Russian interference campaign or Mr. Putin's intentions would have been inaccurate.

Some operatives had other reasons to suspect the source could be a double agent, according to two former officials, but they declined to explain further.

Other current and former officials who acknowledged the doubts said they were put to rest when the source agreed to be extracted after the C.I.A. asked a second time.

Leaving behind one's native country is a weighty decision, said Joseph Augustyn, a former senior C.I.A. officer who once ran the agency's defector resettlement center. Often, informants have kept their spy work secret from their families.

"It's a very difficult decision to make, but it is their decision to make," Mr. Augustyn said. "There have been times when people have not come out when we strongly suggested that they should."

The decision to extract the informant was driven "in part" because of concerns that Mr. Trump and his administration had mishandled delicate intelligence, CNN reported. But former intelligence officials said there was no public evidence that Mr. Trump directly endangered the source, and other current American officials insisted that media scrutiny of the agency's sources alone was the impetus for the extraction.

Mr. Trump was first briefed on the intelligence about Russian interference, including material from the prized informant, two weeks before his inauguration. A C.I.A. spokeswoman responding to the CNN report called the assertion that Mr. Trump's handling of intelligence drove the reported extraction "misguided speculation." Some former intelligence officials said the president's closed-door meetings with Mr. Putin and other Russian officials, along with Twitter posts about delicate intelligence matters, have sown concern among overseas sources.

"We have a president who, unlike any other president in modern history, is willing to use sensitive, classified intelligence however he sees fit," said Steven L. Hall, a former C.I.A. official who led the agency's Russia operations. "He does it in front of our adversaries. He does it by tweet. We are in uncharted waters."

But the government had indicated that the source existed long before Mr. Trump took office, first in formally accusing Russia of interference in October 2016 and then when intelligence officials declassified parts of their assessment about the interference campaign for public release in January 2017. News agencies, including NBC, began reporting around that time about Mr. Putin's involvement in the election sabotage and on the C.I.A.'s possible sources for the assessment.

The following month, The Washington Post reported that the C.I.A.'s conclusions relied on "sourcing deep inside the Russian government." And The New York Times later published articles disclosing details about the source.

The news reporting in the spring and summer of 2017 convinced United States government officials that they had to update and revive their extraction plan, according to people familiar with the matter.

The extraction ensured the informant was in a safer position and rewarded for a long career in service to the United States. But it came at a great cost: It left the C.I.A. struggling to understand what was going on inside the highest ranks of the Kremlin.

The agency has long struggled to recruit sources close to Mr. Putin, a former intelligence officer himself wary of C.I.A. operations. He confides in only a small group of people and has rigorous operational security, eschewing electronic communications.

James R. Clapper Jr., the former director of national intelligence who left office at the end of the Obama administration, said he had no knowledge of the decision to conduct an extraction. But, he said, there was little doubt that revelations about the extraction were "going to make recruiting assets in Russia even more difficult than it already is."

Photograph

A source who had spied for the C.I.A. for decades was central to the conclusion that Russia had interfered with the 2016 election. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKHAIL KLIMENTYEV; CHET STRANGE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Recruited as a midlevel official, the informant came to have access to the Kremlin's highest levels. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MLADEN ANTONOV/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A11)

DETAILS

Subject:	Hackers; Evacuations & rescues; Decision making; Sabotage; Intelligence gathering; Presidents; Presidential elections; Influence; Informers; Espionage
Location:	Russia United States-US
People:	Trump, Donald J Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir

Company / organization:	Name: Republican Party; NAICS: 813940; Name: Democratic National Committee; NAICS: 813940; Name: Central Intelligence Agency--CIA; NAICS: 928110, 928120
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Document 35 of 176

Murder in Berlin Points To Russian Involvement

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

BERLIN -- The killing of a former Chechen separatist commander in central Berlin has raised concerns that Russia may have deployed an agent to a European nation to target a Kremlin opponent, a tactic it has been accused of using many times in the past.

The victim, Zelimkhan Khangoshvili, who fought against Russian troops in the second Chechen war 20 years ago, was on his way to Friday prayers last week when he was shot in the head twice by a bicycle-riding man using a handgun with a silencer, according to witness accounts cited in the German news media.

The Russian government in 2006 legalized the killings abroad of people who were judged to pose terrorist threats, resuming a Soviet-era practice.

The Kremlin has never acknowledged using the authority granted under the law and has denied specific accusations, including that it tried to kill a former double agent, Sergei V. Skripal, with a nerve agent in Britain last year. In Ukraine, the authorities have reported a number of killings and attempted killings that they attribute to Moscow.

In Germany, Mr. Khangoshvili had told close friends and the authorities that his name had been on an official wanted list in Moscow since 2002.

The German police arrested a 49-year-old Russian man, publicly identified as only Vadim S., and said he faces charges of "treacherous manslaughter." Police divers recovered the suspected weapon, a Glock 26, and a bike in a nearby river, the Berlin state prosecutor's office said on Twitter.

The midday killing had been well planned, early reports suggest. After approaching his victim from behind and shooting him at least twice, the killer biked his way a few hundred yards south to a riverbank. Two witnesses saw him throw his bike and a plastic bag into the Spree River.

The witnesses alerted the police, who found the suspect in nearby shrubs, where he had changed his clothes and appearance, and seemed ready to travel by scooter. He had a large amount of money with him, the police said.

The suspect's identity is based on the name on his Russian passport, though the document had not been verified. The man had arrived from Moscow via Paris a few days earlier, according to news reports, and was scheduled to fly back to the Russian capital.

Mr. Khangoshvili had been a target before, according to an advocate familiar with his case. He had survived at least two attempts on his life in Georgia and had sought safety in Germany.

"He was in constant danger from the Russians," said Ekkehard Maass, the director of the German-Caucasian Society, who had supported Mr. Khangoshvili's asylum application in Germany. "His death fits into a long list of targeted killings by the Russians over the past decade."

In Ukraine, the authorities have reported multiple assassinations and attempted assassinations using methods including car bombs and silenced pistols during the country's now 5-year-old conflict with Russian-backed separatists.

In 2016, an attacker on a bike in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv shot from behind and injured a former Ukrainian artillery officer, Yevgeny Sukhoveyev. In that case, the attacker pedaled away without being caught. A year later, a man posing as a journalist for the French newspaper Le Monde tried to shoot two ethnic Chechens, Amina Okuyeva and Adam Osmayev, who were fighting on Kiev's side in the Ukraine war. The killer had claimed to be working on a story about their exploits.

Both Chechens survived, but Ms. Okuyeva was later killed when someone opened fire with a machine gun on the

car she was driving outside of Kiev.

Chechen dissidents and former rebels living outside Russia have been frequent targets. In 2009, Sulim B. Yamadayev, a rival to Chechnya's leader, Ramzan A. Kadyrov, was shot and killed in a parking garage in Dubai. In January 2017, Mr. Maass, of the German-Caucasian Society, wrote a letter to the German immigration authorities on Mr. Khangoshvili's behalf, expressing his concern for his safety.

"He is so massively pursued by the Russian side that his life is in danger and he needs special protection," Mr. Maass wrote to the authorities, specifically referring to President Vladimir V. Putin. "I urge you to grant him special protection and not to send him back to where Putin's long arm can reach him."

DETAILS

Subject:	Terrorism; Murders &murder attempts
Location:	Russia Ukraine Germany United Kingdom--UK Spree River Dubai United Arab Emirates Georgia
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/27/world/europe/berlin-murder-russia.html
Publication title:	New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y.
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Document 36 of 176

Nerve Agent Sickened 2nd Officer In Spy Attack

Schaverien, Anna . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]16 Aug 2019: A.11.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- A second police officer has been confirmed as a victim of the nerve-agent attack that nearly killed a Russian former spy and his daughter in England last year, the police said on Thursday, bringing the number of those known to have been sickened in the episode to six.

Forensic testing confirmed that an officer from the Wiltshire Police, who does not wish to be identified, was affected by the nerve agent, Novichok, which was used to target the former spy Sergei V. Skripal, in March 2018. Mr. Skripal's daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, also fell seriously ill after being exposed to the poison, but both survived. Tests on a blood sample from a police officer involved in the response to the poisoning, which occurred in Salisbury, England, confirmed exposure to a small amount of Novichok, according to a statement from the Metropolitan Police in London, which coordinates counterterrorism investigations.

The unnamed officer displayed signs of having been exposed to the nerve agent at the time and was given medical treatment, the authorities said, before returning to duties shortly afterward.

Another officer, Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey, became critically ill after going to Mr. Skripal's home to investigate the attack. Mr. Skripal, a former colonel in Russia's military intelligence, and his daughter, Yulia, had been found unconscious and slumped on a bench.

Sergeant Bailey, who made contact with the nerve agent through the house's door handle, made a full recovery. Last Sunday, he ran a marathon to raise money for the intensive-care unit at the hospital where he was treated. Two other people, Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley, also suffered high levels of exposure to Novichok as a result of the poisoning. They were accidentally exposed to residue in Amesbury, a town near Salisbury, months after the initial episode.

Both were critically sickened on July 1 when Ms. Sturgess sprayed a substance that she thought was perfume onto her wrist from a bottle that Mr. Rowley, her boyfriend, had found. Investigators believe the vial was used to transport the Novichok that poisoned the Skripals. Mr. Rowley survived, but Ms. Sturgess died.

In the wake of the attack, tensions escalated to their highest pitch in decades between Britain and Russia, which London blamed for the poisoning. Moscow denied any involvement.

Two Russian men who were identified as officers in Russia's military intelligence by Britain's prime minister at the time, Theresa May, were charged last September with the attempted murder of the Skripals and Sergeant Bailey. The two men, identified as Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, were also charged with conspiracy to murder Mr. Skripal, possession and use of a chemical weapon and causing grievous bodily harm.

The attack on the Russian former intelligence officer and his daughter in England also took a toll on diplomatic relations between Russia and the West. More than 150 Russians listed by their embassies and consulates as diplomats or military and cultural attachés were expelled from 27 countries, including the United States. Russia retaliated by saying it would expel 60 American diplomats.

The European Union placed economic sanctions on the two suspects and two senior Russian military intelligence officials in January. And this month President Trump signed an executive order imposing new sanctions on Russia over the episode.

"They are suspected groundlessly," the Kremlin's spokesman told reporters when the European Union imposed travel bans and asset freezes on the suspects. "We have still not heard any evidence."

A year after the poisoning, and after 13,000 hours of cleaning, the British government announced that the decontamination of the former Skripal home was complete. But the investigation into the attack continues.

"There are parts of the picture that we are continuing to piece together," the Metropolitan Police statement said.

DETAILS

Subject:	Fund raising; Poisoning; Diplomatic & consular services; Biological & chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Murders & murder attempts; Poisons; Espionage
Location:	Russia United States--US United Kingdom--UK England
People:	Trump, Donald J Sturgess, Dawn May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Rowley, Charlie
Company / organization:	Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120
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LINKS

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Huntsman Steps Down As U.S. Envoy to Russia

Kramer, Andrew E . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]07 Aug 2019: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Jon M. Huntsman Jr., the United States ambassador in Moscow who carried out President Trump's policies during a highly turbulent period of sanctions and investigations into Russian electoral interference, resigned on Tuesday. The move had been expected amid reports that Mr. Huntsman, a former Utah governor, would return to politics in his home state.

Mr. Huntsman had kept a low profile through much of his tenure in Moscow, as a special prosecutor in the United States investigated Russian interference in the 2016 election. He had been nominated by Mr. Trump as the new administration took over in 2017.

In his resignation letter, Mr. Huntsman said he was honored by the trust that Mr. Trump had placed in him "during this historically difficult period in bilateral relations."

During his tenure, Mr. Huntsman wrote, the United States Embassy saw "unprecedented expulsions, forced departures and enormous professional disruptions." His diplomats, he added, worked in "one of the world's most forbidding environments."

Mr. Huntsman, who had also served as ambassador to China under President Barack Obama, had won praise from business people for supporting what American commerce remained legal after a series of United States sanctions. Relations with Moscow soured in 2014, leading to sanctions, after Russia waged a military incursion into Ukraine and annexed the Crimean Peninsula.

Washington and Moscow have been at odds on other fronts: They back opposing sides in Syria's civil war. And spy scandals have prompted further tensions, and sanctions. They included a series of restrictions imposed on Russia in the poisoning of a former double agent, Sergei Skripal, in Britain with a military-grade nerve agent.

In June, Mr. Huntsman visited an American, Paul Whelan, who was arrested in Russia on charges of spying and remains in jail awaiting trial.

More recently, Washington imposed a ban on American banks buying Russian sovereign debt.

"Going forward, we must continue to hold Russia accountable when its behavior threatens us and our allies," Mr. Huntsman said in his resignation letter, which was released by the American Embassy in Moscow. "No reset or restart is going to help, just a clear understanding of our interests and values."

The resignation, he said, is effective Oct. 3.

Mr. Huntsman, who hails from an influential Utah family, was twice elected governor of Utah, in 2004 and 2008, before leaving the position to serve as ambassador to China in 2009. In 2011, he ran in the Republican presidential primaries. The Salt Lake Tribune reported, citing people close to Mr. Huntsman, that he is considering a run for Utah governor next year.

Photograph

Jon M. Huntsman Jr. will leave his post in October. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO/A.P.)

DETAILS

Subject:	Resignations; Diplomatic & consular services; Sanctions; Governors
Location:	Russia United States–US United Kingdom–UK China Syria Ukraine Utah
People:	Trump, Donald J Whelan, Paul Obama, Barack
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Document 38 of 176

Trump Adds To Sanctions On Russia Over Skripals

Crowley, Michael; Barnes, Julian E . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]02 Aug 2019: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

President Trump on Thursday signed an executive order imposing new sanctions on Russia, responding to growing pressure from Congress to further punish Moscow after a nerve agent attack last year against a former Russian spy in Britain.

It is the second round of sanctions by the administration after a botched attempt in March 2018 to fatally poison a former Russian military intelligence officer, Sergei Skripal, in the British town of Salisbury.

The attack put Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, into a coma, and sickened at least three others. One of them, a British woman named Dawn Sturgess, died.

American and European intelligence officials accused Russia of staging the attack. Moscow has denied any

involvement.

The sanctions came a day after Mr. Trump spoke to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, in a call Mr. Trump characterized on Thursday as focusing on huge wildfires in Siberia. Public readouts from the White House and the Kremlin on Wednesday made no mention of the sanctions.

Mr. Trump has been reluctant to take punitive actions against Russia, instead seeking better relations with Moscow despite its well-documented interference in the 2016 election.

But in recent weeks, lawmakers from both sides of the aisle have criticized his administration's delay in taking what they have called legally mandated action to follow up on sanctions imposed last August.

Shortly after the nerve agent attack, believed to have been conducted by two Russian operatives posing as tourists, the Trump administration expelled 60 Russians from Moscow's embassy in Washington in concert with similar expulsions of Russians from Britain and other European countries.

Mr. Skripal was recruited as a double-agent by British intelligence in the 1990s. He was convicted in Russia of spying but resettled in Britain after his release in a 2010 spy swap. His actions earned him the scorn of Mr. Putin, who has called him "a traitor" and "a scumbag."

In August 2018, the State Department determined that the deadly use of the nerve agent, Novichok, had violated a 1991 law passed by Congress to stigmatize the use of chemical and biological weapons. That prompted an initial round of sanctions with little bite, given that they largely mandated penalties that the United States had already applied to Russia for other reasons.

The law, known as the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act, also requires the administration to certify that a country found to have employed such weapons has stopped their use, has provided assurances it will not do so again and has allowed for on-site inspections. Because Russia continues to maintain that it was not behind the botched poisoning, the State Department notified Congress in November that it could not make such a determination.

That the Trump administration did not follow through with the additional penalties prescribed by law frustrated lawmakers. In May, the under secretary of state for arms control and international security, Andrea Thompson, told a Senate panel that the State Department had "teed up" the additional sanctions.

"We've been extremely vocal and active in pushing back on Russia's heinous attack on the Skripals," Ms.

Thompson insisted, suggesting that the slow action on sanctions was "part of a larger Russia strategy."

On Monday, the top Democrat and Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee sent a joint letter to the White House threatening new congressional action to force the administration's hand.

"Failure by the administration to respond to Russia's unabashed aggression is unacceptable and would necessitate that Congress take corrective action," wrote the members, Eliot L. Engel, Democrat of New York, and Michael McCaul, Republican of Texas.

The law provided the administration with numerous sanctions to choose from. The executive order released by the White House on Thursday banned loans or other assistance to Russia by international financial institutions and prohibited most loans from American banks to Russia's government.

European officials, especially from Eastern European countries that feel more directly threatened by Russia, have been pushing the administration for months to put the chemical weapons sanctions in place.

European officials initially expected the White House to act late last year, and then early this year. But for months, the administration stalled on the sanctions, the diplomats said.

One senior administration official said that there was no intention to delay the sanctions, but that they had not been put into place earlier this year over concern that Russia would misunderstand the message.

In June, Mr. Trump had a friendly meeting at the G20 summit in Osaka, Japan, with Mr. Putin, shortly after the Russian leader said in an interview with The Financial Times that the Skripal "spy story" was "not worth five kopecks. Or even five pounds, for that matter." At the same summit, Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain looked disgusted as she shook hands with Mr. Putin for the cameras.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

DETAILS

Subject:	Diplomatic &consular services; Sanctions; Biological &chemical weapons; Executive orders; Espionage; Poisons
Location:	Texas Russia United States--US New York United Kingdom--UK Siberia Japan
People:	Trump, Donald J Sturgess, Dawn Engel, Eliot L May, Theresa McCaul, Michael T Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120; Name: Group of Twenty; NAICS: 926110; Name: Senate; NAICS: 921120; Name: House of Representatives-Foreign Affairs, Committee on; NAICS: 921120; Name: Financial Times; NAICS: 511110
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Putin Rival, Back in Jail, Addresses His Illness

Macfarquhar, Neil . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]30 July 2019: A.11.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – Russia's most prominent opposition figure, Aleksei A. Navalny, raised questions on Monday about whether he had been poisoned in prison after being convicted of calling for a protest that led to one of the largest street demonstrations in Moscow in years.

Mr. Navalny, 43, was sent from the government hospital where he was being treated for an unknown illness back to prison earlier in the day. His return to jail came over the strenuous objections of his doctor, who said that the cause of his symptoms had not been identified, but that he had apparently been poisoned with a "toxic agent." The opposition leader posted a message on his official website that addressed the possibility the authorities had poisoned him.

Mr. Navalny wrote that on the one hand, why would the authorities poison him while in custody, as they would be the obvious culprits? On the other hand, he noted, this had never stopped them before.

"Are they such idiots as to poison me in a spot where they would be the only suspects?" he wrote, before listing a string of incidents involving opposition figures and others where the government was clearly to blame. "The dudes in power in Russia are truly rather moronic and asinine," he wrote.

His doctor, Anastasy Vasilyeva, said insufficient tests had been conducted on the cause of Mr. Navalny's condition to allow him return him to the place where, she said, the toxic exposure probably occurred. After being allowed to see him, Dr. Vasilyeva wrote on Facebook that Mr. Navalny was feeling better but needed continued monitoring.

Mr. Navalny, the most high-profile critic of President Vladimir V. Putin and his government, was rushed to the hospital on Sunday from his jail cell, suffering from swelling and hives, which officials described as an allergic reaction. He was sentenced last week to 30 days in jail for organizing an illegal protest, days before a demonstration he had called drew thousands of people in Moscow on Saturday.

Dr. Vasilyeva said on Sunday that Mr. Navalny might have been poisoned with an unknown chemical substance. The Interfax news agency quoted a doctor at the government hospital where he was admitted as saying that he had suffered from an attack of hives, but had improved.

In describing the events around his hospitalization, Mr. Navalny said on his website that his cellmates noticed on Saturday that the skin on his neck was reddening, and as the day progressed his face, ears and neck began burning and prickling. He could not sleep, and by Sunday morning his head was severely swollen, his eyes were just slivers and his eyelids were the size of "Ping-Pong balls."

Mr. Navalny said he had never experienced allergies to food or to pollen, although he had previously had an occasional skin reaction to toiletries, but not of the kind in the cell. He said he had been in the exact same bunk for 10 days just a few weeks ago, and after nine or 10 times in jail, he always brought his own sheets, soap and toothpaste.

The opposition leader said he started to improve after a doctor gave him a shot, but he was not told anything about his condition and only discovered some details from a hospital report given to a news agency.

Unease among his fellow opposition members and supporters stemmed from the Kremlin's long history of eliminating its opponents, often by poisoning them.

Mr. Putin has tried to build an image of a powerful, united Russia, and anyone who would undermine that strength or point out that much of the country lives in poverty is often the target of official ire.

Independent journalists, rights advocates, opposition politicians, government whistle-blowers and others are smeared in the media, jailed on dubious charges and, in some cases, killed. Mr. Navalny himself temporarily lost most of the vision in one eye when someone threw a caustic liquid into his face in 2017.

Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, was poisoned along with his daughter in Salisbury, England, last year with a potent nerve agent administered by two officers from Russia's military intelligence, Britain said. Russia has denied any involvement even though surveillance cameras caught the officers wandering around Salisbury.

Vladimir Kara-Murza, another opposition leader, has accused the government of poisoning him twice, sending him into a coma in the latest attempt in 2017, although medical tests conducted abroad proved inconclusive.

Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former officer in the Russian security service F.S.B. who became a Putin opponent, died of polonium-210 poisoning in London in 2006.

Boris Nemtsov, a prominent opposition politician, was fatally shot outside the Kremlin in February 2015. Although several people from Chechnya were convicted in the killing, neither the mastermind nor a motive was ever identified.

Sergei L. Magnitsky, a lawyer and auditor, was jailed on tax evasion charges while investigating a \$230 million government tax "refund" that corrupt Russian officials had granted to themselves. Denied essential medical care, he died in 2009.

The journalist Anna Politkovskaya, a critic of Mr. Putin who wrote of atrocities by the Russian military in Chechnya, was shot to death in her Moscow apartment in 2006.

And in a case dating back even further, Yuri Shchekochikhin, a Russian journalist and politician famous for his corruption exposés, fell ill and died suddenly in 2003. His death was attributed to a rare allergic reaction, but the case was never fully resolved publicly.

Analysts have described both Mr. Navalny's medical emergency and the mass detentions on Saturday, when the police carted away almost 1,400 protesters, as possible signs of the Kremlin's unease about Mr. Putin's continued drop in the polls, with Russians grumbling about their stagnant incomes. They said that instead of doing the hard work of changing policies to woo those who are angry with Kremlin, the government is trying to silence them.

The immediate cause of the Moscow protests was anger over the Moscow City Electoral Commission's preventing opposition candidates from registering for the September election for the 45-member City Council. Fifty-seven potential candidates were blocked, including about 17 government critics.

"There are thousands of Muscovites behind every opposition member that was not allowed to run," Nikolai Petrov, a Russian political science professor at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, wrote in the *Vedomosti* daily. "Today these are the people, and not just 17 unregistered candidates, who are in the position of being very harsh critics of the government."

Hence the crackdown will feed more protests, he said, adding that "it is hard to imagine what they will do next, but it won't be pleasant for the government."

The next Moscow protest is scheduled for Saturday.

Photograph

Aleksei A. Navalny on Monday. His doctor said he was exposed to a "toxic agent" in jail. (PHOTOGRAPH BY

NAVALNY.COM, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS); Mr. Navalny was released from a Moscow hospital on Monday, after arriving the day before with facial swelling and hives. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAXIM SHIPENKOV/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

Subject:	Fatalities; Poisoning; Politics; Criminal sentences; Prisons; Demonstrations &protests; Poisons; Critics
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK England
People:	Nemtsov, Boris Navalny, Alexei Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
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Skripal Attack's 'Third Man' Was Link to Moscow Contact

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]01 July 2019: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

A senior Russian military intelligence officer coordinated the nerve-agent attack on Sergei V. Skripal, a former spy, from a hotel in the heart of London, making repeated phone calls to an unregistered, prepaid Russian number, the investigative group Bellingcat says.

The report sheds more light on a third figure in an attack that threw British and Russian relations into a tailspin -- each expelled diplomats from the other country -- and led to the fatal poisoning of a British woman after the discarded Novichok nerve agent was found in a perfume bottle in the trash.

Bellingcat said it had traced phone calls made by the officer, who was identified as Denis Sergeyev but who traveled under the name Sergei Fedotov. It obtained his metadata from an employee of a Russian mobile operator, who says that the leak did not breach privacy laws because Sergei Fedotov, the individual to whom the number is registered, does not exist.

Moscow has long denied any involvement in the attack on Mr. Skripal, who was living in the English city of Salisbury after being released from a Russian prison in a spy swap. He and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, survived the poisoning attempt, and now remain in an undisclosed location.

President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia insisted in an interview published on Friday by The Financial Times that Russia had not tried to poison Mr. Skripal, arguing that he had already served a sentence in a Russian prison for assisting British intelligence. He did, however, speak with open contempt for traitors in general.

"Treason is the gravest crime possible, and traitors must be punished," he said, adding, "I am not saying that the Salisbury incident is the way to do it. Not at all. But traitors must be punished."

British officials identified Mr. Skripal's attackers as colonels in Russia's military intelligence service, the G.R.U., who were caught numerous times on video surveillance footage near Mr. Skripal's home, where traces of the nerve agent was found and which sickened a local police officer.

Bellingcat later revealed their true names as Anatoly V. Chepiga and Aleksandr E. Mishkin. But until now, few details about the "third man" believed to accompanied the team to London have been reported.

The group's findings suggest that the mission was put together hurriedly.

Mr. Sergeyev, it said, received confirmation that he would have to fly to London at 6 p.m. on March 1, just three

days before the poisoning, and then called travel agencies, searching for last-minute flights from Moscow to London. He received a booking confirmation just after 8 p.m., Bellingcat reports, and then searched to see whether he would need a new data plan.

He arrived at Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow at 6 a.m. the following day, and while he waited for his flight to depart – it was delayed by two hours – he downloaded several large data files and sent messages over the messaging applications Telegram, WhatsApp, Viber and Facebook Messenger. Before the flight left, he spoke twice to a Russian phone number belonging to a prepaid SIM card with no registered owner.

During the next three days, he would speak 11 times to someone over the unregistered Russian number, and no one else, Bellingcat reported.

Arriving in London, he checked into a hotel near Paddington Station and spent the next two days there, communicating via encrypted messaging apps and using 3G and 4G connections, Bellingcat said. He left only once, on March 3, during which, phone records reveal, he was near the Thames embankment – a short walk from the railway station where Mr. Skripal's two attackers, Mr. Chepiga and Mr. Mishkin, would leave about 50 minutes later.

On the day of the poisoning, Mr. Sergeyev received a call from the unregistered Russian number around 9 a.m., and then sent a large data file – possibly a photo – an hour later, just as Mr. Chepiga and Mr. Mishkin headed to Salisbury. He then began his journey home to Moscow.

Bellingcat noted that Mr. Sergeyev's phone signals in Moscow typically showed him leaving his home for one of two G.R.U. campuses, its headquarters and its training academy.

The patterns of use during the Skripal operation, it said, also suggest a methodology used in such operations, in which a senior coordinating officer communicates with Moscow, while agents on the ground – in this case, Mr. Chepiga and Mr. Mishkin – receive no instructions.

Photograph

The former home of Sergei V. Skripal in Salisbury, England. He and his daughter Yulia are now in an undisclosed location. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIAN DENNIS/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE – GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Military intelligence; Poisons
Location:	England Russia
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Skripal, Yulia Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130; Name: Financial Times; NAICS: 511110
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The Week Ahead

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[🔗 ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Dance: A Salute to Education

June 12-16; alviniley.org

As Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater wraps up its 60th season, the company turns its attention to another milestone: the 50th anniversary of the Ailey School, where many a star in the company has been nurtured. For the Ailey Spirit Gala on June 13, students from the school join forces with dancers of the main company and its junior

troupe, Ailey II, as well as former members of the nationwide AileyCamp, in a new work by Troy Powell. The piece tells a story that mirrors Powell's own, of rising through the Ailey ranks to become a professional dancer. The company's Lincoln Center season also features some of the most exciting works to join (or re-enter) the repertory in recent years: Ronald K. Brown's "The Call" and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's revived "Shelter" -- on a program with a new piece by Darrell Grand Moultrie -- and Rennie Harris's two-act "Lazarus," inspired by Alvin Ailey's life and legacy. SIOBHAN BURKE

Art: Horses, Monkeys and Elephants

Through Aug. 18; nga.gov

The horses, monkeys and elephants romping through "The Life of Animals in Japanese Art," at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, come in ink, lacquer and ceramic, date from the fifth century to 2016, and seem to cover a range of styles too wide to spring from any single tradition. But what does run through all of them is a distinctively playful intimacy: Unlike the alien beings fit only for scientific analysis or service as metaphors that we find in the West, Japan's animals come across as friends -- to be attended to, delighted in, or, on occasion, made fun of. WILL HEINRICH

Pop: The National and Courtney Barnett at Prospect Park Bandshell

June 12-13; eventbrite.com

The National may have played on some of the world's biggest stages, but their anxiety-ridden songs lend themselves more to the intimacy of headphones than to mass singalongs. The group's most recent project, an album titled "I Am Easy to Find" -- with a corresponding short film directed by Mike Mills -- is less internal than their previous work, cracked open by a new pool of collaborators, including a cadre of female vocalists who often sing in the frontman Matt Berninger's stead. Still, it retains much of the group's signature angst (in early stages of the recording process, Mills jokingly likened it to "'Lemonade' for depressed white people").

This week, these native Ohioans will perform at the Prospect Park Bandshell in their adopted hometown, raising money to support BRIC Arts Media's free summer programming. Joining them is Courtney Barnett, the Australian songwriter known for her quick wit, as heard on songs like "Avant Gardener." Wednesday night is sold out, but tickets remain available for Thursday. OLIVIA HORN

Classical: The Philharmonic Fills City Parks With Music

June 11-16; nyphil.org

This week's tour of New York City's parks by the New York Philharmonic should prove particularly enticing, beyond simply the prospect of hearing a top orchestra for free in the great outdoors. Although the annual affair is often overseen by guest conductors, the orchestra's new music director Jaap van Zweden will take the reins for five concerts in all five boroughs, including on Central Park's Great Lawn this Wednesday. Moreover, the outdoor concerts do not exclusively feature standard fare -- in this case, the likes of Rossini's "La Gazza Ladra" overture, Copland's "Hoe-Down" and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2. It also includes, as the concerts did last year, works written by two young people: Nilomi Weerakkody and Mack Scocca-Ho, both 12 and participants in the Philharmonic's Very Young Composers program. WILLIAM ROBIN

Film: Giving a Voice to Those Who've Been Silenced

June 13-20; hrw.org

In March 2018, Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter, Yulia, were found poisoned on a park bench in Salisbury, England. Six months later, Bellingcat -- a collective of hypervigilant armchair sleuths established in 2014 by Eliot Higgins, a British blogger working from home while caring for his infant daughter -- began to unmask those behind the attempted assassinations.

"Bellingcat: Truth in a Post-Truth World" -- Hans Pool's exploration of the use of open-source investigation by citizen journalists -- will close the Human Rights Watch 30th Anniversary Film Festival, with its focus on the rise of authoritarianism and legalized oppression. The lineup, starting Thursday and presented by Film at Lincoln Center and the IFC Center, includes Rachel Leah Jones and Philippe Bellaïche's opening-night "Advocate," about the Jewish-Israeli lawyer Lea Tsemel's representation of Palestinian clients; "One Child Nation," Nanfu Wang and

Jialing Zhang's examination of China's fight for population control; and Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam's "The Sweet Requiem," which follows a Tibetan refugee on her search for the truth about her past. KATHRYN SHATTUCK

TV: Liza and Charles, Together at Last on 'Younger'

June 12; tvland.com

The older I get, the crazier I am for "Younger," especially with Liza and Charles locked in each other's arms. But fans of Darren Star's romantic romp through the publishing industry know not to get too comfortable for when he invariably rips the rug out from under them.

Sure, their relationship is now an open secret, albeit one that Charles (Peter Hermann) had to forfeit his kingdom to keep. And as the sixth season begins on Wednesday, the pieces wobble into position -- advancing the ever-capable Kelsey (Hilary Duff) into the corner office as publisher under the purview of the narcissistic billionaire investor, Quinn (Laura Benanti); prompting an emotionally wounded Diana (Miriam Shor) to seek a new home for her marketing expertise; and forcing a cautiously elated Liza (Sutton Foster) to navigate the early blush of love with a man who has way too much time on his hands.

And leaving us to wonder and to worry whether our happy couple's bliss -- or anyone's, really -- will last for more than a few beguiling episodes. KATHRYN SHATTUCK

Theater: From Moscow, a 'Masquerade'

June 13-16; cherryorchardfestival.org

Some classics would be much shorter if the fragile, emotional creatures at their center would pause to collect themselves, then calmly ask their wives: "Hey, honey, you're not really cheating on me, are you? Why is someone saying that you are?"

Like Shakespeare's Othello, who murders the faithful Desdemona, the jealousy-crazed Arbenin -- the central character of Mikhail Lermontov's 19th-century Russian verse drama "Masquerade" -- plots to kill his innocent wife, Nina, a victim of gossip and mistaken identity.

On Thursday, the Moscow-based Vakhtangov State Academic Theater of Russia brings its version of that play to City Center, where the company has become a familiar presence at the Cherry Orchard Festival. Expect dreamy, glamorous stage tableaus by the director Rimas Tuminas ("Eugene Onegin"), and an extraordinary troupe of actors performing in Russian with English supertitles. "Masquerade" opens in New York fresh from Toronto's Luminato festival (June 9-10), and will finish its North American tour in Boston (June 18-19). LAURA COLLINS-HUGHES

Credit: By THE NEW YORK TIMES

Photograph

Sutton Foster and Peter Hermann in the sixth season of "Younger." (PHOTOGRAPH BY TV LAND); James Gaffigan in Central Park last year leading the New York Philharmonic. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAITLIN OCHS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); "Haniwa Horse," a piece that dates to sixth-century Japan. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART); The band the National will perform in New York this week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON RICHTER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); From "Masquerade," directed by Rimas Tuminas. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VALERY MYASNIKOV); A scene from the film "The Sweet Requiem." (PHOTOGRAPH BY PABLO BARTHOLOMEW/WHITE CRANE FILMS); Jacqueline Green and Solomon Dumas of Alvin Ailey in "The Call." (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA MOHIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Art galleries &museums; Motion picture directors &producers; Parks &recreation areas; Theater; Festivals
Location:	Russia New York England China Central Park-New York City NY Japan

People:	Berninger, Matt Wang, Nanfu Skripal, Sergei V Duff, Hilary Green, Jacqueline Ailey, Alvin Lermontov, Mikhail IUr'evich (1814-1841)
Company / organization:	Name: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; NAICS: 711120; Name: Human Rights Watch; NAICS: 813311; Name: Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; NAICS: 711310; Name: Ailey II; NAICS: 711120; Name: Vakhtangov State Academic Theater; NAICS: 711110; Name: New York Philharmonic; NAICS: 711130; Name: National Gallery of Art; NAICS: 712110
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/08/arts/the-week-in-arts-alvin-ailey-goes-back-to-school-younger-returns-to-tv-land.html
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Database:	Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

LINKS

2 Russians, Believed to Be Agents, Are Among 14 Convicted in Montenegro Coup Plot

Kramer, Andrew E; Orovic, Joseph . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 May 2019: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

A court in Montenegro on Thursday found 14 people, including two Russians suspected of being spies, guilty of plotting a coup in 2016 to prevent the tiny Balkan country from joining NATO.

Prosecutors did not directly accuse the Russians of working for Moscow, but the case turned up possible evidence of an operation by the Russian military intelligence agency formerly known as the G.R.U. of using a nerve agent to poison a former Russian spy living in Britain last year and numerous other operations in the West. The agency has also been accused of interfering in the United States election in 2016.

The Russians, who were tried in absentia and are believed to be in Russia, "knowingly tried to terrorize Montenegrins, attack others, threaten and hurt basic constitutional and social structures," the judge, Susana Mugosa, said on Thursday in court in Podgorica, the capital.

Judge Mugosa sentenced the two, who were referred to throughout the trial by the pseudonyms on their fake passports, Eduard V. Shirokov and Vladimir N. Popov, to 15 and 12 years in prison. It is unlikely they will serve the terms.

Two Montenegrin politicians accused of coordinating with them to disrupt a parliamentary election in October 2016, Andrija Mandic and Milan Knezevic, were each sentenced to five years in prison. The other sentences ranged from parole to eight years in prison.

The 2016 parliamentary vote in Montenegro, formerly a part of Yugoslavia, was viewed as a referendum on membership in NATO, which had been agreed to but had not yet taken effect. On the eve of the vote, more than 20 Serbian nationalists and others were arrested, and eventually 14 people were accused of plotting to disrupt the election and install an anti-NATO government.

Instead, the governing Democratic Party of Socialists fared well enough to remain in power, and the country joined the alliance in 2017.

The trial in Montenegro bolstered the case made by Western intelligence agencies and prosecutors that Russia has sought to undermine rival powers by sowing dissension among allies, disrupting elections and fueling separatist movements.

Often at the heart of those allegations is the ruthless and effective agency formerly called the G.R.U., and now known as the G.U., or Main Directorate. For years it was a black box to foreign governments, but its activities have spilled into the open in recent years with a flurry of operations in the West.

Evidence introduced at the trial showed that the two Russian defendants used crude but effective spycraft, asking one recruit to save a secret number on his cellphone as "taxi for the hotel" and to arrange a clandestine meeting with "an invitation to grab a beer."

The case roiled politics in Montenegro, which has a population of about 600,000 people. The government called it

evidence of a threat to democracy, with critics and defense lawyers saying it was an effort by the president, Milo Djukanovic, to attack domestic political opponents.

People who disputed the Kremlin connection said the evidence showed such bungling that it could not have been a true Russian espionage plot. Money for the coup plot, for example, was wired by Western Union using the headquarters of the G.R.U. in Moscow as the sender's address.

"If Russia wanted to organize a coup here, they could do it in 20 minutes," Mr. Knezevic, one of the defendants and head of an opposition party, said in an interview last fall. "Nobody believes in this coup besides the special prosecutor."

But reckless operations easily unraveled by Western intelligence agencies have been a hallmark of recent G.R.U. activities, and in Montenegro the apparent incompetence of the Russians and those interacting with them did not convince the judge of innocence.

Awakened to the range and recklessness of the G.R.U.'s activities, Western governments are retaliating. In 2018, more than 150 Russian diplomats were expelled from different countries as punishment for the nerve agent attack in Salisbury, England, on a former G.R.U. officer, Sergei V. Skripal. In October, officials in the Netherlands, Britain and the United States accused the agency of a string of cyberattacks against Western institutions.

After prosecutors indicted the two Russians in 2017, they released images of their passports, which showed that the photograph of the supposed Mr. Shirokov matched that of a former Russian military attaché to Poland, Eduard Shishmakov, whom the Poles had expelled for spying.

Suspicion of Russian intelligence ties grew last year, after two Russian men, whom the British government called G.R.U. agents, were accused in the nerve agent attack on Mr. Skripal. He and three other people who were exposed to the agent survived, but one woman died.

The two Russians accused in the Skripal case had nine-digit passport numbers that were just three apart, and the "Shirokov" passport in the Montenegro case was separated from one of them by just 26. Bellingcat, a group analyzing open-source information about intelligence activities, pointed to the similar numbers as evidence that they had been obtained by the Russian spy agency.

Mr. Shishmakov plotted the coup with a Serbian nationalist, Sasa Sindjelic, and members of the Democratic Front, an alliance of right-wing parties, prosecutors said. Mr. Sindjelic became a witness for prosecutors and was not charged. After the trial, he recanted his testimony.

The plan was to claim electoral fraud on the day of the voting and seize the Parliament building, Mr. Sindjelic testified. He described precautions like storing a sensitive phone number under a bland listing and using code for meetings, and he said the Russians had given him encrypted telephones and the equivalent of about \$200,000 to plan the coup.

"I was giving away money like Santa Claus," Mr. Sindjelic testified at the trial. He said he had even considered keeping receipts for all the money he was disbursing.

"I asked if people needed to sign a piece of paper confirming they took the money," Mr. Sindjelic testified.

In this instance, at least, caution prevailed. He said the Russians told him not to.

Photograph

Officers stood guard on Thursday during a high-profile trial in Podgorica, Montenegro. At left, Andrija Mandic and Milan Knezevic received prison sentences for coordinating with others to disrupt a parliamentary election.

(PHOTOGRAPHS BY BORIS PEJOVIC/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK; SAVO PRELEVIC/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject: Evidence; Passports & visas; Trials; Espionage; Intelligence services

Location:	Yugoslavia Russia Netherlands United States--US United Kingdom--UK Montenegro England Poland
People:	Skripal, Sergei V
Company / organization:	Name: Democratic Party; NAICS: 813940; Name: Environmental Protection Agency-EPA; NAICS: 924110; Name: Western Union Financial Services Inc; NAICS: 522320; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization-NATO; NAICS: 928120
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LINKS

C.I.A. Chief Uses Spy Skills to Connect With Trump. Results Are Mixed.

Barnes, Julian E; Goldman, Adam . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]17 Apr 2019: A.15.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- Gina Haspel was trying to brief President Trump early in her tenure as the C.I.A. director, but he appeared distracted. Houseflies buzzing around the Oval Office were drawing his attention, and ire.

On returning to her office, Ms. Haspel found a solution, according to two officials familiar with the episode, and sent it to Mr. Trump: flypaper.

Ms. Haspel, who will give only her second public speech as director on Thursday, has taken the reins of the nation's premier intelligence agency at a difficult moment in its 71-year history, under pressure from a president often publicly dismissive of its conclusions and a White House that views national security professionals with deep skepticism.

As she approaches her first full year on the job, Ms. Haspel has proved an adept tactician, charming the president with small gestures and talking to him with a blend of a hardheaded realism and appeals to emotion. A career case officer trained to handle informants, she has relied on the skills of a spy -- good listening, empathy and an ability to connect -- to make sure her voice is heard at the White House.

But her voice is not always heeded. For all of Ms. Haspel's ability to stay in Mr. Trump's good graces, there is little evidence she has changed his mind on major issues, underscoring the limits of her approach. Mr. Trump's word choices on a range of issues -- Russian interference in elections, Iran's nuclear program, North Korea's leadership and, most important, the culpability and reliability of Saudi Arabia's crown prince -- remain at odds with the C.I.A.'s assessment of the facts.

Unusually for a president, Mr. Trump has publicly rejected not only intelligence agencies' analysis, but also the facts they have gathered. And that has created a perilous situation for the C.I.A.

Current and former intelligence officers assert that it is not Ms. Haspel's role, nor part of her C.I.A. experience, to push for policies. Intelligence leaders should instead focus on delivering facts and assessments about what those facts might mean to policymakers, they said.

Ms. Haspel has served as a bulwark against politicization at the C.I.A., counseling senior agency leaders to focus on their jobs and ignore presidential comments telling intelligence chiefs to "go back to school," former intelligence officers said.

"The C.I.A. is going through tough times because we have a president who says inaccurate things about the intelligence community and his understanding of the facts is questionable," said Nicholas Dujmovic, the director of the intelligence studies program at the Catholic University of America, who served as a C.I.A. officer for 26 years.

"The message to the intelligence community is to hunker down. This will pass."

The first woman to run the C.I.A., Ms. Haspel has focused instead on shoring up the basics, like rebuilding morale, pushing more officers into overseas positions and emphasizing core spy skills like language expertise. All that has

made her popular with the rank and file.

Ms. Haspel declined to be interviewed for this article, which was based on interviews with more than a dozen current and former intelligence officials who have briefed or worked alongside her.

Ms. Haspel remains in good standing with the president in part because she has directed the agency to focus on Mr. Trump's priorities – like tracking and aiding American hostages held overseas – in addition to its regular work, former officials said.

"Haspel is a case officer, and case officers have extraordinary people skills," said Fred Fleitz, a former C.I.A. officer who served on the National Security Council staff in the Trump administration. "They are remarkably good with senior officials. They know how to connect."

The keys to talking to Trump? Realism and emotion

Soon after the president tapped her to run the C.I.A., Ms. Haspel solidified her reputation as one of the most skilled briefers of Mr. Trump, according to people familiar with her presentations.

Last March, top national security officials gathered inside the White House to discuss with Mr. Trump how to respond to the nerve agent attack in Britain on Sergei V. Skripal, the former Russian intelligence agent.

London was pushing for the White House to expel dozens of suspected Russian operatives, but Mr. Trump was skeptical. He had initially written off the poisoning as part of legitimate spy games, distasteful but within the bounds of espionage. Some officials said they thought that Mr. Trump, who has frequently criticized "rats" and other turncoats, had some sympathy for the Russian government's going after someone viewed as a traitor.

During the discussion, Ms. Haspel, then deputy C.I.A. director, turned toward Mr. Trump. She outlined possible responses in a quiet but firm voice, then leaned forward and told the president that the "strong option" was to expel 60 diplomats.

To persuade Mr. Trump, according to people briefed on the conversation, officials including Ms. Haspel also tried to show him that Mr. Skripal and his daughter were not the only victims of Russia's attack.

Ms. Haspel showed pictures the British government had supplied her of young children hospitalized after being sickened by the Novichok nerve agent that poisoned the Skripals. She then showed a photograph of ducks that British officials said were inadvertently killed by the sloppy work of the Russian operatives.

Ms. Haspel was not the first to use emotional images to appeal to the president, but pairing it with her hard-nosed realism proved effective: Mr. Trump fixated on the pictures of the sickened children and the dead ducks. At the end of the briefing, he embraced the strong option.

The outcome was an example, officials said, of how Ms. Haspel is one of the few people who can get Mr. Trump to shift position based on new information.

"Her style and the way she projects herself in these kind of senior situations is disarming, without showing weakness," said Doug Wise, a former C.I.A. officer who has worked with Ms. Haspel.

Big losses and small wins

Co-workers and friends of Ms. Haspel push back on any notion that she is manipulating the president. She is instead trying to get him to listen and to protect the agency, according to former intelligence officials who know her.

C.I.A. officers are warned not to use their recruiting abilities on colleagues or other United States officials. But those skills come naturally and are hard to turn off, former agency operatives said. One unstated practice among C.I.A. station chiefs has long been to recruit the American ambassador, the person in the best position to help them succeed.

And there is little danger of Mr. Trump thinking the intelligence community is bending to his worldview, other officials said. Indeed, probably no example shows the limits of Ms. Haspel's influence better than the administration's reaction to the killing of the Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi.

The C.I.A. assessed that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia, whom the White House has courted, was culpable in the strangling and dismemberment of Mr. Khashoggi.

Many on Capitol Hill found Ms. Haspel and the C.I.A. persuasive. Mr. Trump did not, releasing a long statement

about why he was not going to alter American policy on Saudi Arabia or end support for Prince Mohammed. On other issues, Ms. Haspel has won Mr. Trump's trust by seizing on his interests that intersect with the intelligence community's agenda. Early in her tenure, Mr. Trump asked for updates on hostages held in North Korea, Iran, Yemen and elsewhere. Ms. Haspel told her C.I.A. deputies to prioritize hostage cases, to make sure the latest developments were available in presidential intelligence briefings.

Ms. Haspel, who has extensive field experience with hostage cases, got personally involved in the case of Robert A. Levinson, the former F.B.I. agent and onetime C.I.A. analyst who disappeared in Iran in 2007. She met with Levinson family members in July, weeks after taking office, and has ramped up efforts inside the agency to figure out what happened to him.

Learning from experience

Anxious for one of their own to take the helm, the C.I.A. rank-and-file hailed Ms. Haspel's ascension to the top of the agency. They were coming off the uneven tenure of Mike Pompeo, now the secretary of state, who sowed fear in the agency with his bombastic style, former officials said.

As Mr. Pompeo's deputy, Ms. Haspel served as a buffer, they said, coaching bureaucrats on how to talk to him. She quickly became a trusted adviser, who had credibility from surviving a dark period: the C.I.A.'s interrogation and detention program that grew out of the frantic pursuit for Qaeda conspirators in the months after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Ms. Haspel was chief of base at one of the C.I.A.'s secret prisons in Thailand, where Qaeda terrorists were tortured, including under her watch. She also served as chief of staff to Jose A. Rodriguez Jr., the divisive C.I.A. officer who decided to destroy 92 tapes of agency interrogations, some of which showed torture of a Qaeda terrorist.

During her Senate confirmation hearing last year, senators questioned Ms. Haspel's judgment over her role in the destruction of the tapes. Ms. Haspel defended it as a move to protect C.I.A. officers but said she would consult more widely if she were in a similar situation now. "Experience," she said, "is a good teacher."

Her experience has made her cautious and fiercely protective of the C.I.A., viewing it as in need of safeguarding in a turbulent political environment, lawmakers who have worked with Ms. Haspel said.

Ms. Haspel won the trust of Mr. Pompeo, however, and has stayed loyal to him. As a result, Mr. Trump sees Ms. Haspel as an extension of Mr. Pompeo, a view that has helped protect her, current and former intelligence officials said.

But former officials have wondered how long that will last. Other senior national security officials, bureaucratic veterans like Jim Mattis and H. R. McMaster, saw their influence decline as they pushed policies at odds with Mr. Trump.

Ms. Haspel's relationship with Mr. Trump has kept the agency at the table in the White House, said Andrea Kendall-Taylor, a former C.I.A. analyst who is now a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security.

"But as she continues to present facts and analysis that differ from what the president wants to hear, especially on high-profile issues like Russia and North Korea," Ms. Kendall-Taylor warned, "her influence will wane."

Credit: JULIAN E. BARNES and ADAM GOLDMAN; Eric Schmitt, Michael S. Schmidt and Matthew Rosenberg contributed reporting.

Photograph

Gina Haspel with President Trump on May 21, when she was sworn in as C.I.A. director. Her voice is heard, but not always heeded. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Intelligence gathering; Presidents; National security; Realism; Leadership; Espionage; Intelligence services
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Location:	Iran North Korea Russia
People:	Haspel, Gina Trump, Donald J
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LINKS

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Document 44 of 176

Querying Russian Envoy, Poisoned Man Gets Only 'Propaganda'

Magra, Illiana . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]08 Apr 2019: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- A British man whose girlfriend died after they were both poisoned by a nerve agent thought to have been discarded by Russian intelligence officers in England went looking for answers at the Russian Embassy in London this weekend, asking, "Why did your country kill my girlfriend?"

The startling meeting -- which at times seemed more like a friendly tour of the embassy in South Kensington, an affluent area in West London, than an inquisition of a representative of the government potentially responsible for the death of his girlfriend, Dawn Sturgess, in July -- left more questions than answers.

The meeting between the man, Charlie Rowley, and Russia's ambassador to Britain, Alexander V. Yakovenko, on Saturday was partly arranged by The Sunday Mirror, a British tabloid.

Mr. Rowley met with Russia's envoy nine months after he and Ms. Sturgess were poisoned by a nerve agent that the authorities say was originally used to target a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, in March 2018. But Mr. Skripal's daughter, Yulia, and a police officer were also sickened.

The poisoning was at the center of a diplomatic split between Britain and Russia, leading both countries to engage in tit-for-tat expulsions of each others' diplomats. Mr. Rowley also lost some of his eyesight, suffered strokes and contracted meningitis after the attack.

But on Sunday, the BBC showed images of Mr. Rowley shaking the hands of the smiling ambassador as Mr. Rowley's brother Matthew sat in a wheelchair in the room. The envoy also is seen showing the Britons around the embassy.

"I went along to ask them 'Why did your country kill my girlfriend?'" Mr. Rowley said in an interview with The Sunday Mirror. "But I didn't really get any answers," Mr. Rowley added. "I just got Russian propaganda."

Mr. Yakovenko denied that Russia had been behind the poisonings. He then asked his visitors to pass his "best regards to the parents" of Ms. Sturgess.

"I know how it was hard for them," he said, according to video footage published by The Sunday Mirror, and in an apparent appeal for cooperation, added, "But we should be together, definitely."

Neither The Sunday Mirror nor the Russian Embassy responded to requests for comment on Sunday. Mr. Rowley could not immediately be reached.

Russia has always denied any role in poisoning Mr. Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury, England, with the military-grade nerve agent, Novichok. But the British authorities say it had been the work of at least two Russian intelligence officers, Anatoly V. Chepiga and Aleksandr Y. Mishkin, who were caught on CCTV entering the country and traveling to Salisbury.

In an interview with the state-run Russian network RT, both claimed they were sports nutritionists who had visited Salisbury as tourists because of its remarkable cathedral.

But the British authorities say they believe that the Russians had carelessly discarded the remaining poison, which was found by Mr. Rowley while he was rummaging through a dumpster.

Ms. Sturgess, 44, fell ill in Amesbury, a town in southern England, after Mr. Rowley, 45, gave her a small glass bottle he had found in a box in the trash. He thought the oily substance inside the bottle was perfume. She sprayed

it on her wrist, and rubbed her hands together, he later told the authorities.

A week later she was dead, and he was in a coma.

It was only when he regained consciousness in a hospital that the police told him that the substance was Novichok, he said in an interview with the British television channel ITV in July.

The authorities said at the time that Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess had most likely been accidentally exposed to the poison.

In March, Ewan Hope, the son of Ms. Sturgess, asked President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia to allow British investigators to question the men presumed responsible, telling Mr. Putin, "I am appealing to you as a human being."

"Allow our officers to question these men about my mother's murder," he urged Mr. Putin on the anniversary of the nerve agent attack on Mr. Skripal, according to excerpts from a letter published in *The Mirror*.

In denying its role in the poisonings, Russia has also satirized the episode. In December, RT sent around chocolate replicas of Salisbury Cathedral as holiday gifts.

But on Saturday, the Russian ambassador handed Mr. Rowley a 51-page dossier titled "Salisbury: Unanswered Questions," in which Britain is accused of "inaccuracies and inconsistencies," and of "failing to provide information," according to *The Sunday Mirror*.

Mr. Yakovenko later told reporters that the meeting had been "quite a friendly event." He added of Mr. Rowley: "It was an ordinary conversation between friends. He just wanted to know the truth."

The envoy also told Mr. Rowley that the British police had never asked to interview the two suspects. But Mr. Rowley did not appear to be convinced by much of what he heard.

"He hasn't changed my view that Russia" is responsible, he said.

Mr. Rowley told *The Mirror*, "He said Russia only have small amounts of Novichok because they use it as an antidote and don't produce it any more."

"He said the only countries that produce it now are the Czech Republic and America," he added.

"I said, 'Well, my girlfriend did die; it's only because I washed it off that I'm still here,'" Mr. Rowley said. "He didn't know what to say to that."

Photograph

Russia's envoy to Britain, Alexander Yakovenko, left, with Charlie Rowley, center, and his brother. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RTR, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Diplomatic & consular services; Propaganda; Biological & chemical weapons; Criminal investigations
Location:	Czech Republic Russia United Kingdom–UK England
People:	Sturgess, Dawn Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Rowley, Charlie
Company / organization:	Name: Mirror Group Newspapers; NAICS: 511110
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LINKS

[Find It @ GT](#)

Document 45 of 176

When Chasing Russian Spies, Remember to Text Your Mother

Schwartz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]04 Apr 2019: A.2.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Times Insider explains who we are and what we do, and delivers behind-the-scenes insights into how our journalism comes together.

The veteran C.I.A. operative had some information I wanted. It wasn't much: a little detail for an article I was reporting about Sergei V. Skripal, the retired Russian spy whose poisoning last year sparked a conflagration between Russia and the West. Could we talk on background? No need to put your name in the paper, I told him. Not a chance.

I was in "a dark hole," he informed me when I called one afternoon. And no one would help me out of it.

It had been about five months since Mr. Skripal and his daughter were found twitching on a park bench, and by that point, my colleague Ellen Barry and I might as well have been interviewing the paving stones in Salisbury, the English cathedral town where the two Russians had been poisoned. We had approached spies and their intermediaries from Washington to Moscow and many places in between -- anyone we thought might have some information about the case. Few would even speak with us, and those who did provided little but discouragement.

The call with the retired C.I.A. officer was a low point.

"I wish we were in the other kind of dark hole, where we know the truth but when we publish it someone will kill us," Ellen texted me after I described the call.

I've spent the last year or so trying, mostly unsuccessfully, to dig up novel information about Russia's intelligence services, particularly the assassins employed by the Kremlin to eliminate enemies of the state.

It is an unusual beat that has taken me all over Europe and brought me into the company of some exotic characters, some more willing than others to divulge their secrets.

There was the retired intelligence officer and self-described Stalinist in Moscow who strongly suggested that during his long career he had murdered people at his government's behest. He would not, however, "reveal forms and methods."

In southern Spain, I sat across from an 85-year-old private detective who wore a gun on his hip as he explained his plan to help me reach a particularly secretive Russian source I was after somewhere near Marbella. The catch: We would have to use a paraglider.

Eventually, I found myself at a jail in Ukraine talking with Oleg Smorodinov, a former separatist fighter and all-around ne'er-do-well from eastern Ukraine who has admitted to working as an assassin for the Russian intelligence services and whose tale I described in a recent article.

Oleg was different from anyone I had encountered before in one crucial respect: He talked. A lot. I visited him in jail three times, and we spoke for over six hours. He talked about meeting two Russian handlers he believed were intelligence operatives at a cafe in central Moscow. He talked about their plot to kill six men Russia had deemed enemies and traitors. And he talked in great detail about murdering one of those men, describing the man's last words and the expression on his face after he had fired off eight rounds into his body.

He never gave me a satisfactory answer for why he was so open. At one point, I suggested that his handlers in Moscow might be upset if they knew what he was telling me.

"They may not know," he replied. "What's the difference, the point?"

The article I wrote about Oleg was read widely. Some of its many readers undoubtedly work in the Kremlin -- though, unlike what happened after some of my other articles were published, no officials have weighed in yet. I'm often asked whether in the course of my reporting I've ever felt I was in danger. My mom asks that frequently. "Are you worried about your safety?" she texted after my latest article. "Do not blow me off with a sarcastic answer."

Terrible son that I am, I tweeted a screenshot of our exchange.

For more than a decade now, I've been writing about subjects sure to rattle the Kremlin. But while I assume that at times I'm under surveillance, particularly when I'm in Russia, I rarely worry about it.

I do, however, take precautions. I use encrypted applications to communicate with sources and check in frequently with my editors when I'm on the road.

A retired intelligence officer once told me that when meeting unfamiliar sources I should change the location of the rendezvous at the last minute. It's rude, but it can disrupt a planned assault.

I heed that advice on occasion, but perhaps not often enough for my mom's peace of mind.

Follow the @ReaderCenter on Twitter for more coverage highlighting your perspectives and experiences and for insight into how we work.

Photograph

Michael Schwirtz interviewing Oleg Smorodinov in a courthouse in western Ukraine. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSEPH SYWENKYJ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

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Document 46 of 176

Killing Made No Sense. Then the Assassin Talked.

Schwartz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]31 Mar 2019: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

RIVNE, Ukraine -- The target lived on the sixth floor of a cheerless, salmon-colored building on Vidinska Street, across from a thicket of weeping willows. Oleg Smorodinov found him there, rented a small apartment on the ground floor, and waited.

He had gotten the name from his two handlers in Moscow. They met at the Vienna Cafe, a few blocks from the headquarters of Russia's domestic intelligence agency, and handed him a list of six people in Ukraine. Find them, they told Mr. Smorodinov, and he set off. He was already boasting to friends that he was a spy.

Each person on the list was assigned a code name related to flowers. One was 'briar.' Another was 'buttercup.' The target, a man named Ivan Mamchur, was called 'rose.' To Mr. Smorodinov, he was a nobody, an electrician who worked at the local jail. To the handlers in Moscow, though, he was significant.

"Drenched in blood up to his elbows," they told him.

The surveillance was uneventful. At 7 each morning, Mr. Mamchur left his wife and daughter, rode his bicycle to work, and returned each evening at 6. "Like clockwork," Mr. Smorodinov recalled. In his idle hours, Mr. Smorodinov drank beer in the parking lot where an old woman kept watch on a clowder of cats.

Then, on Sept. 16, 2016, Mr. Smorodinov's phone buzzed with a text message from Moscow.

"The rose has to be picked today," he remembered it saying. "Tomorrow, it will no longer be relevant."

In the grim hallway outside the man's apartment, Mr. Smorodinov positioned himself, a cigarette in one hand and in the other, a pneumatic pistol modified to fire real bullets and fitted with a silencer.

"I took the pistol," he later recalled, "and thought 'what will be, will be.' "

As Mr. Mamchur emerged from the elevator, Mr. Smorodinov called his name and fired until the magazine was

empty.

Mr. Mamchur did not fall immediately, but turned toward his assassin, stumbling a few steps before gasping.

"It was not me," he said. "I'm not guilty."

Then he dropped to the concrete floor.

Mr. Smorodinov fled to Moscow, where his handlers treated him to dinner at a Japanese sushi chain called Two Chopsticks. For his work, they bought him a Mercedes van, pictures of which he posted on social media. But they withheld a portion of a promised \$5,000 because he had left the murder weapon in Ukraine.

They told him not to worry. No one would ever catch him. No one would ever care. At the time, Mr. Smorodinov was not certain why they had asked him to kill Ivan Mamchur but now he thinks he knows.

"It was revenge," he told me. "Most likely revenge."

'They Have a Workflow. They Murder People.'

I met Oleg Smorodinov last October, during his trial at the Rivne City Court in Ukraine, about two years after the murder. He had been arrested a few months after it happened while crossing back into Ukraine to surprise an ex-girlfriend for her birthday.

A mistake. She helped tip off the police.

"He killed a person," she told me later by text message. "Let him answer for it."

The courtroom was tiny, about the size of a large bedroom in a New York apartment, if one equipped with a steel cage. I approached Mr. Smorodinov as he was being locked in. He was dressed in a blue track suit and perked up when I introduced myself as a reporter. He was surprisingly eager to talk and invited me to meet him afterward, in the jail.

The trial had been underway for weeks but seemed like a formality. Ukrainian prosecutors say he was a hit man for Russia's intelligence services. His DNA was found on the murder weapon and on cigarette butts collected at the scene. Mr. Smorodinov admits he pulled the trigger.

The three judges sat glumly beneath a nylon Ukrainian flag, listening impassively as a prosecutor read out the results of a ballistics test and a gory medical examiner's report.

Everyone seemed bored. Violence is normalized in Ukraine.

For months, I had been traveling in Russia and Europe, reporting on the poisoning last year in England of the former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal. It had touched off a geopolitical confrontation and brought talk of a new Cold War. Britain and its allies enacted sanctions and expelled more than 150 Russian diplomats after blaming the nerve agent attack on two officers from Russia's military intelligence service, the G.R.U.

For Ukraine, Russian interference was an old reality. Russian special forces had seized Crimea in February 2014 and since then, the Kremlin has supplied arms, funding and troops to fuel a separatist war in eastern Ukraine that has cost 13,000 lives.

Assassinations happen frequently enough in Ukraine that they are often just blips in the local news cycle. In 2006, Russian President Vladimir V. Putin signed a law legalizing targeted killings abroad, and Ukrainian officials say teams of Russian hit men operate freely inside the country.

"For the intelligence services, as bad as this sounds, murdering people is just part of the work flow," said Oleksiy Arestovych, a retired officer in Ukraine's military intelligence service. "They go to work, it's their job. You have a work flow, you write articles. They have a workflow, they murder people."

"It doesn't really worry them," he said. "They celebrate it, mark it, without much sentiment."

The Skripal poisoning had woken the West up to this. In Britain, authorities are now reviewing the cases of several Russians whose deaths on British soil were not initially deemed suspicious. In the United States, a bipartisan group of senators recently introduced legislation that would require the State Department to determine whether Russia should be deemed a state sponsor of terrorism.

"There's no evidence to suggest that Russia can be deterred from making these kinds attacks," said Daniel Hoffman, a former C.I.A. station chief who helped negotiate the release of Mr. Skripal from a Russian prison in 2010. "It really does fall on the people at risk to try to conceal their location and be on the lookout for any signs

that the Russians might be targeting them."

Russian officials have denied their country's involvement in the Skripal poisoning. In a text message, Dmitri S. Peskov, Mr. Putin's spokesman, said the Kremlin knew of neither Mr. Mamchur nor Mr. Smorodinov. I had come to Ukraine to learn more about G.R.U. assassins like those accused of trying to kill Mr. Skripal. Ukraine was where the agency had proved itself to Mr. Putin by helping to seize Crimea back in 2014. But now, G.R.U. fingerprints were turning up around the world.

Several years ago, while working in Moscow, I had gotten to know a handful of Russian intelligence officers. A retired colonel once listed the qualities that he, as a professional, believed a successful assassin should possess. "To do this," he told me, "you need spirit and training and hatred. And in addition to hatred, you also need money and desire."

But these were elite assassins. More often, I learned, if the Kremlin wants you dead, they send someone like Oleg Smorodinov, an amoral hired gun willing to kill in exchange for a few thousand dollars and a Mercedes van.

Liquidators

At the Rivne jail, the guards confiscated my scarf. They worried that Mr. Smorodinov could use it to strangle me. In earlier photos, Mr. Smorodinov does look menacing, with a sailor's blocky build and a boxer's misshapen face. But jail has aged him, melting away his musculature.

"A grandpa," he sighs. He is 51.

In reality, he is the one who should be afraid. Rivne is a proudly anti-Russian city in western Ukraine with a monument that bears the spectral faces of the 21 local sons who have died in the fighting still underway in eastern Ukraine against the Russian-backed separatist groups.

Mr. Smorodinov is an ethnic Russian who moved to eastern Ukraine as a teenager. He later fought with the same separatists loathed in Rivne.

For his safety, he is being held in the smaller transit jail rather than the main detention center where the victim, Mr. Mamchur, worked. One guard told him a story, perhaps apocryphal, about an accused Russian assassin who was jailed in Kiev, the capital. He was dead within 40 minutes.

In the first of our three meetings, Mr. Smorodinov unfolded a map of central Moscow that he had drawn from memory on graph paper. He pointed to a pencil-shaded block labeled Vienna Cafe, around the corner from a square representing the headquarters of Russia's Federal Security Service, or F.S.B., the main successor of the Soviet K.G.B.

"This, in general, is where I met with my handlers, in the cafe," he said.

Mr. Smorodinov has never been an intelligence officer, or so he says. Though he had once served in the Soviet navy and worked for a few years as a police officer, he has dedicated much of his adult life to organized crime, having done time in prison for bribery and extortion. Between prison stints, he worked as a sex trafficker, shuttling women from Ukraine to clients in Moscow, a former criminal associate told me.

Mr. Smorodinov described the murder in minute detail, including the text message from Moscow, the floral code names and the stunned expression on Mr. Mamchur's face as he collapsed to the floor.

But he is trying to persuade prosecutors, and me, that he was an unwitting assassin, duped by the two mysterious handlers he met at the Vienna Cafe, men he knew only as Philipp and Maksim.

Mr. Smorodinov said he was steered to them by contacts he made at weapons expos in Moscow. He settled in the Russian capital in 2015 after he was injured by artillery fire while fighting in eastern Ukraine.

Nikolai A. Gorbunov, whose company OOO Zenit sells accessories for AK-style assault rifles, recalled Mr. Smorodinov and said Russian intelligence agents frequently attend the expos.

At one expo, Mr. Smorodinov said someone linked to Wagner, the Russian mercenary outfit, mentioned a need for fighters in Syria, where Russian troops are supporting the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

"I wanted to go to Syria," he said, "honestly, to shoot, to fight, to earn money."

But when the plan fell through, Mr. Smorodinov said the Wagner contact introduced him to Maksim and Philipp. He was thrilled. He equated it to a job in the Interior Ministry.

"I was thinking of my pension -- to work several years and retire to collect my pension," he said.

When he arrived in Rivne, Mr. Smorodinov said he understood that his mission was to document Mr. Mamchur's movements. The murder was supposed to have been carried out by a team of what he called "the liquidators."

"Liquidators only work for one day, an hour, two, three, not more," he said. "They work under the principle that they don't exist. As soon as they arrive, they're gone to a different city."

An inconvenient fact in this scenario is that during his stay in Rivne, his accomplice, Kostya, identified by investigators as Konstantin Ivanov, brought him two guns, one of which had a silencer. In their communications, alluding to the code names of the targets, the two men referred to the guns as "watering cans."

"We're dealing with flowers here," Mr. Smorodinov said.

Mr. Smorodinov insisted that even as he fired the shots into Mr. Mamchur, he thought it was a charade, a way to test his mettle. The bullets could have been blanks, he said.

"I'm standing there, and go up to him and say, 'Get up.' It's not a test," he told me. "That's what went through my head. 'It's not a test.'"

It is not an especially convincing defense. Aleksandr Gatiyatullin, who headed the criminal gang Mr. Smorodinov was involved with in the early 2000s and served time in prison with him, described him as thickheaded, willing to take serious risks without thinking much about the consequences.

Weeks before Mr. Mamchur's murder, Mr. Gatiyatullin said, Mr. Smorodinov confided in him and his wife, claiming that he had been made a lieutenant in the F.S.B. and was working in Ukraine on a special mission.

"We laughed and laughed. No one ever took him seriously," Mr. Gatiyatullin said. "Then this murder of Mamchur happened. I see he posts photos of a Mercedes minibus and I wonder where he got the money for it."

He added: "I think some F.S.B. guys called him for a meeting, saw what an idiot he was and thought they could use him."

The List

On the day Mr. Smorodinov was arrested, Ukraine's prosecutor general, Yuri V. Lutsenko, held a news conference and described the murder as further evidence that Ukraine was "in a state of war." Ukraine's news media quickly lost interest, chalking it up as just another bloody episode in Russia's continuing interference.

Prosecutors seem only marginally interested in why Mr. Mamchur had been a target. To Ukrainian officials, the answer seemed obvious.

"This is part of an interlinked chain of crimes, the main purpose of which is to destabilize the country," Serhii Knyazev, the chief of Ukraine's national police, told me.

But it wasn't that simple. From the morning I met him in the courtroom, Mr. Smorodinov had talked about a list of six names. They were all Ukrainians, and his first assignment had been to locate each of them. Once he did that, he was sent to Rivne.

In jail, he gave me the passcodes to his social media accounts and told me I could find the list on his computer, which was in Moscow with his nephew. When I telephoned the nephew, Vladimir Dobrovolsky, he said he knew about his uncle's trips to Ukraine to "surveil people."

"I tried not to get involved in that," Mr. Dobrovolsky said. "With the intelligence services, the less you know, the better you sleep."

He emailed me the files and I found a flood of photos of naked women and one document named "List of Workers," a title Mr. Smorodinov said he had concocted as a ruse in case anyone seized his computer.

The six men were of different ages and, except for two of them, lived in different cities. Ukrainian investigators and prosecutors hadn't been very interested. One police investigator told me he had never even seen the list and asked if I could forward a copy. I never did.

I had assumed the people on the list were somehow tied to Russia's continuing conflict in Ukraine, that the Kremlin was seeking revenge against individuals tied to the fighting. And as I investigated the names, I learned that they did all share a military background.

But there was a surprise. What tied them together wasn't the Ukraine conflict. Instead, it was a different Russian

war.

A Different War

In early August 2008, I rushed from Moscow to Tbilisi to cover the conflict breaking out between Russia and the Republic of Georgia. I had never covered a war and hired a driver to take me and a photographer to get as close to the action as possible. It did not take long.

On a road in the middle of a field, we were stopped by Georgian military police officers, who said they were looking for spies. I don't remember the exact chronology of what happened next: I had gotten out to speak with the officers, when an antiaircraft battery began firing toward a Russian bomber that I strained to see against the bright blue of the sky.

Then came a terrible whooshing sound that kept getting louder until it felt like my ears were going to pop. I dove into a ditch just as the bombs hit the road. A squadron of Russian Air Force fighter jets, Su-25s, appeared, pummeling everything in view -- apartment buildings, the fields on either side of us.

One thing stands out vividly: the antiaircraft guns firing round after round into the sky. I have a memory of a single Su-25 coming down in flames, floating like a leaf, back and forth, until it hit the ground.

The war lasted only five days and ended with a crushing victory for Moscow. But in many ways, the conflict was an embarrassment for Russia's intelligence services. Years earlier, Ukraine had secretly sold sophisticated antiaircraft systems to Georgia, allowing for the effective defense that I had seen.

Russian officials refused to believe that Georgian soldiers had the skill to operate the complicated systems. Ukrainian troops, they insisted, must have helped.

For Mr. Putin -- who has described Russians and Ukrainians as "one people" -- it was an act of bloody treachery. "We don't know who decided to deliver equipment and weapons from Ukraine during the conflict, but whoever it was, that person made a huge mistake," Mr. Putin said at a news conference shortly after the war.

"That the weapons delivered in the course of military action were operated by specialists from Ukraine is a crime," he continued. "If we find confirmation of this, we will accordingly make contact with the people who did it."

Ukraine's Russia-backed Party of Regions, then in the opposition, began an investigation and published the names of Ukrainian soldiers believed to have been involved. One man, described in the report as having "participated in military actions," was on Mr. Smorodinov's list.

So were two others who appeared in books about the war written by Russian historians. Ukrainian officials confirmed that a fourth man on the list was in Georgia but provided no details. A fifth man confirmed to me that he was in Georgia, but denied any involvement in the war.

The Times is withholding the names of the men for their safety.

"Fortunately, these citizens are alive," Mr. Knyazev, the national police chief, told me. "At least for now."

Mr. Mamchur was third on the list, the only name highlighted in green font.

Initially, Ukrainian officials were reluctant to tell me that he had been in Georgia. His wife refused to speak with me. But a co-worker at the Rivne jail, Serhii M. Klymchuk, said Mr. Mamchur spoke fondly about his time in Georgia and praised the efficiency of the Georgian military.

Eventually, officials confirmed that Mr. Mamchur had been in Georgia when the war began, as a commander in the Ukrainian army's third special operations regiment, an elite contingent whose fighters had also seen action in Iraq and Afghanistan. But they insisted that neither he nor any other Ukrainian soldier took part in the fighting.

Yuri I. Yekhanurov, who was Ukraine's defense minister at the time, said he rushed to evacuate the soldiers when the fighting started.

"I remember that time well," he said in an interview. "For me, it was a problem to extract my people."

The Kremlin has never believed that. After the war, Russian state television produced an all-out propaganda campaign that included a documentary by Arkady Mamontov, whose films often serve as a barometer of Kremlin sentiment.

In one scene, Mr. Mamontov is shown berating a bewildered, shirtless man inside his home in Ukraine, accusing

him of firing on Russian jets during the war.

"Are you a former soldier?" Mr. Mamontov shouts as the man fumbles for answers. "Ukrainians and Russians we're brothers – and you shot them down," he said.

Curiously, a month before Mr. Mamchur was killed, Russian television again aired the Mamontov documentary.

Mr. Smorodinov assumes he will be found guilty. In more than six hours of interviews, not once did he express remorse. Had he not been caught, he acknowledged, he most likely would have continued working his way down the list, name by name.

He is hoping to be swapped for one of the dozens of Ukrainians imprisoned in Russia, but the Russians have yet to show any interest.

"He doesn't understand that no one needs him," Mr. Knyazev, the national police chief, said. "He's forgotten, written off, a used bullet. Our enemy, unfortunately, has a lot of people like him in reserve."

Credit: By MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ; Stanislav Kozliuk and Sergey Korovayny contributed reporting from Rivne, Ukraine.

Photograph

Oleg Smorodinov in a defendant's cage in a courtroom in Rivne, Ukraine, where he was standing trial for killing an electrician. Prosecutors say he was a hit man for Russia's intelligence services.; The residential building where Mr. Smorodinov killed the electrician, Ivan Mamchur. Mr. Mamchur lived on the sixth floor. Mr. Smorodinov rented a small apartment on the ground floor from where he kept an eye on him.; The headstone of Mr. Mamchur in Rivne. "It was not me. I'm not guilty," he told his assassin before dropping dead. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOSEPH SYWENKYJ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16)

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Year After Skripal Attack, Russia Far From Chastened

Schwartz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]05 Mar 2019: A.11.

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FULL TEXT

UNITED NATIONS – Far from wishing the world would forget the name Sergei V. Skripal, Russia seems to be emphasizing it.

Exactly one year ago, Mr. Skripal, a former Russian spy, was found twitching beside his unconscious daughter on a park bench in Salisbury, England, both poisoned, British authorities later said, with a potent nerve agent administered by two officers from Russia's military intelligence agency. In response, Britain and its allies expelled more than 150 Russian diplomats and imposed punishing economic sanctions, pushing the Kremlin further into isolation from the West.

Rather than ignoring the anniversary, however, Russia punctuated the occasion on Monday with an hourlong news conference at the United Nations and a 52-page report rehashing the episode in detail, amplified by extensive coverage on its English-language government channel, RT.

Russian officials also have tried to turn the tables, accusing Britain of violating international law by refusing to provide Russian consular officials access to the Skripals, who survived and whose whereabouts has not been

made public.

"Where are they kept? We have absolutely no information about this," Dmitry Polyanskiy, Russia's first deputy permanent representative at the United Nations, said at the news conference, in which he suggested the Skripals might have been victims of "a forced detention or even abduction."

There are reasons to shield the Skripals from contact with representatives of the country that the British authorities say tried to kill them. The British government has said the Skripals are free to make contact with Russian diplomats should they wish, but have so far declined to do so.

Over the past year Russian officials have sought to exploit holes in the complicated narrative of the poisoning to suggest an anti-Russian conspiracy. Mr. Polyanskiy pointed to early inconsistencies in news reports about the effects of the nerve agent, which the British authorities said was a Soviet-developed weapon known as Novichok. He also said the absence of surveillance video in the vicinity of the Mr. Skripal's home was suspicious. Ultimately, he insisted, the British government had failed to provide any convincing evidence of Russian involvement.

"They are satisfied," he said, referring to British officials. "They achieved what they wanted, they created this illusion that Russia was behind this crime and they don't bother to produce any other proofs."

For months, the British authorities have released quite a bit of information about the poisoning and the evidence indicating who carried it out and how. In September, the Crown Prosecution Service charged two men, identified as officers in Russia's military intelligence agency, known as the G.R.U., with attempted murder, conspiracy and possession of a nerve agent. They men were identified by the aliases they used on their Russian passports, Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov.

With the help of Britain's ubiquitous CCTV camera coverage, the authorities were able to assemble a detailed map of the men's journey from London to Salisbury, where investigators say they sprayed the poison on Mr. Skripal's front door using a bottle disguised as a vial of perfume.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the global body that monitors chemical weapons stockpiles, confirmed the conclusions of British scientists about the use of Novichok, traces of which were found in the East London hotel room where the suspects had stayed.

On Monday, Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain traveled to Salisbury, where she praised the emergency workers, public servants and residents for their response to the attack. In a statement, she said the anniversary was "an important milestone for Salisbury as it emerges from the shadow cast by the use of chemical weapons on the streets of our country."

A year on, British law enforcement agencies continue to investigate the poisoning, leaving open the possibility that others could be implicated. British news outlets and an investigative organization, Bellingcat, have identified a third G.R.U. officer who arrived in London on the same day as the other suspects.

The officer, whom Bellingcat has identified as Denis Sergeev, was also reported to have been in the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, on the day that a prominent Bulgarian arms dealer was poisoned in 2015. Last month, Britain's ambassador to Bulgaria, Emma Hopkins, announced that British officials were assisting in the investigation of that poisoning.

Besides the Skripals, the nerve agent sickened three others, including a police officer and two Britons who picked up the discarded bottle believed used in the poisoning. One of them, Dawn Sturgess, died.

Shortly after Britain identified Mr. Petrov and Mr. Boshirov as suspects, they gave an interview to the editor of RT, in which they claimed to be sports nutritionists on holiday in Salisbury to see its famous cathedral. RT later distributed chocolate models of the cathedral as holiday gifts.

And President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, far from chastising the G.R.U. for entangling Russia in a confrontation with the West, heaped praise on the agency at an event last November celebrating its centenary, describing it as "legendary."

So far, there is no indication that any of the punishments conceived by the West have changed Russia's behavior. Mark Galeotti, an expert on the Russian intelligence services, wrote in an op-ed in The Moscow Times on Monday

that while Russia has of late appeared to step back from its most aggressive actions, "the battle goes on." "The Kremlin is enjoying the reputation of being a swashbuckling maverick, ruthless, dangerous and decisive," he wrote. "This has a certain value, not least in deterring the fainthearted."

Photograph

Dmitry Polyanskiy, Russia's deputy United Nations envoy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SETH WENIG/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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Son of Fatally Poisoned Briton Tells Putin, 'The Least She Deserves Is Justice'

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]04 Mar 2019: A.6.

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FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The son of Dawn Sturgess, a British woman fatally poisoned by a nerve agent discarded in a residential area by Russian intelligence officers, on Sunday asked President Vladimir V. Putin to allow British investigators to question the men presumed responsible, telling Mr. Putin, "I am appealing to you as a human being."

"Allow our officers to question these men about my mother's murder," he urged Mr. Putin on the anniversary of the nerve agent attack, according to excerpts from a letter published in The Mirror. "The least she deserves is justice." Ms. Sturgess, 44, and her boyfriend, Charlie Rowley, 45, were collateral damage in the attack on Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy who had been resettled in Salisbury, a quiet city in southern England. Since Ms. Sturgess's death, Russian officials have repeatedly made light of the episode. In December, the state-run television network RT sent chocolate replicas of Salisbury Cathedral as holiday gifts.

On Sunday, Ms. Sturgess's 20-year-old son, Ewan Hope, addressed Mr. Putin directly.

"He needs to show he's capable of showing some humanity to our family," he said. "I would ask him to imagine how he would feel if he was in my shoes."

Ms. Sturgess and Mr. Rowley, who survived the poisoning, had struggled with addiction, and when they fell ill on July 1 -- nearly four months after the attack on the Skripals -- the police initially suspected an overdose or a contaminated batch of drugs.

But their symptoms -- foaming at the mouth, pinpoint pupils and hallucinations -- were similar to those that had emerged with the three previous victims: Mr. Skripal, his daughter, Yulia, and a detective who was exposed while responding to the crime.

Mr. Hope described his frustration at watching the two Russian intelligence officers presumed responsible, Anatoly V. Chepiga and Aleksandr Y. Mishkin, give a poker-faced interview to RT. They claimed they were sports nutritionists who had visited Salisbury because they had heard of its remarkable cathedral.

"I was so angry," he told The Mirror. "They looked so smug and happy with themselves. But I felt a sense of relief as well because I thought something would happen and that they would be caught. Now I feel like we've been lied to." Mr. Hope continued, "The strange thing now is we know who killed Mum, the evidence is there and we know how it happened, but we can't get them to face justice." In the absence of a trial, he said, "it's going to upset me for the rest of my life."

At the time of the poisoning, Ms. Sturgess was living in a state-run shelter that houses people with drug and alcohol problems. Other residents spoke fondly of her, describing her as a maternal figure who propped her door open with a sock so that her friends could stop in to see her at any time.

She had been buoyed by her relationship with Mr. Rowley, who was recovering from a heroin addiction.

"I trust Charlie with my life and he gets me the best gifts ever," she wrote on Facebook.

It was one of those gifts, a vial with a counterfeit label identifying it as Nina Ricci perfume, that killed her.

Ms. Sturgess is believed to have sprayed the substance on the inside of her wrist on July 1. A friend who was with Ms. Sturgess and Mr. Rowley said that their condition rapidly deteriorated. Ms. Sturgess lived for a week after her exposure.

Her family said little at the time, but expressed anger as the anniversary of the poisoning approached.

Her mother, Caroline, recalled that she was allowed to touch her dying daughter only if she was wearing protective gloves. At one point, she said, she reached up to wipe away a tear and was warned by an official not to touch her own face.

Her son, Mr. Hope, also recalled touching her as she lay in the hospital.

"I touched her hair through the gloves and told her: 'I love you, Mum. I just want you to get better,'" he told The Mirror before she died. "I'm worried I'm going to lose my mum."

Photograph

Dawn Sturgess

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Murders &murder attempts; Biological &chemical weapons
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Sturgess, Dawn Putin, Vladimir Rowley, Charlie Hope, Ewan
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/03/world/europe/skripal-dawn-sturgess-putin-salisbury.html
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Skripal House Called Safe After Extensive Cleanup

Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]02 Mar 2019: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- It has a lot going for it: a two-story house on a leafy cul-de-sac, a short walk from schools, parks and a train station.

And then there's the downside.

A year after a nerve-agent attack nearly killed a Russian former spy and his daughter, the enormous job of decontaminating his former home in Salisbury, England, is complete, the government announced on Friday.

Hundreds of specialists spent a total of 13,000 hours cleaning up 13 sites in and around Salisbury that had been tainted by the nerve agent, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said. The house where Sergei V. Skripal lived, and where he and his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, were poisoned, was the last to be pronounced

decontaminated.

Though Mr. Skripal appears to have been the target of the attack, five people were sickened by exposure to the chemical, including one who died.

Breathing through respirators and clad in sweltering hazardous materials suits, the decontamination workers – including 190 British Army and Royal Air Force personnel – combed through each of the sites and sent about 5,000 samples for testing at the nearby government laboratory at Porton Down, many of which had to be destroyed. They even removed the roof of the Skripal house.

Backing them up were contractors and people from multiple local, county and national government agencies. On Twitter, Tyrone Urch, an Army lieutenant general, called it "a monumental and courageous effort by thousands of people."

The environment department said it had turned over control of the house to Wiltshire Council, the local government for the county that includes Salisbury.

"Work will begin shortly to reconstruct and refurbish the house so it can return to being a home again," Alistair Cunningham, who is leading the council's recovery efforts, said in a statement. The council is talking with people in the neighborhood "as it is important their views are taken into account on how it is used in the future."

It remains to be seen whether they will have trouble persuading people who might live in the house, or use it in some other way, that every last microscopic trace of one of the deadliest toxins devised by science has really been removed.

The announcement that the work was done, and that the house had been handed over to the county council, ended one chapter in a bizarre and lethal story, straight out of a Cold War espionage novel, that has badly strained relations between Russia and the West.

Mr. Skripal had worked for the Russian military intelligence agency, G.R.U., until he was imprisoned for passing information to the British. In 2010, he was sent to Britain in an exchange of imprisoned agents, and settled in Salisbury, a small cathedral city southwest of London.

On March 4, 2018, he and his daughter, who was visiting from Russia, were found unresponsive on a park bench in Salisbury. British scientists identified the poison involved as a Novichok, a type of nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union.

Britain contends that agents of Mr. Skripal's former employer flew to London under assumed names, took a train to Salisbury, applied the Novichok to the front door handle of his home, returned to London and flew home, all in the span of two days. Britain's allies have backed up the findings of London's investigation, which produced substantial evidence that was made public.

The Kremlin denied any involvement, floating various theories, ranging from the plausible to the contradictory to the absurd, but offered no evidence.

The incident led to sanctions against Russia, the expulsion of about 150 Russian government employees from Britain and its allies, and the expulsion from Russia of a similar number of people working for those countries.

Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey, the first police officer to enter the Skripal home on the day the first victims were found, was exposed, despite wearing protective gear, and became very ill. He recovered, but he and his family had to give up their home and everything in it, rather than take the risk that he had brought traces of the deadly chemical home with him.

Places the Skripals and Sergeant Bailey had visited were cordoned off and tested for contamination, the police gave instructions to the public not to pick anything up off the ground, and a sense of dread gripped Salisbury. Tourism, a pillar of the local economy, plummeted.

Nearly three months after the Skripals took ill, two more people, Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley, were sickened at Mr. Rowley's house in Amesbury, a nearby town, and the cycle of fear, quarantines and public warnings began again.

Investigators said Mr. Rowley had found a discarded perfume bottle and had given it to Ms. Sturgess, his girlfriend – but it was the vessel the Russians had used for the Novichok. She died and he survived.

In the end, officials said, traces of Novichok were found in homes, stores, a shopping center, a pub, a restaurant, a church, offices, a police station and two ambulance stations.

Through it all, Mr. Cunningham said, "Salisbury has proved it is resilient, positive and looking forward."

Photograph

The roof of Sergei V. Skripal's house was removed during decontamination. Nerve agent was found on the front door handle. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VICKIE FLORES/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

Subject:	Biological &chemical weapons; Councils
Location:	England Russia Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Sturgess, Dawn Rowley, Charlie
Company / organization:	Name: Army-UK; NAICS: 928110; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Environmental Protection Agency--EPA; NAICS: 924110
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Document 50 of 176

Putin's Main Weapon: The 'Intelligence State'

Sipher, John . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]25 Feb 2019:
A.23.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

According to this year's National Intelligence Worldwide Threat Assessment and Senate testimony by top-ranked intelligence officials, Americans can expect Vladimir Putin's Russia to continue its efforts to aggravate social, political and racial tensions in the United States and among its allies.

So, to best prepare for future Russian assaults, we should look to the past and study the mind-set of the Cold War K.G.B. – the intelligence service in which President Putin spent his formative years. The history of the brutal Soviet security services lays bare the roots of Russia's current use of political arrests, subversion, disinformation, assassination, espionage and the weaponization of lies. None of those tactics is new to the Kremlin.

In fact, those tactics made Soviet Russia the world's first "intelligence state," and they also distinguished it from authoritarian states run by militaries. Today's Russia has become even more of an intelligence state after Mr. Putin's almost 20-year tenure as its strongman. In the U.S.S.R., the party ruled. It was only after the rise in the 1980s of Yuri Andropov – Mr. Putin's role model and mentor – that the K.G.B. became the state's most important institution. Then, a decade after the Soviet Union fell, Mr. Putin rose to power and recruited many of his former K.G.B. colleagues to help rebuild the state. The result is a regime with the policies and philosophy of a supercharged secret police service, a regime that relies on intelligence operations to deal with foreign policy challenges and maintain control at home.

Mr. Putin and his cronies had thrived in an empire where the K.G.B. was the sword and shield of the state, so they regularly return to their tried-and-true weapons when dealing with 21st-century problems. The intelligence services have even been used to covertly drug Russia's Olympic and Paralympic athletes – the mark of an ultimate "intelligence state."

How did this start? After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, Vladimir Lenin established a secret police service called the Cheka to be his main weapon of repression and terror. Under Felix Dzerzhinsky, a ruthless revolutionary, the Cheka was tasked with keeping the leadership in power at all costs. It served as judge, jury and executioner for the

state, using sabotage, censorship, repression and murder to keep the population in line and external enemies at bay.

As Dzerzhinsky remarked, "We stand for organized terror," and "the Cheka is obliged to defend the revolution and conquer the enemy even if its sword does by chance sometimes fall upon the heads of the innocent."

During Dzerzhinsky's time, monarchists, socialists, White Russians and outsiders all conspired to overthrow Lenin and the Bolshevik government. The main underground resistance bringing these forces together was the Monarchist Union of Central Russia, which operated secretly throughout Europe and inside the Soviet Union. But unbeknown to those in that organization, it was a trap -- a full-fledged honey pot created by the Cheka to draw in enemies of the Soviet Union so they could be identified, neutralized and killed. This fledgling secret police service hoodwinked the established intelligence services of Europe, and in so doing showed its guile, patience and cruelty. Britain's "Ace of Spies," Sidney Reilly, who became Ian Fleming's model for James Bond, was just the most famous individual to be lured to the Soviet Union, interrogated and executed. Misplaced trust became a model for a century of Soviet and Russian subversive efforts, and the Cheka remained a source of pride for future Russian intelligence operatives. Indeed, Russian intelligence officers -- including Mr. Putin -- still celebrate Chekist Day every Dec. 20.

Over the decades, the Soviet and Russian secret services developed tools and habits based on their Chekist experience that set them apart from their counterparts in the West. Rather than focusing on collecting and analyzing intelligence, they developed expertise in propaganda, agitation, subversion, repression, deception and murder.

Indeed, the first senior defector from the new Bolshevik state, Boris Bajanov, fled to British India in 1928 with assassins on his tail. Bajanov, Stalin's personal secretary, reported that the Kremlin's primary foreign policy was to use covert means to weaken its enemies from within, so that if war came, it would be easier to win.

The Cheka and its successors sowed chaos abroad with propaganda, disinformation and sabotage while managing mass arrests and gulags at home. Bajanov added that Soviet cultural and diplomatic institutions were simply cover mechanisms meant to hoodwink Western intellectuals, foment commercial and political unrest and undermine democracies from within. In other words, their purpose was to throw dust in the eyes of educated people in the West. Over the years, defector after defector came to the West with the same story.

Indeed, the Kremlin deployed an army of spies and recruited informants around the world to steal secrets, spread disinformation and support terrorists and rogue regimes. The security services built their hybrid warfare on a form of deception called "reflexive control" -- an effort to manage the perceptions of adversaries so they would be fooled into acting against their own interests. The method included distracting, exhausting and confusing opponents in order to ultimately control their animating narrative. "Operation Infektion" was one such worldwide disinformation effort. Its goal was to spread the story that the virus that caused AIDS was a weapon the Pentagon had designed to destroy developing countries. The Russian operation to influence the 2016 American presidential election was a more recent example.

Assassination, too, is nothing new. When he arrived in the West, Bajanov explained that the Soviet leadership would send assassins to kill anyone who knew the true nature of the Kremlin's inner workings. This practice has continued. The unsuccessful 2018 Russian attempt to murder Sergei Skripal in Britain is almost indistinguishable from the Cold War K.G.B. assassination of the Ukrainian nationalist Stepan Bandera in 1959. Assassins covertly tracked Bandera to his Munich address and used a K.G.B.-manufactured gun that sprayed poison to make Bandera's death appear to have been a heart attack. It was only a K.G.B. assassin's eventual defection years later that revealed the truth.

As the United States seeks to engage Russia, it must realize that the Kremlin tiger will not change its stripes. Russia's efforts to forcefully defend itself stem from a profound sense of insecurity, bred from centuries of invasions and breakdowns of the state. Few countries have suffered more. So a central element of Russia's statecraft since the days of the czars has been deceiving and weakening its enemies from within. In that sense, Russia's well-sharpened tools of political tradecraft are explainable and logical, even though condemnable.

Western unity is our best defense. Mr. Putin seems to know he cannot compete with the West on a level playing field. He wields his Chekist fog machine to bewilder, confuse and paralyze his enemies because it is all he has. And as long as our politics are tribal, and Americans see domestic political opponents as the real enemy, the Kremlin's efforts to leverage and exploit our weaknesses will continue.

We should avoid threatening Russia's sovereignty and instead work with our allies to defend ourselves vigorously and in unison from cyber, physical and hybrid attacks, and push back when threatened.

This being the case, President Trump's anti-European sentiments are surely his greatest gift to President Putin.

John Sipher is a former chief of station for the C.I.A. and a co-founder of Spycraft Entertainment.

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This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Illustration

DRAWING (DRAWING BY MAX LÖFFLER)

DETAILS

Subject:	Cold War; Politics; Intelligence gathering; Intelligence services; Foreign policy; Security services; Propaganda; Assassinations &assassination attempts; Espionage; Bolshevism; Opinions
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK Europe United States--US New York India Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR
People:	Trump, Donald J Bandera, Stepan Fleming, Ian Putin, Vladimir Lenin, Vladimir (Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov) (1870-1924)
Company / organization:	Name: Department of Defense; NAICS: 928110; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130; Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Senate; NAICS: 921120
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LINKS

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Document 51 of 176

NATO Wants Troops to Share. That May Be a Risk.

Palko Karasz . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]22 Feb 2019: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- "Want to see more of Lasse L. Matberg?" NATO asked on Facebook last October about an officer who acted as the public face for a recent military exercise. The following week, it said, he was to take part in Trident Juncture 2018, NATO's "biggest exercise in decades."

Mr. Matberg's image, sometimes seen with Norway's Armed Forces, has appeared prominently on his Instagram account, which has 630,000 followers. He and other NATO soldiers have also been active on Facebook, with 5,000 photos published under the hashtag #Tridentjuncture, showing soldiers posing with guns, in the field or in the cockpit of a military aircraft.

Publicizing exercises like Trident Juncture has become an essential tool for NATO to get its message out and to showcase its military strength -- especially in the face of fake news spread online by Russia. But such information published on social media platforms carries risks, researchers from the Strategic Communications Center of

Excellence warned this week.

An article published by the independent organization, which provides NATO with advice and expertise and is based in Riga, Latvia, said that during a recent exercise in a NATO nation, researchers were able to collect sensitive information, track troop movements and find soldiers' approximate location via social media.

It's the latest warning that in addition to electronic devices such as smartphones, Instagram and Facebook also can unintentionally pull back the curtain on military activities meant to be kept out of the public eye. In January 2018, Strava, a fitness app that posts a map of its users' activity, unwittingly revealed the locations and habits of military bases and personnel, including those of American forces in Iraq and Syria.

And on Tuesday, Russian lawmakers voted to bar troops from using smartphones and recording devices, and from posting anything online about their military service, after soldiers' digital traces were used to reveal actions the Kremlin wanted to keep secret.

Here's what the researchers from the Strategic Communications Center of Excellence found.

Public posts can help find and track soldiers

The researchers embedded with a unit that played the adversary in an exercise by a NATO member state. They discovered that Instagram provided timely information about the exercise, and Facebook features like friend suggestions allowed them to find soldiers through their connections.

They not only used data that people shared publicly on social media to connect with soldiers. They also set up "honey pot" pages designed to lure the soldiers in and closed groups on Facebook, using both fake accounts and some that impersonated real people to engage with their targets. They sought details about the exercise, its participants and its targets.

The results were in line with a recent article by Bellingcat, an online investigative group that recently gained prominence when it identified the Russian spies suspected by Britain of poisoning the former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia, in Salisbury, England.

"Soldiers who take part in large-scale exercises, regardless of nationality, love to share photographs of their trip on social networks," according to the Bellingcat article. It added that Instagram photographs and tagged locations offered many opportunities to monitor NATO's Trident Juncture exercise last year.

Soldiers shared sensitive data

By tracking soldiers on social media, researchers were able to discover the dates of the exercise and to follow the movements of battalions and pinpoint their exact locations.

Through direct contact with the soldiers, researchers managed to find their approximate location, including those of crucial personnel.

All participants targeted shared pictures of military equipment, the article said.

Facebook's response revealed loopholes

Facebook identified and took down some of the fake pages in a matter of hours or weeks, but the closed groups, one fake profile and one profile impersonating a real person were not discovered, the researchers wrote.

Researchers also alerted Facebook to a feature that allowed them to find users' workplace information even when the users actively blocked those details from the public.

"The privacy features and settings of social media platforms cannot be trusted not to leak information to other layers of the social media platform," the article said.

Social media guidelines in NATO states aren't aligned

The article concluded that at the current level of security, an adversary would be able to collect personal data and track and target soldiers participating in an exercise in order to influence their behavior.

It said that social media companies should consider changes to prevent private data leaks. But it found that some of the weaknesses the researchers were able to exploit were "human flaws that can only be addressed through better training and stricter control."

NATO member states, including Britain, the United States and France, have published guidelines for social media use and warned their troops of the risks it posed. But the guidelines were different in each nation.

In response to the article, NATO said in an emailed statement on Thursday that it was "important that NATO Allies continue to train their troops to be vigilant, including online."

"At the same time, we are strengthening our cyberdefenses and taking all necessary measures to protect our networks."

Photograph

British soldiers in NATO's Trident Juncture exercise last year. Social media posts may have allowed outsiders to track the operation. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LEON NEAL/GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Photographs; Military exercises; Smartphones; Social networks; Researchers; Military personnel
Location:	Russia United States–US Latvia United Kingdom–UK Iraq England Syria France Norway
People:	Skripal, Sergei V
Company / organization:	Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization–NATO; NAICS: 928120; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130
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At Site of a Poisoning, A Russian Flag Stings

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]18 Feb 2019: A.7.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Two weeks before the anniversary of a nerve-agent attack against a former Russian spy in Salisbury, England, someone unfurled a large Russian flag on the city's cathedral overnight, in what residents took to be a mockery of the ordeal they suffered last year.

Images of the Russian flag, fluttering from scaffolding around the cathedral, were widely circulated on social media Sunday morning.

The dean of Salisbury, Nicholas Papadopoulos, called it "a remarkably stupid thing to do."

He said it "makes light of the huge personal tragedies involved, and the damage done to the city by the unprecedented nerve agent attacks on Salisbury last year."

It was not clear who climbed the scaffolding surrounding the building to put up the flag, which was hastily removed Sunday morning. The flag has been handed over to the police, the cathedral said.

"What a stupid stunt," the Conservative lawmaker John Glen remarked on Twitter. "Mocking the serious events sadly experienced in Salisbury last year."

The attempted assassination of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, with a military-grade nerve agent on March 4, 2018, upended life in Salisbury for much of last year and soured diplomatic relations between Russia and Britain, with each country expelling some of the other's diplomats.

Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, survived the attack, but Salisbury suffered sprawling collateral damage for many months.

A detective who touched traces of the poison fell ill, and his family had to vacate their home. Two Britons who came across a discarded perfume box that contained a vial of the poison collapsed. One of them, Dawn Sturgess, 44, died.

As the anniversary of the poisoning approached, her parents, Stan and Caroline Sturgess, described their lasting

anger, including at the British government for failing to warn the community that a former Russian spy had been settled among them.

They said family members were told to wear protective gloves when they touched Ms. Sturgess in the hospital as she died.

"At one point I was stroking her hair and I started crying," Caroline Sturgess told The Guardian last week. "I went to wipe a tear away. A consultant told me, 'Don't touch your face.'"

But the case has been the subject of humor in Russia.

The Russian authorities, who denied responsibility for the attack on Mr. Skripal, took a defiant, mocking tone throughout the investigation, even when the attackers were revealed to be decorated officers in Russia's military intelligence service.

RT, the Russian state-run broadcaster, sent chocolate models of the Salisbury cathedral to other news agencies as a holiday gift.

Last month, a Russian toymaker released a board game called Our Guys in Salisbury, in which players race to move figures resembling the two men charged in the attack, Anatoly Chepiga and Aleksandr Mishkin, to a spray bottle bearing a green skull and crossbones.

Mikhail Bober, who invented the game, said he did it out of exasperation at Western news reports of the crime.

"In some ways, this was an idea of our answer to Western media: Enough already," he told The Guardian.

Photograph

A Russian flag was put up outside the cathedral in Salisbury, England, on Sunday, in what residents took to be a mockery of the poisoning last year of a former Russian spy and his daughter. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SPIRE FM)

DETAILS

Subject:	Social networks; Families &family life; Poisoning; Poisons; Diplomatic &consular services
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People:	Skripal, Sergei V Sturgess, Dawn Skripal, Yulia
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Bulgarians Suspect Link To Poisoning Of Russian

Schwartz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]12 Feb 2019: A.7.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The Bulgarian authorities have reopened a criminal investigation into the poisoning of a prominent arms dealer over questions about a possible connection with the nerve agent attack on Sergei V. Skripal, the former Russian spy poisoned in Britain last year.

Bulgaria's chief prosecutor, Sotir Tsatsarov, said Monday that a suspected Russian intelligence officer, identified in news reports last week as potentially involved in the Skripal case, had also visited Bulgaria in April 2015, around the time that the arms dealer, Emilian Gebrev, was poisoned with an unknown substance.

Last week, the British newspaper The Telegraph reported that the two men indicted in the poisoning – identified by British authorities as active officers in Russia's military intelligence agency – were accompanied by a third man, an

officer using the alias Sergey Fedotov, when they traveled to Britain last spring. In his remarks on Monday, Mr. Tsatsarov said the same man had visited Bulgaria three times in 2015, confirming a report published last week by the investigative site Bellingcat.

"We are trying to establish all moments while he was on Bulgarian territory, the hotels he stayed in, the vehicles he used, contacts with Bulgarian citizens," Mr. Tsatsarov said at a news conference.

The Russian government has denied any involvement in the attack on Mr. Skripal, and the two Russians named by the British authorities have said they were tourists.

At the news conference with Mr. Tsatsarov, Britain's ambassador to Bulgaria, Emma Hopkins, who met on Monday with Bulgaria's prime minister and law enforcement officials, said Britain and Bulgaria had been working closely on the case for months.

"We are working in a joint team and a close partnership, and we are going to find out the facts in this case," Ms. Hopkins said.

Doctors initially believed that Mr. Gebrev had a stroke after he collapsed at a reception he was hosting in Sofia, Bulgaria's capital, and slipped into a coma. But when his son and one of his company's executives were hospitalized with similar symptoms a short time later, the authorities opened a criminal investigation on suspicion he had been poisoned.

Mr. Gebrev, who with the others survived the poisoning, could not be reached for comment. He has told Bulgarian news outlets that he was unsure why someone might want to poison him.

Investigators have so far failed to identify the substance used in his poisoning. Mr. Tsatsarov said a Finnish laboratory, enlisted by Mr. Gebrev, had found traces of organophosphates, which are used in fertilizers, but no evidence of any substances banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention. Investigators also detected a high concentration of chlorine in the arugula that Mr. Gebrev ate in a salad around the time he was believed to have been poisoned, Mr. Tsatsarov said.

The authorities decided to reopen the investigation in October, Mr. Tsatsarov said, after Mr. Gebrev raised the possibility that the substance used in the poisoning could have been Novichok, the same nerve agent used on Mr. Skripal.

Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were found incapacitated on a park bench in the town of Salisbury in March 2018. Though emergency personnel at first suspected a drug overdose, it was quickly determined the pair had been poisoned with Novichok, a sophisticated and highly potent strain of nerve agent developed in the Soviet Union. British authorities later said that two officers from Russia's military intelligence agency, known as the G.R.U., had applied the substance to Mr. Skripal's front door using a container disguised as a perfume bottle. Mr. Skripal and his daughter survived and remain in hiding. A British woman who was also exposed to the nerve agent died several months later.

Last week, Bellingcat, which has covered the Skripal case closely, reported that the third officer had traveled extensively around Europe in the years before the Skripal poisoning. He arrived at the seaside resort of Burgas, Bulgaria, on April 24, 2015, Bellingcat reported, four days before Mr. Gebrev was hospitalized.

Credit: MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ; Boryana Dzhambazova contributed reporting from Sofia, Bulgaria.

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Poisons; Intelligence services; Terrorism; Indictments
Location:	Bulgaria Russia United Kingdom–UK Europe
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Gebrev, Emilian Tsatsarov, Sotir

URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/11/world/europe/bulgaria-poisoning-russia-skripal.html
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LINKS

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Plan by Britain to Suspend Visas for Rich? Suspended

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Days after saying that it was about to suspend a controversial visa program that gives wealthy investors a fast track to British residency, the government said on Wednesday that the program remained in force, without providing an explanation.

Last week, the immigration minister, Caroline Nokes, announced that the special visas would be temporarily suspended from midnight on Friday as part of a drive to crack down on corruption and organized crime. The government said it would overhaul the program, which has been widely criticized as allowing foreigners with ill-gotten gains to buy their way into the country and launder their money in Britain.

But several days after its announced deadline, the government still had not put in place new restrictions on what are formally called Tier 1 visas and commonly known as golden visas. That allowed immigration lawyers to continue submitting applications.

A spokesman for the Home Office confirmed on Wednesday that the visas had not been suspended, while reaffirming the government's commitment to overhauling the program. "A further announcement will be made in due course," the spokesman said, declining to provide any more information.

The visas, introduced in 2008, have been especially popular among wealthy people from Russia, China and the United Arab Emirates. They contributed to a flood of money that has buoyed British real estate and financial markets.

Under the program, a foreign national who invests 2 million pounds, about \$2.5 million, in assets in Britain can apply for permanent residency after five years in the country. Investing £5 million allows a person to apply after three years, and £10 million permits application after two years.

The program started to draw criticism after the government's Migration Advisory Committee published a report in 2014 questioning its economic benefits. The British authorities have also grown increasingly concerned about the origins of money being invested.

In the aftermath of the poisoning of the Russian former spy Sergei V. Skripal on British soil this year, the Home Office said it would review more than 700 investor visas issued to wealthy Russians.

Under new rules outlined last week, visa applicants would have to provide comprehensive audits of all their financial and business interests and show that they have had control of their funds for the last two years.

The government decided to keep the program running rather than suspend it, partly to address objections from other government departments, The Times of London reported.

"There were eyebrows raised when the change of policy was hastily announced through a press release with no prior consultation with immigration law practitioners and no formal Home Office notice," said Philip Barth, the head of immigration at the Irwin Mitchell Private Wealth law firm.

"To have backtracked so quickly," he said, "shows that much more care needs to be taken with this kind of policy."

DETAILS

Subject: Immigration policy; Passports &visas

Location: China Russia United Arab Emirates United Kingdom--UK

People:	Skripal, Sergei V Nokes, Caroline
Company / organization:	Name: Irwin Mitchell; NAICS: 541110; Name: Times of London; NAICS: 511110
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/12/world/europe/uk-golden-visas.html
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U.K. Pauses 'Golden Visa' For Wealthy

Ceylan Yeginer . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]07 Dec 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The British government is preparing to suspend a special visa program that allows wealthy investors to fast-track their settlement in the country, part of a new drive to crack down on money laundering.

The Tier 1 visas will be suspended from midnight on Dec. 7 until the Home Office introduces tighter restrictions to tackle corruption and organized crime.

"We will not tolerate people who do not play by the rules and seek to abuse the system," Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said in a statement on Thursday.

What are Tier 1 visas?

They are not called "golden visas" for nothing. They provide a faster route for wealthy investors coming from outside the European Union and Switzerland to settle in Britain.

The program was introduced in 2008 to attract wealthy foreign nationals willing to invest large amounts of capital in Britain. Billions of pounds have poured into London over the past decade, following an influx of global elites who have benefited from the program.

It peaked in 2014, after 1,172 visas were granted.

The visa program has been especially popular among Russian oligarchs and wealthy people from China and the United Arab Emirates. More than 1,000 investment visas were granted in the 12-month period ending in September 2018.

Can you afford a golden visa?

To qualify, foreign nationals must put down a minimum of 2 million pounds (around \$2.5 million) as an investment in Britain.

Such an investment in United Kingdom bonds, share capital or companies allows investors to apply for permanent residency within five years.

For a £5 million investment, they can apply for permanent residency after three years.

An investment of £10 million can open the door to permanent residency after two years.

After that, the nationals theoretically could apply for citizenship.

Is there a Russian link?

The visa program has always had its critics, with anticorruption campaigners railing against Britain's openness to ill-gotten riches from overseas and the foreigners who invest them. But it reached a fever pitch after a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, was poisoned on British soil with a nerve agent in Salisbury, England.

Prime Minister Theresa May's government signaled then that it would review the cases of 700 Russians who were granted visas to live in Britain under the Tier 1 visa scheme. Soon afterward, the visa renewal for the Russian billionaire owner of the Chelsea football team, Roman Abramovich, was mysteriously delayed.

Mr. Abramovich later surfaced in Israel, where he had apparently immigrated under the law of return, which guarantees citizenship to any Jew wanting to move there.

What are the problems?

Criticism of the program can be traced as far back as 2014, after visa applications soared. The government's Migration Advisory Committee filed a report that said the scheme brought limited economic benefits because most of the investors had bought fixed-interest loan securities known as gilts, meaning that they were effectively

loaning the government money instead of investing in the country.

"We do not need such investment to fund the deficit. We are selling around £300 million of gilts every day -- therefore the capital market is working very efficiently," the report said.

While investors and their families spend money in Britain and generate revenue, the favorable impacts are typically exaggerated, the committee found. As the benefits were being questioned, the authorities grew concerned over the origins of funds being invested into the country.

This year, the government introduced "unexplained wealth orders," forcing those suspected of serious crimes to explain the provenance of their wealth and assets.

The National Crime Agency estimated that £100 billion in "dirty money" was being funneled into Britain each year, mainly from Russia, Nigeria, Pakistan and the Far East.

What restrictions are planned?

After the visa program is suspended on Friday, the Home Office will conduct an investigation before reintroducing it with stricter regulations.

Under the new rules, visa applicants will have to provide audits of all their financial and business interests using firms registered in the United Kingdom, and show that they have had control of their funds for at least two years, the Home Office said.

Changes will also be introduced to increase the benefits of the investment to British companies.

DETAILS

Subject:	Passports &visas; Citizenship
Location:	Switzerland Israel Nigeria United Kingdom--UK England China Pakistan United Arab Emirates
People:	May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Nokes, Caroline
Company / organization:	Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/06/world/europe/uk-golden-visa-suspended.html
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Officer Says Family Lost Everything In Poisoning

Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]24 Nov 2018: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The British police officer who was poisoned in a nerve agent attack on a Russian former spy has said that he and his family had to abandon all their belongings because of possible contamination -- not just their home and cars, but every item in them, from family mementos to their children's toys.

"We lost all of our possessions, including the kids' -- everything the kids own, we lost all that," Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey told the BBC in an interview broadcast on Thursday. It was his first public account of his experiences since the March 4 attack in Salisbury.

"We lost everything," he said. "It's been very difficult to come to terms with that."

British news media have reported that the government will compensate Sergeant Bailey and the other victims of the attack, which used a Soviet-developed Novichok nerve agent, but this has not been officially confirmed. In all, the attack killed one person and sickened four others, who may have suffered lasting physical harm.

The use of a nerve agent on British soil set off an international uproar, prompting Britain and its allies to impose sanctions on Russia and to expel about 150 Kremlin employees, many of whom were suspected of being spies. Russia expelled a similar number of Western officials in retaliation.

Western officials say the Novichok attack was an attempt to assassinate Sergei V. Skripal, a former officer in Russian military intelligence. In 2006, Russia convicted him of selling secrets to the British and imprisoned him. He was sent to Britain in a spy swap four years later.

British officials say two Russian agents carried out the assassination mission, spraying the deadly substance on the handle of the front door of Mr. Skripal's house in Salisbury. He and his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, who was visiting from Russia, came into contact with it and became extremely ill, but they survived.

Two other people were poisoned almost three months later; one of them, Dawn Sturgess, died, while the other, her boyfriend, Charlie Rowley, recovered. Officials say the couple had found and handled a perfume bottle that the Russian agents had used to transport the Novichok before carelessly discarding it.

On the night of March 4, after the Skripals were found unconscious on a park bench but before it was clear what had sickened them, three officers of the Wiltshire Police went to their home to investigate. Sergeant Bailey said he was the first one into the house, meaning he was the one who grasped the door handle.

The officers wore protective suits, including gloves and masks, he told the BBC, and later took them off and bagged them for disposal. He said he did not know how, despite his protective gear, he had made contact with the nerve agent.

Back at the police station, "my pupils were like pinpricks and I was sweaty and hot, and at the time I put that down to being tired and stressed," Sergeant Bailey said. He went home, and it was not until two days after the Skripals had taken ill that he went to a hospital for treatment.

"Everything was juddering -- I was very, very unsteady on my feet," he said. "My whole body was dripping with sweat."

After doctors told him that he had been poisoned with a nerve agent, he said, "I was petrified."

Sergeant Bailey was not affected as severely as the Skripals, and unlike them, he never became comatose. He was released after 16 days in Salisbury District Hospital.

"Physically, I think I've bounced back pretty well," he said. Psychologically, "that's a different kettle of fish."

Author/Affiliation

Follow Richard Pérez-Peña on Twitter: @perezpena .

Photograph

Bailey

DETAILS

Subject:	Biological &chemical weapons
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Sturgess, Dawn Rowley, Charlie
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130
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Document 57 of 176

Leader of Russia's Spies Dies After Illness

Macfarquhar, Neil; Schwirtz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]23 Nov 2018: A.12.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW -- The head of Russia's military intelligence agency, who oversaw the hacking of the Democratic Party's computers during the United States' 2016 presidential election, died on Wednesday after a long illness, Russian state news agencies reported.

Col. Gen. Igor V. Korobov, 63, had not been seen in public for months and was notably absent from a ceremony on Nov. 2 marking the 100th anniversary of the military intelligence agency, known as the G.R.U.

Historically a secretive, little-understood agency, the G.R.U. under General Korobov emerged as Russia's primary tool of global disruption. Mr. Korobov was sanctioned by the Treasury Department for the release of emails stolen from the Democratic Party in support of Donald Trump's campaign in 2016.

Under his watch, the G.R.U. was implicated in the theft and publication of documents belonging to the presidential campaign of Emmanuel Macron in France, the hacking of computers of the global antidoping watchdog and the poisoning of a former G.R.U. officer, Sergei V. Skripal, with a highly potent nerve agent in Britain this year.

G.R.U. operatives also play a key role in the wars in Ukraine and Syria.

Such operations have demonstrated Russia's ability to project its limited power well beyond its borders and to remain a relevant international player that the West is still struggling to reckon with.

The officer expected to succeed General Korobov is Vice Adm. Igor O. Kostyukov, who had been serving as acting director because of Mr. Korobov's illness, according to Russian news reports.

The admiral sat next to President Vladimir V. Putin during the public ceremony commemorating the organization's 100th anniversary.

Admiral Kostyukov, 59, who was sanctioned by the United States, twice, was also linked by the American government to cyberattacks. Educated as a naval officer, he served abroad as a military attaché before joining the G.R.U., the news reports said.

Like his late boss, he helped plan and direct Russian operations in Syria, although no details about his role are public. He received a "Hero of Russia" award in 2017 for his military service.

Although the Twitter feeds of numerous Russia watchers in the West filled with black humor about the short life expectancy of any G.R.U. leader, especially after a string of bungled overseas operations, General Korobov's death was not considered all that untimely in Russia.

He had cancer, according to various independent publications, plus the average life expectancy for Russian men, although it has risen by about a decade to 66 in recent years, is still far lower than that of men in most Western countries.

The speculation was fed partly by the fact that the death of the general's predecessor, Col. Gen. Igor D. Sergun, occurred nearly three years ago under cloudy circumstances at a similar age. Despite some reports that he had dropped dead in the Lebanese capital, Beirut, during a stopover on a trip to Syria, the government insisted that General Sergun, 58, had died in Russia.

General Korobov was appointed head of the G.R.U. by Mr. Putin in January 2016. The general's absence in recent months had fueled rumors about an impending leadership shake-up at the agency.

Russian news agencies cited a Defense Ministry statement that described the general as a "true son of Russia, a patriot of the Fatherland." And at the G.R.U.'s anniversary ceremony this month, Mr. Putin praised the agency for its "unique capabilities."

Though General Korobov is one of Russia's top military officials, very little is publicly known about him. According to his sparse biography on the Defense Ministry's website, he joined the armed forces in 1973 and joined the G.R.U. in 1985.

Despite Mr. Putin's recent laudatory remarks, the G.R.U. has had its share of missteps lately. Just weeks after the British authorities released photographs and aliases of two G.R.U. officers suspected of poisoning Mr. Skripal in Salisbury, England, in March, researchers with the investigative group Bellingcat uncovered the officers' true identities and travel itineraries primarily using publicly available information.

In October, officials in the Netherlands revealed details about a botched attempt by four agency operatives to hack

into the computers of the world's chemical weapons watchdog in The Hague. The operatives were carrying computers with details from previous missions, along with an airport taxi receipt showing that they had been picked up outside a G.R.U. headquarters building in Moscow.

Still, the agency's activities have put Russia's adversaries on edge and have provoked fierce reaction from the West. Russia has been hit with wave after wave of sanctions as a result of its election interference. After Mr. Skripal was poisoned, Britain and many allies expelled more than 150 Russia diplomats, many believed to be undercover intelligence operatives.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Credit: NEIL MacFARQUHAR and MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ; Neil MacFarquhar reporting from Moscow, and Michael Schwirtz from New York.

Photograph

Col. Gen. Igor V. Korobov

DETAILS

Subject:	Rites &ceremonies; Poisoning; Life expectancy; Political leadership; Political parties; Sanctions; Military intelligence; Intelligence services
Location:	Beirut Lebanon Russia Netherlands United States--US New York United Kingdom--UK England Syria France Ukraine
People:	Trump, Donald J Skripal, Sergei V Macron, Emmanuel Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Democratic Party; NAICS: 813940
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/21/world/europe/korobov-gru-russian-intelligence.html
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Last updated:	2018-11-23
Database:	Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

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Document 58 of 176

A Taste Before Dying

Mishan, Ligaya . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]11 Nov 2018: M2.109.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

THE GREEN TEA was poured from a porcelain pot in a wood-paneled piano bar at the Millennium Hotel in London. It had been laced with lemon, honey and a radioactive isotope of polonium, a highly unstable element first identified in 1898 by the chemist Marie Curie. She named polonium after her homeland, Poland, which at the time did not exist as a nation-state, its territory having been parsed out and claimed by Russia, the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The name was an intentionally political act, as was the isotope's appearance in that poisoned cup more than a century later, in 2006, presented by a former K.G.B. agent to Alexander Litvinenko, a Russian dissident and defector, who drank it and died.

As long as there have been power structures and people teetering at the top of them, there have been assassinations. Those most at risk surround themselves with bodyguards trained in Krav Maga and Secret Service agents armed with Sig Sauer P229 pistols. But poison is trickier to defend against, an invisible enemy: The best ones are colorless, odorless, tasteless and traceless, vanishing into food or drink without any sign of contamination. From the dawn of the Persian Achaemenid Empire in the sixth century B.C. to the sustained hold of Vladimir Putin over the Russian Federation today, it has long been believed that the only way to detect the presence of poison is to make someone of lesser importance take the first bite or sip, then wait and see if they survive.

In ancient Persia, a cupbearer would sip the wine -- from a spoon so that his lips never touched the cup -- before offering it to the king. The Macedonians appointed edeatoai (tasters), who were also responsible for supervising

seating arrangements at formal banquets. This was not a lowly, thankless position but a mark of honor: At one point, Alexander the Great's edeatros was Ptolemy, the trusted general who would eventually seize control of Egypt after his superior's death. The Romans, both republican and imperial, had praegustatores (literally, foretasters) drawn from slaves and freedmen, for whom the role could lead to higher rank. Halotus, a eunuch who tasted food for the emperor Claudius in the first century A.D., wound up a rich procurator, a provincial official.

Note, however, that Alexander died at 32, having fallen violently ill after a drunken night; some historians argue that there was poison in his wine, which somehow got past the edeatros. And Claudius died on Halotus's watch, supposedly from eating *Amanita phalloides*, otherwise known as the death-cap mushroom, slipped onto his plate on the orders of his wife, Agrippina. His son Britannicus was dispatched shortly afterward, at 13, with the praegustator cleverly circumvented: According to the historic record in the "Annals of Tacitus," "A drink, still harmless, very hot, and already tasted, was handed to Britannicus; then, when he declined it as too warm, cold water was poured in, and with it the poison" – likely of plant origin. The system failed.

Nonetheless, poison has come back in vogue in the shadow world of espionage – a privileging of subterfuge over brute force in keeping with the insidious expansion of warfare to the virtual world, lending everything the sheen of falsehood and conspiracy. Our ways of murder, state-sponsored or not, may have become more sophisticated with each technological advance, and yet poison, elegant, arcane and deadly, endures. In 2011, the Chinese timber tycoon Long Liyuan went into cardiac arrest after eating a hot pot whose ingredients included cat meat and *Gelsemium elegans*, or heartbreak grass, a flowering plant native to China and Southeast Asia with toxic alkaloids (kin to strychnine) that trigger respiratory failure. (A government official reportedly confessed to the crime.) A year later, remains of the same plant were found in the stomach of the deceased Alexander Perepilichny, a Russian financier in London who collapsed suddenly while cooperating with Western investigators looking into a multimillion-dollar fraud case. In each instance, the weapon was nothing more than a crumble of leaves.

IN TRUTH, no taster can guarantee a leader's survival. Poisons are unpredictable, their outcomes depending on the victim's size, age, gender, metabolism and organ health. Arsenic might take effect in two hours or four days; occasionally, its symptoms are as mild as a stomach bug. In high doses, strychnine, the poison of choice in Agatha Christie's 1920 debut, "The Mysterious Affair at Styles," can induce spasms and respiratory failure within 15 minutes of ingestion, but a smaller amount may start manifesting later and still prove as fatal. Only cyanide, with its trailing scent of bitter almonds, acts quickly, capable of causing death within a few minutes – thus its purported popularity in pill form among World War II spies, in case of capture.

So the hiring of food tasters is best understood as a cosmetic gesture. Often they're part of a protective entourage, a cohort whose primary goal is less to shield the figure at the center than to threaten and unsettle others. Putin is said to rarely touch food at banquets outside of Russia. Nicolae Ceausescu, the general secretary of the Romanian Communist Party from 1965 to 1989, brought his own taster to an event at Buckingham Palace in 1978. (The queen was not amused.) Sometimes tasters are simply a means of "quality control," as Gyaltsen Phensok, who cooked for the Dalai Lama in the late 1950s, put it; he recalled a taster once advising him that the yogurt was too sour, so he put sugar into it. American presidents are followed around the world by Navy mess specialists – cooks, essentially – who monitor their food, with one going so far as to check whether mushrooms served to George W. Bush had been sautéed in wine, because the specialist thought (incorrectly) that the president abstained from alcohol even in food.

But a taster isn't just a bodyguard, taking a bullet with each bite. There's an intimacy to the act of sharing food. Vetting someone's meal by putting it in your own mouth is perhaps not so different from animal mothers chewing their offspring's food, breaking it down so it's safe to eat – a technique called kiss feeding, which some scientists think might have been an evolutionary precursor to romantic kissing. In 1988, Saddam Hussein, then the president of Iraq, sentenced to death his eldest son, Uday, for murdering Saddam's beloved valet and food taster, Kamel Hana Gegeo. (His affection had limits, however: Uday ended up exiled to Switzerland instead.)

Only the most paranoid – or perhaps the guiltiest – tyrants become truly obsessive about what they eat. In North Korea under Kim Jong-il, every grain of rice was inspected and "only those with perfect form were presented," his

former personal chef noted in a pseudonymously written biography of the Dear Leader, published in Japan in 2003. Sometimes food tasters have become accidental beneficiaries of such precautions: Margot Wölk, coerced into being one of Adolf Hitler's tasters toward the end of his days in his Wolfsschanze bunker in occupied Poland, was terrified by her mission but also acknowledged that "the food was delicious, only the best vegetables," while the rest of the Reich was subsisting on rations.

OVER THE YEARS, high-profile figures have tried to find other defenses against poisoning. In Qing dynasty China, emperors wielded silver chopsticks, inspecting their gleam as proof that no poison was present, since it was theorized that toxicity would tarnish the metal. (Eunuchs also tasted the food beforehand, just in case.) In the late 13th century, Pope Boniface VIII kept a stash of knives that were said to be carved from unicorn horn that would sweat if put in contact with poison. Mithridates VI, who ruled Pontus, a Persian satrapy on the Black Sea, during the second and first centuries B.C., survived a poisoning attempt by his mother, Queen Laodice, after his father was poisoned. Rather than live in fear, the king studied toxicology and fine-tuned a daily prophylactic that included tiny doses of poison, with the goal of eventually making himself immune.

Today, food tasting is a dying profession – and no longer in the literal sense. In 2003, to safeguard the food for visiting President George W. Bush, the Thai government deployed mice, whose diminutive size would encourage faster onset of symptoms; the Chinese government did the same at the 2008 Beijing Olympics on behalf of the athletes. Bypassing tasting altogether, the official physician to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey announced three years ago that a special laboratory had been built in the new presidential palace expressly to test meals for poison.

However, fewer modern poisons rely on consumption, which makes them even harder to anticipate. In 2017, at Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur International Airport, two women targeted Kim Jong-nam, the older half brother of Kim Jong-un, the current supreme leader of North Korea, by slapping him on the cheeks with the nerve agent VX; his autopsy suggested that he died within 20 minutes. Novichok, a series of nerve agents secretly developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, was used earlier this year in the attempted murder of Sergei V. Skripal, a Russian spy turned double agent for Britain. The chemical was swabbed on the handle of Skripal's front door in Salisbury, England, which may explain why he survived – he absorbed only a small amount through the skin, albeit enough to leave him (and his 33-year-old daughter) near death for weeks.

These newly engineered poisons represent a horrific frontier in technological innovation. Yet they remain essentially archaic, achieving the same goal as an ancient Roman's application of crushed belladonna. They're also administered in the same ageless spirit, with coldblooded premeditation and stealth, by paranoid oligarchs anxious to consolidate power and to eliminate rivals, enemies or simply those who have displeased them. Erdogan's laboratory in Turkey has thus far turned up little more than the residue of pesticides in fruits and vegetables – a reminder that the modern world contains many threats to our existence beyond those sponsored by the state. But what is life without risk? In a 1989 biography of Japan's wartime emperor, Hirohito, who ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne in Japan in 1926 and renounced his status as a "living god" in 1946, the foreign correspondent Edward Behr wrote of Hirohito's unfulfilled yearning for fugu (puffer fish). The fish is a treasured national delicacy but was historically forbidden to emperors because its liver is suffused with the poison tetrodotoxin. Before the fish is consumed, that compound is mostly removed by chefs specifically trained and licensed to do so. Not entirely removed, however: A lingering trace is left, to numb the lips – and to remind us that every exquisite taste has its price.

Photograph

From left: containers of cyanide; phosphorous, zinc and strychnine; arsenic; more strychnine.; A woodcut engraving (published in 1882) of a slave's death by the poison that would soon kill the Roman heir Britannicus, based on an 1824 painting by Xavier Sigalon. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARY EVANS/VANESSA WAGSTAFF/THE IMAGE WORKS; SCIENCE & SOCIETY PICTURE LIBRARY/SSPL/GETTY IMAGES; CARY WOLINSKY/NG IMAGE COLLECTION; MARY EVANS/VANESSA WAGSTAFF/THE IMAGE WORKS AKG-IMAGES/GLASSHOUSE/JT VINTAGE) DRAWING (DRAWING BY AURORE DE LACOPY)

DETAILS

Subject:	Laboratories; Food; Arsenic; Murders &murder attempts; Espionage
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People:	Bush, George W
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Document 59 of 176

President Disputes Kremlin's Claim That He's Meeting Putin

Baker, Peter . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]08 Nov 2018: A.11.

[!\[\]\(6633cc246680a59d7f5692bfa1345e37_img.jpg\) ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- President Trump said on Wednesday that he will not meet with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia this weekend, contradicting the Kremlin, which said earlier in the day that the two would have a discussion while in Paris for an unrelated gathering of world leaders.

The on-again, off-again meeting has been the subject of confusion and conflicting reports in recent weeks. At one point last month, the two sides indicated that the presidents would meet in Paris, then Mr. Trump said earlier this week that they would probably not, then the Kremlin said Wednesday that they would at least meet briefly during lunch on Sunday.

At a news conference at the White House later Wednesday, Mr. Trump said that was not the case. They would both attend a lunch for world leaders scheduled on Sunday, he said, but were not set to have a conversation.

"I don't think we have anything scheduled in Paris and I'm coming back very quickly," the president said. "I don't think we have time set aside for that meeting."

Instead, Mr. Trump said he expects to sit down with Mr. Putin later in the month in Buenos Aires on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the Group of 20, or G20. "That's where we're actually looking forward to meet," Mr. Trump said.

Whenever it takes place, it would be the first meeting between the American and Russian presidents since they got together in Helsinki in July -- when Mr. Trump, with Mr. Putin at his side, publicly challenged the conclusion of his own intelligence agencies that Moscow interfered in the 2016 presidential election. After bipartisan condemnation back home, Mr. Trump said he misspoke and did not mean to undercut the agencies' conclusion.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin are both scheduled to travel to Paris for a ceremony to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. But French officials had asked the Americans and Russians not to hold the meeting between the presidents for fear that it would overshadow their event.

"The French partners actively brought their concerns to the Russian and U.S. sides and, with these considerations in mind, Washington and Moscow decided against holding a full-scale meeting of the presidents," Yuri Ushakov, Mr. Putin's foreign policy adviser, told reporters in Moscow.

But Mr. Ushakov said Mr. Putin and Mr. Trump will meet during a lunch on Sunday and then have "a more detailed conversation" in Buenos Aires.

The two nations are at odds over a number of issues, including Russia's intervention in Ukraine, its support for Syria's government, the poisoning of a former Russian spy on British soil and the fate of a 1980s arms control treaty that Mr. Trump has threatened to pull out of.

Just this week, the Trump administration said it was preparing to impose new sanctions on Russia over the

poisoning of the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia, after Moscow failed to meet a 90-day deadline to comply with an American law on preventing the use of chemical weapons.

For all the tension between the two countries, Mr. Trump has made it a priority to establish friendly personal relations with Mr. Putin. Russian officials have said they want direct conversations between Mr. Putin and Mr. Trump to circumvent what they see as a deep-state cabal surrounding the American president that is trying to sabotage his efforts to foster closer ties between the two countries.

Follow Peter Baker on Twitter: @peterbakernyt.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

DETAILS

Subject:	Presidents; Poisoning; Economic summit conferences
Location:	Russia United States–US Syria Ukraine
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Trump, Donald J Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Group of Twenty; NAICS: 926110
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/07/us/politics/trump-putin-paris-meeting.html
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Database:	Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

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Document 60 of 176

Trump May Revive Cold War, but China Could Change Dynamics

Sanger, David E; Erlanger, Steven . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]23 Oct 2018: A.4.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Over the past few days the shape of what many in Europe and the United States call a new Cold War has begun to emerge -- with threats and nuclear weapons that resemble the old one, punctuated by new dynamics, in part because of the rise of a rich, expanding and nationalist China.

The change was evident as President Trump explained his decision to abandon a 31-year-old arms-control treaty with Russia -- hinting he was ready to plunge into a new arms race with both Moscow and Beijing, and as the Justice Department filed charges, for the third time this year, against Russians accused of interfering in American elections.

Past attempts to embarrass President Vladimir V. Putin into changing his behavior, in both the nuclear and cyberconflict arenas, have failed. During the Obama administration, the exposure of Russia's violations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2014 did nothing to alter Moscow's arms buildup. Nor did the decision to name Mr. Putin as the man behind the 2016 attack on the Democratic National Committee and the widespread use of social media to widen fissures in American politics. There is little evidence that the indictment of the Internet Research Agency and members of Mr. Putin's military intelligence have deterred the Russians. But in both cases China is also lurking in the background, a powerful force in a way it never was in the first Cold War, which began just as Mao declared the creation of the People's Republic. And while China appears to be the reason for Mr. Trump's decision to pull out of the missile treaty with Russia, it is causing new anxieties in a Europe already mistrustful of Mr. Trump's "America First" foreign and trade policies.

Mr. Trump argued correctly that the arms treaty, signed in 1987 by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, left China free to build up its own nuclear and conventional missiles of all ranges. (China was never part of the negotiations, and never a signatory to the treaty.) And perhaps as part of his effort to deflect discussion of whether Russia succeeded in manipulating the 2016 election, Mr. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have accused

China of meddling, too -- seeking to shape American public opinion more through investment, trade and theft of intellectual property than covert cybermanipulation.

The Trump administration identifies both Russia and China as "revisionist powers" and "strategic competitors" of the United States. But when it comes to countering their nuclear advances and their increasingly innovative use of cyberconflict to outmaneuver their adversaries, Mr. Trump's long-term strategy remains a mystery -- beyond promises to match every military buildup, and strike back hard.

Whether it was real or a negotiating ploy, Mr. Trump's declaration on Saturday that he was ready, if necessary, to plunge the world back into a 1950's-style arms race is bound to cause yet another rift between Washington and its European allies -- exactly the kind of fracture inside NATO that Mr. Putin has tried to create.

And in cybersecurity, Mr. Trump has veered from denying Russian activity to authorizing the newly created United States Cyber Command more latitude to conduct pre-emptive strikes without presidential authorization. That raises fears of escalation with no clear reason to believe that the United States, its sprawling networks still vulnerable, would come out on top.

The Europeans do not deny that Russia has violated the I.N.F. treaty, which Kevin Ryan, an expert on Russian arms at the Belfer Center at Harvard, noted recently was "negotiated at a time that was equally, if not more, contentious." At the time, hundreds of thousands of Europeans demonstrated against the deployment of American Pershing II intermediate-range missiles on their soil as a counterbalance to Soviet SS-20s. That deployment led to the I.N.F. treaty Mr. Trump now wants to dump.

Most European leaders -- especially the Germans -- believe other weapons systems deter the Russians, including air- and ground-launched missiles. For them, Mr. Trump's decision to abandon one of the few remaining treaties controlling nuclear weapons fits a narrative of "America First" at the expense of existing, long-term alliances, like NATO -- and is the latest in a series of abandoned agreements, from the Paris accord on climate to the Iranian nuclear deal.

In this case, they see few advantages from leaving the treaty. Carl Bildt, a former Swedish prime minister, called the move "a gift to Russia that exposes Europe to a growing nuclear threat," because as the United States enters an arms race, "Russia can quickly deploy new weapons in numbers."

The German foreign minister, Heiko Maas, called the decision regrettable, noting that it "poses difficult questions for us and for Europe" since it is the Europeans who are in range of the Russian missiles, not the United States. Mr. Gorbachev, unsurprisingly, decried the Trump decision as reckless, asking: "Do they really not understand in Washington what this can lead to?"

Moreover, the Europeans believe Mr. Trump's strategy -- praising Mr. Putin when the two appear together as they did in Helsinki, then letting his aides step up pressure -- is, if anything, emboldening the Russian leader. They were stunned to see Russia send a hit squad to Britain to try to kill a former Russian intelligence officer, Sergei V. Skripal, despite having exchanged him in a spy-swap years before. And Russia continues to freely meddle in European politics, most recently trying to block the accession of Macedonia to both NATO and the European Union.

But the European reaction has been disorganized. While NATO countries have put more troops in Baltic nations and Poland, and are preparing a huge military exercise in the North Atlantic, there is no agreed-on strategy over what red lines should be set to respond to Russian activity. Nowhere is that clearer than in the realm of cyberwarfare, where Europeans are spending more money on collective defense, but NATO has no offensive capability and no agreement about what kind of interference by the Russians calls for a response.

For his part, Mr. Putin has calibrated his actions with care. He denies that the Russian deployment of what the West calls an SSC-8 missile violates the treaty. And he has accused the United States -- long before Mr. Trump was elected -- of violating the treaty itself, arguing that antimissile batteries it has placed in Europe could be used to fire other missiles that violate the ban on weapons that can reach 300 to 3,500 miles.

If the breach with Russia opens, it will most likely rekindle the Europeans' fear that their territory would be the battlefield for the superpowers.

"I am deeply worried," Wolfgang Ischinger, the former German ambassador to the United States, said on Sunday. He urged Washington instead to try to expand the treaty, by bringing in China. "No way European allies like Germany could live through another I.N.F." deployment, he wrote on Twitter, "a la 1980s: that road is closed." Mr. Trump himself seemed to open up that possibility on Saturday. "If they get smart and if others get smart and they say, 'Let's not develop these horrible nuclear weapons,' I would be extremely happy with that. But as long as somebody is violating that agreement, we're not going to be the only one to adhere to it," he said.

But missile treaties are not like Nafta, the trade agreement Mr. Trump criticized and then renegotiated with Mexico and Canada.

Mr. Putin has little incentive to negotiate a new I.N.F. treaty; his intermediate-range missiles fit a strategy of disruption. The Chinese have even less incentive to join any talks: Most of their missiles, nuclear and non-nuclear, fall within the range of weapons prohibited by the treaty. They would be giving up one of their primary tools for keeping the United States at a distance in the Pacific. And the Americans, the Chinese point out, have missiles of the same range at sea and on aircraft, which are permitted by the treaty.

Mr. Trump's strategy is even harder to discern in the cyberattacks. While the Justice Department has indicted Russians working for the Internet Research Agency, officers of the intelligence organization formerly known as the GRU, and now an "accountant" charged with aiding influence campaigns with millions of dollars, none is known to be in custody. (The United States will not describe the whereabouts of the accountant.)

The newly elevated United States Cyber Command has put together a team to counter election interference, but said little about its tactics. Fighting disinformation is especially hard: Cybercommand officials say they are far more comfortable turning off Iranian centrifuges or sabotaging North Korean missiles than they are waging counter-information wars.

While Mr. Trump can build missiles to match the Chinese or Russian arsenals, there is no simple way to match Russian or Chinese influence operations.

For the Trump administration, it is like the early 1950s all over again, said one of the president's top advisers, as a new threat emerged and Washington argued over how, or if, to counter it. But this time Washington does not seem to be consulting its allies.

DAVID E. SANGER and STEVEN ERLANGER David E. Sanger reported from Phoenix, and Steven Erlanger from Brussels.

President XI Jinping of China and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. A New Cold War with Russia has Begun to Emerge, with China Playing a Key Role. (Photograph by Greg Baker/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images); President Mikhail Gorbachev of Russia and President Ronald Reagan Signed a Weapons Treaty in 1987. At Right, a 1983 Protest in Germany Against Missiles. (Photographs by Barry Thumma/Associated Press; Associated Press)

DETAILS

Subject:	Agreements; Cold War; Treaties; Arms control &disarmament; Military deployment; Social networks; Presidents; Missiles; Nuclear weapons; Threats; National security; International relations-US; Foreign policy
Location:	Russia United States-US Germany China Europe
People:	Putin, Vladimir Trump, Donald J Xi Jinping
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Armchair Investigators at Forefront of British Inquiry Into Spy Poisoning

Schwartz, Michael; Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 Oct 2018: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Inside a packed, heavily guarded room in the House of Commons, reporters gathered for an update on Tuesday about the suspects involved in the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain this year.

If the subject matter was unusual, so were the people doing the briefing.

They were not prosecutors or counterintelligence officers or even spokesmen from Downing Street. Rather, they were researchers from Bellingcat, an investigative group founded by Eliot Higgins, 39, a blogger who began by posting on a laptop from his apartment while babysitting his infant daughter.

Over the past month, Bellingcat has published a series of reports unmasking the Russian men who the British say traveled to Salisbury in March, poisoning a former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia.

The experience has been jarring for British officials – who, in some cases, seem to have learned of disclosures not long before the general public – and for Russian officials, who have expressed suspicion that Bellingcat is a front for Western spy agencies.

"This is a new frontier in terms of internet activism, or internet research," said Jonathan Eyal, associate director of the Royal United Services Institute, a security and defense policy group. "What you witnessed in the House of Parliament is a blurring of distinctions: States are increasingly losing their monopoly over spying. Now it belongs to anyone who has the brains, the spunk and the technological ability."

At Tuesday's briefing, which was introduced by Bob Seely, a British member of Parliament, Bellingcat researchers gave out new details about Aleksandr E. Mishkin, whom the group identified on Monday as one of the two men who carried out the attack on Mr. Skripal in March.

The internet sleuths offered the sort of details rarely available from state officials, describing an increasingly risky game of cat-and-mouse with the Russian government.

When Bellingcat investigators mass-mailed queries to "hundreds and hundreds" of Dr. Mishkin's medical school classmates, they said, the vast majority responded swiftly, saying they had never heard of him. But two alumni said they knew him. One added that "everybody from his department was contacted two weeks ago, and told not to disclose anything about him," said Christo Grozev, who oversees Bellingcat's Ukraine and Russia probes.

Russia took note, three days ago, when Bellingcat announced it would reveal Dr. Mishkin's identity at the briefing Tuesday, Mr. Grozev said. Dr. Mishkin's grandmother was told to leave her village abruptly, he said.

But a reporter sent to the village found seven residents who would confirm his identity. His grandmother was so proud of Dr. Mishkin, a recipient of the prestigious Hero of the Russian Federation award, that she displayed a photograph of him receiving the award from President Vladimir V. Putin, neighbors told Bellingcat.

Bellingcat has previously avoided sending its Russia-based personnel on work that targets the Russian military intelligence service, known as the G.R.U., which he said "would be the part of the government that would be the most vengeful and the most dangerous."

This time, "they insisted," he said. "They really wanted to be part of it."

Bellingcat has withheld some information its researchers felt could put their Russian colleagues in danger, Mr. Higgins said in an interview.

"The sources we're using we're trying to protect them," Mr. Higgins said.

Bellingcat was founded in July 2014, three days before a surface-to-air missile blew a Malaysia Airlines passenger jet out of the sky over Ukraine, killing all 298 people on board. Russia and Ukraine, locked in conflict over a separatist Ukrainian region, blamed each other for the tragedy. Initially, Mr. Higgins said he approached his

investigation "with an open mind."

"Ukraine was not a conflict I was looking at and didn't have a lot of knowledge of it," he said.

Using videos and photos gathered online, he and a group of investigators were eventually able to identify the mobile launcher that fired the missile that struck the passenger jet and trace its movement from Russia into rebel-held Ukrainian territory in the period before the jet was downed.

The group has since identified two Russian military intelligence commanders possibly involved in overseeing the delivery of the missile launcher to Ukrainian rebel territory.

A consortium of international investigators that includes prosecutors from the Netherlands and Malaysia and others has backed up many of Bellingcat's findings, and at one point interviewed Mr. Higgins as a witness.

Mr. Higgins, who briefly worked as a payments officer at a women's underwear company, first gained attention for his meticulous reporting on the war in Syria, blogging under the name Brown Moses. Bellingcat now has 10 full-time employees as well as about a dozen volunteers around the world, and it receives funding through a mix of grants from organizations like the Open Society Foundation and workshops where students pay \$2,500 for a five-day crash course in open-source investigations.

The workshops draw a mix of journalists, government investigators and, sometimes, law enforcement officials. Mr. Higgins said he once had an intelligence officer make a recruiting pitch at one of his workshops, something he frowns upon.

"I've asked people not to recruit anyone to spy," he said.

British authorities have so far refused to comment on Bellingcat's investigation into the Skripal poisoning suspects, or reveal any new details about the case. The Russian government has claimed the two men were sports nutritionists who traveled to Mr. Skripal's adopted hometown, Salisbury, England, on a snowy weekend in early March to admire its famous gothic cathedral.

Russian authorities have made no secret of their contempt for Bellingcat.

Russia's Foreign Ministry called Bellingcat's revelations about the Russian hit men "criminal investigative activity," and a senior Russian diplomat at the United Nations recently referred to its researchers as "boorish and arrogant uncouth goons."

In a statement issued on Tuesday, Russia's embassy in Britain said it would discuss the details revealed by Bellingcat only with the British authorities through official channels.

"If information continues to flow in the form of media leaks with references to anonymous sources and investigations by NGOs (even though they have obvious ties with secret services), this will only confirm that the British authorities have no intention to pursue investigation within the framework of international law," the embassy statement said.

As part of its investigation into the Salisbury poisoning suspects, Bellingcat dipped into Russia's vast market for stolen data. The first clues to the true identities of the two men came from passport data that could have come from a Russian government bureaucrat, who was either sympathetic to Bellingcat's cause, or possibly paid off. Asked about the motivations of such sources, Mr. Higgins said, "I'm pretty sure it's mainly about the money," though he insisted Bellingcat itself was not paying anyone for information.

Bellingcat's disclosure of the identity of the first poisoning suspect, Col. Anatoly V. Chepiga, came just over a week before Dutch, English and American authorities unveiled details about an apparently botched operation by four other G.R.U. officers to hack into computers at the headquarters of the world's chemical weapons watchdog. Included among the materials published by investigators was an airport taxi receipt showing the men had been picked up outside a G.R.U. barracks, as well as a photo of a bag filled with empty Heineken beer cans the men apparently drank while on the job.

Researchers from Bellingcat immediately began analyzing the newly released information. Within hours they discovered the name of one of the ousted G.R.U. officers in a database of car registrations.

The officer, Alexey Sergeyevich Morenets, had registered his Lada VAZ 21093, a cheap Russian-made sedan, to the address of the G.R.U.'s cyberwarfare department in the Moscow suburbs. By plugging in that address into the

database, the researchers then discovered the names, passport numbers and birth dates of 305 people who had registered vehicles to the same location.

With a few keystrokes, Bellingcat researchers possibly gained access to data on dozens if not hundreds of G.R.U. officers whose personal information was available on an easily accessible database.

The finding revealed a "staggering amount of incompetence," Mr. Higgins said.

Eliot Higgins, the Founder of the Investigative Group Bellingcat, After Updating Reporters in London On the Identity of a Second Suspect in the Poisoning of a Former Russian Spy in Britain Last Year. (Photograph by Tolga Akmen/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images)

DETAILS

Subject:	Internet; Poisoning; Diplomatic & consular services; Researchers; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Espionage; Databases
Location:	Russia Netherlands United Kingdom--UK Malaysia England Syria France Ukraine
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Malaysia Airlines; NAICS: 481111; Name: United Nations--UN; NAICS: 928120
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LINKS

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Document 62 of 176

Report Names 2nd Suspect In Poisoning Of Russian

Schwartz, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]09 Oct 2018: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

A group of investigative journalists and researchers on Monday identified a military doctor employed by a Russian intelligence agency as one of two men suspected by the British authorities of trying to kill a former Russian spy with a potent nerve agent in Britain earlier this year.

The group, which named the other suspect in the poisoning about two weeks ago, identified the doctor as Alexander Yevgenyevich Mishkin. It said he was a graduate of an elite military medical academy who was recruited by a military intelligence agency widely known as the G.R.U.

Last month, British prosecutors filed criminal charges against two Russian men they say traveled in March to Salisbury and poisoned the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, by smearing the nerve agent on a door handle at his home. Mr. Skripal's daughter, Yulia, was also poisoned.

The authorities said the men, who were captured on surveillance video near Mr. Skripal's home, had traveled to Britain using the aliases Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov. While the men were identified as G.R.U. officers, their true names were not disclosed.

British officials could not be immediately reached on Monday evening for comment on the new report, which was prepared by researchers and journalists in Britain and Russia.

The Russian authorities have denied any involvement in the poisoning, and days after the charges were filed, the two suspects gave an interview to Russian state television in which they claimed to be sports nutritionists. They said they had traveled to Salisbury to admire its Gothic cathedral.

But in a series of reports over the last month, researchers from the investigative group Bellingcat and a Russian news outlet, The Insider, have tried to uncover details about the suspects. They said they had discovered passport information linked to the men's aliases that showed extensive travel, as well as ties to the Russian security services. And they released the names.

They reported that Mr. Boshirov's real name is Col. Anatoly V. Chepiga, a 2014 recipient of the title Hero of the Russian Federation, most likely for service in Ukraine's civil war, and released photos of his name chiseled into a war memorial at the Far Eastern military academy where he studied. Only a few officers each year receive the

award, which is typically given personally by President Vladimir V. Putin.

In its report Monday, the group said Mr. Petrov was really Dr. Mishkin – but it said the information about him was more sparse. It published a copy of his passport, which was issued in 2001 in Arkhangelsk region along the White Sea.

"Bellingcat's identification process included multiple open sources, testimony from people familiar with the person, as well as copies of personally identifying documents," the group said.

Dr. Mishkin received his alias, Alexander Petrov, upon moving to Moscow in 2010, Bellingcat reported. Before traveling to Salisbury, it said, he used the identity to travel extensively in the former Soviet Union, including several trips to Ukraine as well as to the breakaway Moldovan republic of Transnistria.

The group also said that until 2014, Dr. Mishkin's registered home address in Moscow was the same as the G.R.U.'s headquarters.

Bellingcat said it would reveal a fuller report about Dr. Mishkin on Tuesday, when it is scheduled to present its findings to the House of Commons together with a British member of Parliament. The British authorities have so far been unwilling to confirm the suspects' true identities.

Seven months after the poisonings occurred, they remain a point of bitter contention between Russia and the West. After the attack, new sanctions were imposed on Russia and about 150 Russian diplomats were expelled from Western nations.

Mr. Skripal and his daughter were found slumped on a park bench in Salisbury on March 4, a day after Yulia Skripal had arrived from Moscow to tell her father she planned to marry.

Mr. Skripal, a former military intelligence colonel who was imprisoned for selling secrets to Britain's foreign intelligence service and then released to Britain in a 2010 spy swap, has not been heard from publicly since that day. Yulia has since issued a written statement and appeared once on camera, saying she hoped to one day return to Russia.

A police officer who responded to the poisoning was also sickened by the nerve agent, Novichok, and survived. And months later, two other British citizens were exposed when they picked up a perfume bottle British authorities say the two assassins had used to transport the nerve agent. One of them, Dawn Sturgess, died.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

A Report Identified Alexander Yevgenyevich Mishkin, a Doctor with the Russian Military. (Photograph by Bellingcat, Via Associated Press)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Researchers; Biological &chemical weapons; Military intelligence; Espionage; Intelligence services
Location:	Transnistria Russia Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK White Sea Ukraine
People:	Sturgess, Dawn Skripal, Sergei V Skripal, Yulia Putin, Vladimir
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Database:	Global Newsstream,U.S. Newsstream,ProQuest Central

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Document 63 of 176

Russia's Spies, Foiled Again

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

One has to wonder whether Russia's military hackers want to be exposed, given how often they are. Or are these bungled operations just the tip of the iceberg?

On Thursday, the United States, Britain and the Netherlands produced a stunning array of accusations against officers of the GRU, Russia's military intelligence service, for cyberattacks involving antidoping agencies, political campaigns, chemical warfare labs and the downing of a passenger jet.

The coordinated revelations about GRU hacking over the past three years confirmed the many reports that have already emerged about a Russian cyberwarfare program working overtime under fanciful names such as BadRabbit, Fancy Bear or Voodoo Bear to push Russia's agendas abroad – mostly by trying to control the damage from embarrassing revelations about botched Kremlin operations.

In Washington, the Justice Department announced the indictment of seven GRU officers for a series of cyberattacks, including efforts to hack into antidoping agencies in the United States, Canada and elsewhere, in an apparent attempt to stymie their investigations into Russia's systematic doping of its athletes. Three of those named were previously charged by the special counsel, Robert Mueller, with hacking into Democratic Party servers.

Dutch officials, meanwhile, revealed a Russian attempt in April to hack into the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in the Netherlands, which at the time was investigating the nerve agent used in the attempted assassination by the GRU of a GRU double agent in Britain, Sergei Skripal. The Dutch caught and threw out four Russian GRU agents – noting that they were also behind an attack to hack a Swiss lab involved in the inquiry. Britain, for its part, released a report on GRU cyberattacks that disclosed an attempted hack on the Foreign Office and gave more evidence of GRU involvement in the leak of Democratic emails in 2016.

All that, declared the British foreign secretary, Jeremy Hunt, amounted to "reckless and indiscriminate" attacks that left Russia isolated in the international community. But unless there are many more far more successful attacks that the United States and its allies have not disclosed, those revealed on Thursday seemed to speak, above all, to the pathetically unsuccessful efforts by Vladimir Putin &Co. to throw their weight around and then try to cover up their failures.

The failed attacks on Mr. Skripal, the industrial-scale doping of Russian athletes and the downing of a Malaysian airliner in 2014 were massively damaging to Russia's standing in the world, and the disclosure that Russian military hackers tried to secretly sneak into agencies investigating them can only make the shame and ridicule greater. As for the 2016 election, the Kremlin must be wondering whether helping to put Donald Trump into the White House was really a triumph, given that it has produced no tangible benefits while generating a huge amount of ill will and a barrage of accusations and investigations.

The Kremlin has responded with its usual ridicule of Western charges, calling them "a diabolical blend of perfume" in a rather sick reference to the perfume bottle used to poison Mr. Skripal and his daughter with a nerve agent. Mr. Putin, a former K.G.B. agent, seems not to have fathomed that few in the West are fooled by his propaganda antics or impressed by his power plays, and that his irresponsible cyberattacks serve only to further diminish his country's already dismal standing in the world.

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Credit: THE EDITORIAL BOARD

DETAILS

Subject:	Investigations; Internet crime; Biological &chemical weapons; Editorials; Hackers; Intelligence gathering; Computer crime; Espionage; Intelligence services; Information warfare; National security; International relations-US
Location:	Russia Netherlands United States-US United Kingdom-UK
People:	Trump, Donald J Mueller, Robert S III Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: GRU (Glavnoye Razvedyvatel'noye Upravleniye); NAICS: 922120
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Database:	Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

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Document 64 of 176

Russia Accused In the Hacking Of Its Pursuers

Sanger, David E; Sullivan, Eileen; Kirkpatrick, David D . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]05 Oct 2018: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- Western allies accused Russian intelligence officers on Thursday of launching cyberattacks against organizations around the globe that challenged Russian wrongdoing, exposed Kremlin disinformation campaigns or took on President Vladimir V. Putin.

Officers operating near Red Square sought to hack the British foreign ministry, antidoping agencies in Colorado Springs and Canada, and investigators examining the shooting down of a Malaysian passenger jet over Ukraine in 2014, the officials said.

Other Russian officers armed with mobile computer equipment traveled to the Netherlands in April to tap into the headquarters of the world's chemical weapons watchdog, which was investigating the poisoning in Britain a month earlier of a Russian former spy and his daughter. Those officers were caught and expelled.

Seeking to deter Moscow, officials in Washington, London and Amsterdam released extraordinarily detailed accounts of Russian misdeeds on Thursday in intelligence reports and a Justice Department indictment charging seven Russian officers.

They named the officers, published photographs of them and their equipment, and released maps charting their travel and their targets. One officer caught in the Netherlands, they said, was carrying a receipt for a taxi ride to the Moscow airport from the street outside the headquarters of the military intelligence agency formerly known as the G.R.U.

The complaints echoed the case that British authorities recently made against Russia in the poisoning of the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, by publishing photographs of two Russian officers and other evidence. American officials also expanded the constellation of cyberattacks they blamed on Russia, which they had previously limited to election interference.

The accusations also demonstrated that even while its hacking of the Democratic National Committee was underway, the G.R.U. was conducting similar operations around the world.

"The defendants believed that they could use their perceived anonymity to act with impunity, in their own countries and on territories of other sovereign nations, to undermine international institutions and to distract from their government's own wrongdoing," said John C. Demers, the assistant attorney general for national security. "They were wrong."

As with previous Justice Department criminal complaints against hackers from Russia, China, Iran and North Korea, the indictments were unlikely to lead to arrests. But taken together, the accusations formed the West's latest public shaming of the Kremlin, over malfeasance that President Trump has shown reluctance to condemn. In the case of election interference in the United States, he has cast doubt that it ever happened.

Instead, Vice President Mike Pence denounced China on a number of fronts on Thursday, saying that its influence campaigns were more worrisome than Russia's. "What the Russians are doing pales in comparison to what China is doing across this country," he said.

He made no reference to the Russian indictments.

The Kremlin dismissed the accusations. A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry called them the result of a "rich imagination" and "some kind of diabolical perfume cocktail," Russian state media reported.

The combined effort by Western officials is based on a theory that Mr. Putin and his aides can be embarrassed into paring back their operations. But past cases cast doubt on that theory. American intelligence agencies accused the Russians, and ultimately Mr. Putin, of the Democratic National Committee hack in 2016; Thursday's allegations documented misconduct this year, by the same agency and, in some cases, the same operatives.

Of the seven Russian officers charged by the Justice Department, three were also indicted in July by the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, for interfering in the 2016 election. The new Justice Department case did not emerge from the Mueller investigation, Mr. Demers said, but added, "They evince the same methods of computer intrusion and the same overarching Russian strategic goal: to pursue its interests through illegal influence and disinformation operations aimed at muddying or altering perceptions of the truth."

The indictment primarily focused on allegations that the Russian officers hacked into antidoping agencies and

sporting federations, including the global soccer organization FIFA, and stole private medical information about roughly 250 athletes from 30 countries. The hackers released the data "selectively, and sometimes misleadingly," in retaliation for the revelations of a state-sponsored Russian doping program that led to a ban on the Russian team from the 2018 Winter Olympics, prosecutors said.

The Dutch intelligence officials also contributed evidence to the hacks of the sports groups. The authorities who foiled the Russian operation in the Netherlands seized a laptop that had a picture of one of the G.R.U. officers with a Russian athlete during the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil. It also contained evidence that a Russian spy stayed in the same Lausanne, Switzerland, hotel as a Canadian antidoping official during a meeting of the World Anti-Doping Agency as it investigated allegations of Russian doping.

After the Canadian official logged on to the hotel's Wi-Fi network, the Russian and some of his colleagues used it to illegally access his laptop, according to the Justice Department indictment. The Canadian later noticed a strange message in his sent mail riddled with typos and a fake signature. Investigators found a malicious link embedded in the email; Russian intelligence had apparently used it to stealthily access the Canadian antidoping agency's network for weeks in the fall of 2016.

Beginning that September, officers from G.R.U. Unit 74455 released information stolen from the World Anti-Doping Agency. Claiming to be "hacktivists," court papers show they went by the name Fancy Bears' Hack Team, an ironic reference to the name that investigators have given to that G.R.U. unit and another.

As they did that summer and fall with stolen Democratic emails, the Russians played off the Western news media's hunger for scoops. Through this July, the indictment alleged, the Fancy Bears' Hack Team communicated with about 70 reporters, doling out stories on an exclusive basis.

In one case, the Justice Department alleged, an unidentified reporter suggested ways for the spies to sift through their stolen data for nuggets of news. When articles resulting from their documents were published, the Russian intelligence officers distributed them "in an apparent attempt to amplify the exposure and effect of their message," the indictment said.

"All of this was done to undermine those organizations' efforts to ensure the integrity of the Olympic and other games," Mr. Demers said.

One officer, Ivan Sergeyevich Yermakov, was also charged with creating a fake website and sending spear-phishing emails to employees of Westinghouse Electric Company, based near Pittsburgh, who worked on nuclear reactor technology. Westinghouse has supplied Ukraine with nuclear fuel, but Mr. Demers declined to detail whether the larger aim of the Russian operation was to steal nuclear technology or interfere with fuel deliveries to Ukraine, which Mr. Putin has sought to destabilize.

One of the most detailed and well-documented of the charges involved the attack on the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The group was investigating the poisoning in March of the Skripals. British officials have accused Russia of using a nerve agent to try to kill Mr. Skripal, whom Mr. Putin on Wednesday called "simply a scumbag" and "a traitor to the motherland."

The attack on the O.P.C.W., as the group is known, unfolded over three days before it was thwarted.

Dutch officials identified four Russian military intelligence operatives – two of whom specialize in cyberattacks – soon after they arrived in Amsterdam on April 10 carrying diplomatic passports, said Maj. Gen. Onno Eichelsheim, the director of the Dutch Military Intelligence and Security Service. They were also behind an attempt to hack a Swiss laboratory that tested a nerve agent for the O.P.C.W. in the Skripal poisoning and had also done testing in 2013 of the agent used in a chemical attack in Syria, a Russian ally, Dutch officials said.

British intelligence officials alerted their Dutch counterparts that the Russian officers intended to conduct reconnaissance for a hacking operation, General Eichelsheim said. A day after their arrival, the spies rented a Citroën hatchback to travel to and around The Hague. One of them, Alexey Minin, took several pictures around O.P.C.W. headquarters, according to Dutch officials.

On their third day in the Netherlands, the Russian officers parked the Citroën in the lot of a Marriott Hotel next door, its trunk pointed toward the headquarters of the arms control organization. Inside the car was a sophisticated

device for penetrating a Wi-Fi network to gather the login credentials of its users, its antenna hidden under a jacket.

After about 30 minutes, the Dutch authorities moved in on the Citroën, catching the Russians in the act and, General Eichelsheim said, preventing "severe damage" to the O.P.C.W.

The Dutch recovered the taxi receipt and the laptop, whose internet search history included evidence that train tickets were purchased for an April 17 trip from the Netherlands to Bern, Switzerland, about 25 miles from the Swiss facility, said to be their next target.

The Dutch also seized a mobile phone that one of the Russian agents tried to destroy and discovered that it had been used four days earlier at G.R.U. headquarters.

They also found evidence that a Russian officer had been in a Kuala Lumpur hotel near where Malaysian government officials were investigating the 2014 crash of the passenger jet over Ukraine that killed nearly 300 people. In May, international investigators said Russia had supplied the missile that downed the plane.

And British officials identified a group of hackers known as Sandworm as the culprits in Russia's attempt to hack the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and said that the same Russian officers were behind attempted cyberattacks in April on the British Defense Science and Technology Laboratory.

Credit: DAVID E. SANGER, EILEEN SULLIVAN and DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK; David E. Sanger and Eileen Sullivan reported from Washington, and David D. Kirkpatrick from London. Charlie Savage contributed reporting from Washington, Milan Schreuer from Brussels and Ellen Barry from London.

In the Hague On Thursday, Dutch Officials Described Thwarting a Cyberattack On the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and Expelling Four Russian Intelligence Officers. (Photographs by Bart Maat/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images; Dutch Defense Ministry, Via Associated Press) (A7)

DETAILS

Subject:	Drugs &sports; Laboratories; Olympic games; Evidence; Photographs; Poisoning; Hackers; Intelligence gathering; Internet crime; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Espionage; Intelligence services; International relations; Collusion; National security; Presidential elections; Computer crime; Information warfare
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LINKS

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Document 65 of 176

Spy Poisoned in Britain Fed MI6 Agents Secrets on Putin Ally, New Book Claims

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]02 Oct 2018: A.7.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Sergei V. Skripal, the former Russian spy targeted in a nerve agent attack this spring, fed Britain's Secret Intelligence Service information about a 1990s-era corruption scheme that reached all the way up to Nikolai P. Patrushev, a top Russian intelligence chief and close ally of Vladimir V. Putin, a new book contends.

Mr. Skripal said this in interviews last year with Mark Urban, the BBC's diplomatic and defense editor, who was researching a book about post-Cold War espionage.

The information on high-level graft was sensitive, Mr. Skripal said. A naval officer who worked in Russia's military intelligence service alongside Mr. Skripal, who like him had been caught passing information to Western security

services, was found dead in 2004, apparently strangled, in a military hospital after an interrogation by Russian intelligence agents, Mr. Skripal said.

The official explanation was suicide, but several of his fingers had been cut off, in a grisly and unmistakable message.

British intelligence concluded that Mr. Skripal had been spared the same fate because, during Russian interrogations, he had not mentioned the web of corruption leading to Mr. Patrushev, then the head of the Federal Security Service, the successor to the K.G.B. Mr. Patrushev has stepped down from that post, but remains close to Mr. Putin, serving as general secretary of Russia's security council.

The interviews with Mr. Skripal, excerpted in Mr. Urban's book, "The Skripal Files: The Life and Near Death of a Russian Spy," to be published on Tuesday in the United States, do not answer the question of why Mr. Skripal was targeted, but they do paint the fullest picture to date of his life as a Russian spy and a British informant.

Deeply disillusioned by the Soviet collapse and disgusted by President Boris N. Yeltsin, he avoided swearing a new oath of loyalty to the Russian Federation, Mr. Skripal told Mr. Urban.

Then in 1992, he requested an audience with a general in the G.R.U., Russia's military intelligence service, and tried to hand in his resignation, explaining that he "didn't want to serve the new government." But the service was so desperate for qualified officers that they did not accept his resignation and offered him a plum assignment in Madrid.

Four years later, as an informant for Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, known as MI6, he passed on information about systematic graft in the Madrid headquarters of the G.R.U., as Soviet-era discipline relaxed. He told MI6 the identity of certain officers who were overcharging for procurements and inventing fictitious budget items, then distributing a cut to senior officers who served as their protectors.

Britain used Skripal's information to help Spanish intelligence recruit the naval officer -- the man who, in 2004, was found strangled in his hospital bed. Mr. Skripal's MI6 handlers offered to remove him from Russia, the book claims, but Mr. Skripal decided to return to Russia, where, two months later, he was arrested.

During about 10 hours of interviews with Mr. Urban, in a house stocked with the jigsaw puzzles and model ships of an aging, solitary man, Mr. Skripal said he was afraid to attract attention by being quoted in the book.

"It's because of Putin," he told Mr. Urban. "You see, we are afraid of Putin."

Mr. Urban, who has covered Britain's security services for 30 years, frequently presents the thinking of intelligence officials without naming them. A portion of the book is told from the perspective of the MI6 officer who recruited Mr. Skripal, who is identified with a pseudonym.

Mr. Urban does not settle on one theory as to why Mr. Skripal, a relatively obscure figure, was targeted for such a spectacular attack. But one theory in the intelligence world is that Russian hit men were unable to locate their first choice -- Col. Aleksandr Potelev, deputy head at the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service's American section, who in 2010 blew the cover of 10 Russian undercover spies living as Americans.

The C.I.A. spirited Mr. Potelev out of Russia in July 2010 -- the very week that then President Dmitri A. Medvedev of Russia had visited Washington for a smiley public meeting with President Barack Obama -- and then broke the news to Moscow that 10 of its undercover spies had been betrayed by a Russian officer.

Mr. Putin, as a young man, had served in a role similar to Mr. Potelev's, providing support to undercover agents stationed abroad. He seethed with anger when asked about the betrayal, at one point saying at a national news conference, "How will he be able to look in the eyes of his children, the pig?"

Mr. Urban suggests that Russian intelligence services may have had trouble finding Mr. Potelev, who had been resettled under an assumed identity by the F.B.I., and then "moved down the list" to other former agents deemed traitors who were easier to find -- like Mr. Skripal, who lived openly in Salisbury.

President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia with Nikolai P. Patrushev, Left, a Top Intelligence Chief and Close Ally, in Moscow Last Year. (Photograph by Maksim Blinov/Sputnik, Via Associated Press)

DETAILS

Subject:	Resignations; Security services; Presidents; Military intelligence; Espionage; Intelligence services
Location:	Russia United States-US United Kingdom-UK
People:	Yeltsin, Boris Skripal, Sergei V Medvedev, Dmitri Putin, Vladimir Obama, Barack
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Database:	Global Newsstream,U.S. Newsstream,ProQuest Central

LINKS

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Conspiracist Takes Over Italy's State TV

Horowitz, Jason . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]28 Sep 2018: A.4.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

ROME – Marcello Foa has spread the claim that Hillary Clinton attended a satanic dinner. He broke the news on his blog of a full-scale American military mobilization that never happened. A fan of the Russian leader Vladimir V. Putin and a guest on Russia Today, he doubts the evidence that Moscow's operatives poisoned a former Soviet spy because it is "too obvious."

Mr. Foa is also now the Italian government's most influential media figure.

On Wednesday night, leaders of Italy's populist government cheered as a parliamentary committee approved Mr. Foa as chairman of Italy's state broadcaster RAI, which has millions of viewers, thousands of employees and is, in Mr. Foa's estimation, the most powerful cultural force in the country.

Supporters of Mr. Foa argue that he is an independent voice free of institutional allegiances and RAI's insidious establishment bias against populist voices. His critics argue that his right-wing politics, euro-skepticism, concerns about the "damaging" effects of combination vaccines, and tendency to re-tweet conspiracy theories should have disqualified him for the job.

But he was the pick of Matteo Salvini, the powerful leader of the anti-immigrant League, who Mr. Foa helped introduce in March to Stephen K. Bannon, President Trump's former senior adviser. He also has ties to Mr. Salvini's coalition partners, the Five Star Movement.

Mr. Foa's appointment now has raised alarms about the state of the Italian media, never too healthy to begin with, and represents a victory of the populist parties over the establishment media that once discounted them.

It is far from symbolic, though. Mr. Foa's appointment signals an opening gambit by Italy's populists to take their anti-establishment message, and ambition to reshape public perception, from social media to the televised media mainstream, where the vast majority of Italy still gets its information.

On the eve of his appointment, Mr. Foa, 55 and affable, offered a glimpse of his new office with eight television screens in the wall, and shared passages of his book exploring the ways that politicians and spin doctors manipulate the truth and spread misinformation.

"The paradox for me is that somebody accused me of being a producer of fake news," he said in a long interview. Instead, he said, he would work to reverse what he claimed was a de facto veto at RAI of euro-skeptic politicians and government ministers, and to introduce voices to make the broadcaster "mirror" the current political reality. Italy's media have long warped standard journalistic practices like a fun-house mirror.

The brother of Silvio Berlusconi, the media magnate and former prime minister, nominally owned *il Giornale*, where Mr. Foa spent decades working as a reporter and editor.

For years, Mr. Berlusconi flooded his private newspaper and channels and public airways with pro-Berlusconi propaganda, and it was Mr. Berlusconi who greenlighted Mr. Foa's nomination, in exchange for political concessions.

Political agendas, partisan slants, a porous line between journalists and publicists (who call themselves journalists), anonymous reconstructions, conspiratorial tones and little accountability for false reports have riddled the credibility of the Italian press.

All of that fueled polarization and national frustration over the media, which Italy's new populist leaders, Mr. Salvini and Luigi Di Maio of the Five Star Movement, clobbered as they rose to power.

The result is a largely impotent press that has failed to hold accountable populist leaders who reach enormous audiences directly with their social media accounts.

Mr. Foa said this was only natural, because by suppressing alternative voices on the state broadcaster, "You push the success of Di Maio and Salvini's Facebook pages."

He allowed that it is perhaps not especially helpful for a free press or democracy when leaders dismiss stories they do not like as fake news.

All the same, he said, attacking the news media was "part of the game" and so it was wrong to blame the politicians. "It's not their fault, for me," he said.

The Five Star Movement's hostility to the news media traces back to its co-founders -- the comedian Beppe Grillo and the late Gianroberto Casaleggio, an internet entrepreneur.

Mr. Grillo often featured his disdain for reporters on his wildly popular blog, calling them "the walking dead," among other things. Mr. Casaleggio was an admirer of Mr. Foa's right-wing blog and a futurist who envisioned a democratization of politics and media on the web.

The party has built a reputation for secrecy, doublespeak and antagonism to critical coverage.

In July, the government's top spokesman, Rocco Casalino, an alumnus of the reality television show "Big Brother" and a Five Star power broker, made a thinly veiled threat to pull state funding from a newspaper, *Il Foglio*, which has been critical of the government.

"Now that *Il Foglio* will close, what will you do?" Mr. Casalino said to a reporter from the paper. "Can you tell me what purpose *Il Foglio* has? Why does it exist?"

The outburst prompted the Order of Journalists in Lombardy, to which Mr. Casalino belongs, to open an investigation into whether he had violated professional guidelines. In turn, the Five Star Movement's blog advocated the abolition of the organization.

Instead, in the current government it is Mr. Salvini, a former radio disc jockey, who has begun the charm offensive, wrapping his extreme language in an earthy, endearing delivery.

He has dominated Italian politics by dominating news cycles in Trumpian style -- offering up some nugget, often over Twitter, that is outrageous and offensive to his haters, red meat to his supporters and simply irresistible to the Italian media. He has 3.2 million followers on Facebook and 880,400 on Twitter.

Mr. Foa first met Mr. Bannon, the former executive chairman of the right-wing Breitbart News, at the Lugano house of the Swiss financier Tito Tettamanti. He said he later helped arrange a meeting between Mr. Bannon and Mr. Salvini.

The mainstream press had a habit of "portraying all these events in such a mysterious way," Mr. Foa said.

Mr. Foa's son, Leonardo, fresh out of college, now works with Mr. Salvini's social media maestro, Luca Morisi. (Mr. Foa said his son got the job on his own.) Mr. Morisi's team has been compared to Casaleggio Associates, which administers Five Star's internet platform and is now run by Davide Casaleggio, the founder's son.

Before the election, Mr. Morisi acknowledged that the official website "We're With Salvini" shared the same Google codes as sites supportive of the Five Star Movement, as well as "I'm With Putin" and other conspiracy sites.

"But we have nothing to do with the pro-Putin or pro-Five Star sites," Mr. Morisi said at the time.

Since becoming Italy's interior minister and vice premier, Mr. Salvini's constant social media posts, television appearances and campaign-style travel have raised the question of when he actually works. But that is perhaps an outdated conception of work in an age when the media message is the métier.

At 12:38 p.m. on Sept. 24, the government passed Mr. Salvini's tough new immigration law. At 12:55 p.m. he posted a smiley face emoticon. At 1:09 p.m., he tweeted a link to himself talking about it on Facebook Live. At 1:45 he tweeted that the hashtag about his decree, #DecretoSalvini, was "in ten minutes already third on Twitter in Italy! Thank you." At 2:59, he tweeted that the hashtag was "FIRST in Italy on Twitter."

Mr. Foa has had his own adventures on Twitter.

A few days before the 2016 United States presidential election, he shared an Italian blog post claiming Mrs. Clinton had attended a "satanic" dinner with John Podesta.

He said that the report seemed plausible to him because he recalled reading in some "very serious press" about "pedophilic" art in the collection of Mr. Podesta. (John's brother, Tony Podesta, collects contemporary works.) "I didn't go deep on this," he said in the interview this week in his defense, acknowledging that he "might be wrong," and that he sometimes succumbed to the temptation to publish the sensational to boost his audience on social media.

"It's happened to me a couple of times," he said.

In 2017, he falsely claimed the United States military was preparing to mobilize 150,000 reservists, possibly for a war against Syria or North Korea or Russia. He said a friend in American national security circles told him Mr. Trump had called up reservists and that he checked with an expert he knew in Italy who said it was true.

"So I had two sources and I wrote just five lines on my blog, ten lines. And that's all," he said.

Still, he thinks reporters could be more cautious, when, for instance, reporting that Russia was behind the March poisoning of a former Soviet Spy, Sergei V. Skripal.

"It's too obvious for me," Mr. Foa said of the evidence in the case. "It's a way of saying, 'Oh, you see, Putin is the bad guy doing the bad thing.'"

His prime concern now, though, he said, is restoring the credibility of RAI, which he said had been destroyed by an establishment, anti-populist bias. Without that trust, he said, political parties, internet trolls and regular citizens would continue to use social media to misinform the public and erode democracy.

"We're in a very dangerous territory," he said.

Credit: JASON HOROWITZ; Emma Johanningsmeier contributed reporting from Rome.

The Appointment of Marcello Foa, Center, As Chairman of Italy's State Broadcaster Rai Represents a Victory of the Populist Parties Over the Establishment Press. (Photograph by Massimo Percossi/Epa, Via Shutterstock); the Five Star Movement's Hostility to the Media Traces Back to Its Co-Founders, Including the Comedian Beppe Grillo, Top. Matteo Salvini, Above Left, Dominates Politics by Dominating the Media Coverage. (Photographs by Gianni Cipriano for the New York Times; Andrea Ronchini/Nurphoto, Via Getty Images)

DETAILS

Subject:	Comedians; Journalists; News media; Political leadership; Social networks; Populism
Location:	Italy Russia United States--US
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LINKS

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Journalists Identify Russian Officer As Suspect in Poisoning of an Ex-Spy

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]27 Sep 2018: A.11.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- A group of investigative journalists from Britain and Russia on Wednesday named a highly decorated colonel in Russia's military intelligence service as one of the men accused of poisoning a former Russian spy and his daughter in Britain earlier this year.

A report by the investigative group Bellingcat and the Insider, a Russian news outlet, named the suspect as Col. Anatoly V. Chepiga, a 2014 recipient of the title Hero of the Russian Federation, probably for service in eastern

Ukraine. The award, given to only a handful of officers each year, is typically bestowed personally by President Vladimir V. Putin, the report said.

The police in Britain would not comment on the report, and Russia also offered no response.

Moscow has denied any involvement in the attack on the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, who was living in the English city of Salisbury after being released from a Russian prison in a spy swap.

The two men Britain identified as the prime suspects have told the Russian news media that they were merely sports nutritionists who had visited Salisbury to see the sights and scout for new nutrition products.

But the report by the Insider and Bellingcat -- a group that has also carried out research on the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine -- appears to support Britain's assertion that Moscow was behind the poisoning.

The journalists provided a detailed account of their methodology in identifying Colonel Chepiga as one of the suspects.

After the British authorities released security camera images of the two main suspects this month, reporters from Bellingcat and the Insider set about trying to learn their identities. The British authorities named the men as Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, based on their Russian passports, but officials suggested that these were aliases.

Mr. Boshirov, the new report says, is actually Colonel Chepiga.

The reporters began by searching through yearbooks for Russia's Far Eastern Military Command Academy, which frequently prepares officers for overseas clandestine operations.

Identifying Colonel Chepiga in a photograph of officers deployed in Chechnya, they then scoured databases, social networks and the internet, but discovered little trace of him aside from a 2003 passport photograph. A passport application from that period gave his place of residence as a military unit based in Khabarovsk, but then there were few records of his existence until 2014, when his military school boasted on its website of his winning the Hero of Russia award.

That honor is typically awarded in a public ceremony and accompanied by a presidential decree, except in cases where the underlying act is part of a secret mission. While there is no reference to Colonel Chepiga's award on the Kremlin website, a website dedicated to the graduates of the Far Eastern Military Command Academy says he received it for "conducting a peacekeeping mission."

Earlier this month, the British authorities released security camera images of two men traveling from an Aeroflot flight to the scene of the poisoning, near the victim's home, and from there back to Moscow. Investigators also said traces of the nerve agent Novichok, which was used in the attack, had been found in the hotel room where the two men stayed.

Several days later, the two suspects appeared on an interview with RT, a Russian state-funded network, saying that they had no connection to the attack on Mr. Skripal. They said, instead, that they were tourists who had traveled to the "wonderful" English city of Salisbury to see its cathedral spire and 14th-century clock.

Britain's Crown Prosecution Service has charged the men with the attempted murder of Mr. Skripal; his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal; and a police officer, Det. Sgt. Nick Bailey, who was sickened while investigating the case. The men were also charged with conspiracy to murder Mr. Skripal; use and possession of the nerve agent; and causing grievous bodily harm. The authorities issued domestic and European arrest warrants for the two men.

Prime Minister Theresa May, citing British intelligence, said the suspects were officers in a branch of Russia's military intelligence known as the G.R.U., the same group accused of disrupting the 2016 United States presidential election.

Mrs. May also said that the Salisbury attack "was almost certainly also approved outside the G.R.U. at a senior level of the Russian state."

Russia imprisoned Mr. Skripal in 2004 for selling secrets to Britain, and released him in 2010 as part of a spy swap with Western countries. He settled in Salisbury but continued working in intelligence, offering insights into Russian espionage practices.

The Skripals fell seriously ill on March 4 with what was diagnosed as nerve agent poisoning, leading to a lockdown

of parts of Salisbury. Residents were terrified as hundreds of workers in hazardous materials suits searched for contamination.

Doctors did not expect them to survive, but the Skripals, who were found unresponsive in a Salisbury park, were released from a hospital after weeks of treatment.

Months later, two Britons, Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley, fell ill after being exposed to the poison. Ms. Sturgess died.

After the attack on the Skripals, Western nations imposed new economic sanctions on Russia and expelled about 150 Russian diplomats and other officials, many of them believed to be intelligence agents. Russia responded by ejecting a similar number of officials from those countries.

On Wednesday at the United Nations General Assembly, Russia's foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, said Britain had given no proof of Russia's guilt in the poisoning.

Col. Anatoly V. Chepiga, a Decorated Officer in Russia's Military Intelligence Service. (Photograph by Metropolitan Police)

DETAILS

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Location:	Russia United States–US United Kingdom–UK Syria Ukraine
People:	Lavrov, Sergei V Sturgess, Dawn May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Rowley, Charlie
Company / organization:	Name: United Nations–UN; NAICS: 928120; Name: Aeroflot Russian Airlines; NAICS: 481111; Name: Crown Prosecution Service; NAICS: 922130
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LINKS

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Document 68 of 176

Unraveling the Russia Story so Far

Scott, Shane; Mazzetti, Mark . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]20 Sep 2018: F.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

On an October afternoon before the 2016 election, a huge banner was unfurled from the Manhattan Bridge in New York City: Vladimir V. Putin against a Russian-flag background, and the unlikely word "Peacemaker" below. It was a daredevil happy birthday to the Russian president, who was turning 64.

In November, shortly after Donald J. Trump eked out a victory that Moscow had worked to assist, an even bigger banner appeared, this time on the Arlington Memorial Bridge in Washington: the face of President Barack Obama and "Goodbye Murderer" in big red letters.

Police never identified who had hung the banners, but there were clues. The earliest promoters of the images on Twitter were American-sounding accounts, including @LeroyLovesUSA, later exposed as Russian fakes operated from St. Petersburg to influence American voters.

The Kremlin, it appeared, had reached onto United States soil in New York and Washington. The banners may well have been intended as visual victory laps for the most effective foreign interference in an American election in history.

For many Americans, the Trump-Russia story as it has been voluminously reported over the past two years is a confusing tangle of unfamiliar names and cyberjargon, further obscured by the shout-fest of partisan politics.

What Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel in charge of the investigation, may know or may yet discover is still uncertain. President Trump's Twitter outbursts that it is all a "hoax" and a "witch hunt," in the face of a mountain of evidence to the contrary, have taken a toll on public comprehension.

But to travel back to 2016 and trace the major plotlines of the Russian attack is to underscore what we now know with certainty: The Russians carried out a landmark intervention that will be examined for decades to come. Acting on the personal animus of Mr. Putin, public and private instruments of Russian power moved with daring and skill to harness the currents of American politics. Well-connected Russians worked aggressively to recruit or influence people inside the Trump campaign.

To many Americans, the intervention seemed to be a surprise attack, a stealth cyberage Pearl Harbor, carried out by an inexplicably sinister Russia. For Mr. Putin, however, it was long-overdue payback, a justified response to years of "provocations" from the United States.

And there is a plausible case that Mr. Putin succeeded in delivering the presidency to his admirer, Mr. Trump, though it cannot be proved or disproved. In an election with an extraordinarily close margin, the repeated disruption of the Clinton campaign by emails published on WikiLeaks and the anti-Clinton, pro-Trump messages shared with millions of voters by Russia could have made the difference, a possibility Mr. Trump flatly rejects. As Mr. Trump emerged in spring 2016 as the improbable favorite for the Republican nomination, the Russian operation accelerated on three fronts -- the hacking and leaking of Democratic documents; massive fraud on Facebook and Twitter; and outreach to Trump campaign associates.

Consider 10 days in March. On March 15 of that year, Mr. Trump won five primaries, closing in on his party's nomination, and crowed that he had become "the biggest political story anywhere in the world." That same day in Moscow, a veteran hacker named Ivan Yermakov, a Russian military intelligence officer working for a secret outfit called Unit 26165, began probing the computer network of the Democratic National Committee. In St. Petersburg, shift workers posted on Facebook and Twitter at a feverish pace, posing as Americans and following instructions to attack Mrs. Clinton.

On March 21 in Washington, Mr. Trump announced his foreign policy team, a group of fringe figures whose advocacy of warmer relations with Russia ran counter to Republican orthodoxy. Meanwhile, Unit 26165 was poring over the bounty from a separate attack it had just carried out: 50,000 emails stolen from the Clinton campaign's chairman.

On March 24, one of the members the Trump foreign policy team, George Papadopoulos, sat in the cafe of an upscale London hotel with a Russian woman who introduced herself as Mr. Putin's niece and offered to help set up a meeting between the Russian president and Mr. Trump. The woman and the adviser exchanged frequent messages in the weeks that followed. Today, Mr. Padadopoulos is unsure that those messages came from the person he met in the cafe.

The Russian intervention was essentially a hijacking -- of American companies like Facebook and Twitter; of American citizens' feelings about immigration and race; of American journalists eager for scoops, however modest; of the naïve, or perhaps not so naïve, ambitions of Mr. Trump's advisers. The Russian trolls, hackers and agents totaled barely 100, and their task was to steer millions of American voters. They knew it would take a village to sabotage an election.

Russians or suspected Russian agents -- including oligarchs, diplomats, former military officers and shadowy intermediaries -- had dozens of contacts during the campaign with Mr. Trump's associates. They reached out through email, Facebook and Twitter. They sought introductions through trusted business connections of Mr. Trump's, obscure academic institutions, veterans groups and the National Rifle Association.

They met Trump campaign aides in Moscow, London, New York and Louisville, Ky. One claimed the Russians had "dirt" on Hillary Clinton; another Russian, the Trump campaign was told, would deliver it. In May and June alone, the Trump campaign fielded at least four invitations to meet with Russian intermediaries or officials.

In nearly every case, the Trump aides and associates seemed enthusiastic about their exchanges with the Russians. Over months of such probing, it seems that no one alerted the Federal Bureau of Investigation to the foreign overtures.

Mr. Trump's position on the Russian contacts has evolved over time: first, that there were none; then, that they did not amount to collusion; next, that in any case collusion was not a crime. That is mere semantics -- conspiracy is

the technical legal term for abetting the Russians in breaking American laws, such as those outlawing computer hacking and banning foreign assistance to a campaign.

Whether Mr. Trump or any of his associates conspired with the Russians is a central question of the investigation by Mr. Mueller, who has already charged 26 Russians and won convictions or guilty pleas from the former national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn; the former campaign chairman, Paul J. Manafort, and his deputy, Rick Gates; and from Mr. Papadopoulos. Mr. Trump's personal lawyer, Michael D. Cohen, has pleaded guilty in a separate case. But none of the convictions to date involve conspiracy. There remains an alternative explanation to the collusion theory: that the Trump aides, far from certain their candidate would win, were happy to meet the Russians because they thought it might lead to moneymaking deals after the election. "Black Caviar," read the subject line of an email Mr. Manafort got in July 2016 from his associate in Kiev, Ukraine, hinting at the possibility of new largess from a Russian oligarch with whom they had done business.

Nina L. Khrushcheva, a professor of international affairs at the New School and the great-granddaughter of the Soviet premier Nikita S. Khrushchev, said that what Russia pulled off, through creativity and sheer luck, would have been the envy of Mr. Putin's predecessors: puncturing the American sense of superiority and insisting on Russia's power and place in the world.

"This operation was to show the Americans – that you bastards are just as screwed up as the rest of us," Professor Khrushcheva said. "Putin fulfilled the dream of every Soviet leader – to stick it to the United States. I think this will be studied by the K.G.B.'s successors for a very long time."

See the full timeline of events.

Putin

Is Angry

The Russian leader thought the United States, and Hillary Clinton, had sought to undermine his presidency. The first Russian advance party was tiny: two women on a whirlwind American tour. Hitting nine states in three weeks in summer 2014, Anna Bogacheva and Aleksandra Krylova were supposed to "gather intelligence" to help them mimic Americans on Facebook and Twitter. They snapped photos and chatted up strangers from California to New York, on a sort of Russian "Thelma & Louise" road trip for the era of social media.

Even then, federal prosecutors would later say, the Russian government was thinking about the next United States presidential election – perhaps ahead of most Americans. Ms. Bogacheva and Ms. Krylova had been dispatched by their employer, an online propaganda factory in St. Petersburg, to prepare to influence American voters.

But why did Mr. Putin care about the election, then more than two years away? He was seething. The United States, in his view, had bullied and interfered with Russia for long enough. It was high time to fight back.

His motives were rooted in Russia's ambivalence toward the West, captured in the history of St. Petersburg, Russia's spectacular northern city and Mr. Putin's hometown. Peter the Great, the brutal but westward-looking 18th-century czar, had brought in the best Italian architects to construct Russia's "window on Europe" in a swamp. Czar Peter's portrait replaced Vladimir Lenin's in Mr. Putin's office when he took a job working for the city's mayor in the early 1990s. Twenty-five years later, the internet offered a different kind of window on the West – a portal that could be used for a virtual invasion.

Mr. Putin, a former K.G.B. officer, had described the breakup of the Soviet Union as the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe" of the 20th century, a remarkable statement from a man whose country experienced revolution, civil war, bloody purges and the deaths of 27 million people in World War II. Like many of his fellow citizens, Mr. Putin was nostalgic for Russia's lost superpower status. And he resented what he saw as American arrogance.

The Russian leader believed the United States had relentlessly sought to undermine Russian sovereignty and his own legitimacy. The United States had backed democratic, anti-Russian forces in the so-called color revolutions on Russia's borders, in Georgia in 2003 and Ukraine in 2004. It had funded pro-democracy Russian activists through American organizations with millions in State Department grants each year.

With little evidence, Mr. Putin believed this American meddling helped produce street demonstrations in Moscow and other cities in 2011, with crowds complaining of a rigged parliamentary election and chanting, "Putin's a thief!"

And Mrs. Clinton, then secretary of state, cheered the protesters on. Russians, she said, "deserve the right to have their voices heard and their votes counted, and that means they deserve free, fair, transparent elections and leaders who are accountable to them."

Mr. Putin blamed Mrs. Clinton for the turmoil, claiming that when she spoke out, his political enemies "heard the signal and with the support of the U.S. State Department began active work."

The two tangled again the next year when Mr. Putin pushed for a "Eurasian Union" that would in effect compete with the European Union. Mrs. Clinton sharply dismissed the notion, calling it a scheme to "re-Sovietize the region" and saying the United States would try to block it.

By 2013, with his initial hopes for a "reset" of Russian relations dashed, Mr. Obama, like his top diplomat, no longer bothered to be diplomatic. He criticized Russia's anti-gay legislation, part of Mr. Putin's effort to become a global champion for conservative values, and gave a biting description of the Russian leader: "He's got that kind of slouch, looking like the bored kid in the back of the classroom." Mr. Putin was reported to be furious.

After Russian troops seized Crimea and carried out a stealth invasion of Ukraine in 2014, relations grew openly hostile. American support for the new government in Kiev and condemnation of Russian behavior heightened Mr. Putin's rage at being told what he could do and not do in what he considered his own backyard.

If Russia had only a fraction of the United States' military might and nothing like its economic power, it had honed its abilities in hacking and influence operations through attacks in Eastern Europe. And it could turn these weapons on America to even the score.

By making mischief in the 2016 election, Mr. Putin could wreak revenge on his enemy, Mrs. Clinton, the presumed Democratic nominee, damaging if not defeating her. He could highlight the polarized state of American democracy, making it a less appealing model for Russians and their neighbors. And he could send a message that Russia would not meekly submit to a domineering America.

Hence the two Russian women who toured the United States in 2014, keyboard warriors granted the unusual privilege of real-world travel, hitting both coasts, Illinois, Louisiana and Texas. At that point, according to a Russian document cited by the special counsel, Mr. Putin's intentions for 2016 were already explicit: to "spread distrust toward the candidates and the political system in general."

In the intervening two years, Mr. Putin's ire at America only increased. He blamed the United States for pushing for a full investigation of illicit doping by Russian athletes, which would lead to mass suspensions of the country's Olympic stars. And when the leaked Panama Papers were published in April 2016, revealing that a cellist who was Mr. Putin's close friend had secret accounts that had handled \$2 billion, he charged that it was a smear operation by the United States.

"Who is behind these provocations?" he asked. "We know that among them are employees of official American institutions."

Then something unexpected happened. Of the more than 20 major-party candidates running for the American presidency, only Mr. Trump had repeatedly expressed admiration for Mr. Putin as a "strong" leader and brushed off criticism of Russia. Only he had little interest in the traditional American preoccupation with democracy and human rights. Only he had explored business interests in Russia for years, repeatedly pursuing a Trump Tower project in Moscow and bringing his beauty pageant there in 2013.

"Do you think Putin will be going to The Miss Universe Pageant in November in Moscow," the future candidate tweeted at the time, adding wistfully, "if so, will he become my new best friend?"

If Mr. Putin had been designing his ideal leader for the United States, he could hardly have done better than Donald Trump.

For some years, Mr. Trump had attracted attention from Russian conservatives with Kremlin ties. A Putin ally named Konstantin Rykov had begun promoting Mr. Trump as a future president in 2012 and created a Russian-language website three years later to support his candidacy. A Russian think tank, Katedra, had begun running analyses pushing Mr. Trump.

Mr. Trump as a candidate was "tough, rough, says what he thinks, rude, emotional and, apparently, candid," wrote

Alexander Dugin, an ultranationalist philosopher considered a major influence on Mr. Putin, in February 2016. Mr. Dugin declared that Mr. Trump probably had "no chance of winning" against the "quite annoying" Mrs. Clinton, but added a postscript: "We want to put trust in Donald Trump. Vote for Trump, and see what will happen." Against all expectations, Republicans across the country began to do just that, and soon Mr. Trump was beating the crowd of mainstream Republicans. Mr. Putin, said Yuval Weber, a Russia scholar, "found for the first time since the collapse of the U.S.S.R. that he has a prospective president of the United States who fundamentally views international issues from the Russian point of view."

Asked about the surging Mr. Trump in December 2015, Mr. Putin said he was "a talent, without any doubt," and "absolutely the leader in the presidential race." He also applied to the candidate the Russian word *yarkii*, which means "colorful" or "flamboyant" but which some reports mistranslated as "brilliant," an assessment that Mr. Trump immediately began repeating.

"It's always a great honor to be so nicely complimented," Mr. Trump said, "by a man so highly respected within his own country and beyond."

Moscow's

Dream Team

As Donald J. Trump emerged as the favorite for the nomination, his campaign brought on aides tied to Russia. Mr. Trump had steamrollered his primary opponents in part by taking aim at Republican foreign policy orthodoxy. The post-9/11 wars were foolish and costly, he would often say at campaign events. America's allies were deadbeats and freeloaders, he told supporters, who cheered in agreement. Russia was not an existential threat, he said, but a potential ally in beating back terrorist groups.

In early March 2016, the establishment struck back. In an open letter, dozens of the party's national security luminaries vowed publicly to try to stop the election of a candidate "so utterly unfitted to the office."

They took particular umbrage at Mr. Trump's remarks about the Russian president, writing that his "admiration for foreign dictators such as Vladimir Putin is unacceptable for the leader of the world's greatest democracy."

But Mr. Trump was not cowed. He soon signed on new advisers and aides, including some who had been pushed to the fringe of a political party that had long lionized President Ronald Reagan for staring down Soviet leaders at the height of the Cold War.

To the Kremlin, they must have looked like a dream team.

Mr. Flynn, the former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, had long viewed Russia as a natural ally in what he saw as a "world war" against radical Islam. In June 2013, when he was D.I.A. chief, he sat inside the imposing headquarters of the G.R.U., Russia's military intelligence agency, and chatted with officers. Two years later, he sat at Mr. Putin's elbow at a gala dinner in Moscow.

Mr. Manafort, a longtime Republican lobbyist, had earned millions working for a pro-Kremlin leader in Ukraine and had a history of business dealings with Oleg Deripaska, a Russian aluminum magnate close to Mr. Putin. He was nearly broke when he joined the Trump campaign in March 2016 -- hired to help prevent a mass defection of convention delegates -- and yet he offered to work on the campaign unpaid.

Carter Page, a businessman who spent several years working in Moscow, was virtually unknown in Washington when Mr. Trump appointed him a foreign policy adviser. But the S.V.R., Russia's foreign intelligence service, knew who he was.

In 2013, Mr. Page met in New York with a Russian spy posing as an attaché at the United Nations and passed along energy industry documents in hopes of securing lucrative deals in Moscow.

The F.B.I., which had been tracking Russian spies when Mr. Page came on the bureau's radar, determined that he had no idea he was meeting with a Russian agent.

"I promised him a lot," said the spy, Victor Podobnyy, speaking to another Russian intelligence officer about his dealings with Mr. Page, according to an F.B.I. transcript. "How else to work with foreigners? You promise a favor for a favor."

The new team was in place by the end of March, and Mr. Trump had a new message that was strikingly similar to

one of Mr. Putin's most ardent talking points.

"I think NATO's obsolete," Mr. Trump said during an interview on ABC's "This Week."

"NATO's not meant for terrorism," he went on to say. "NATO doesn't have the right countries in it for terrorism."

By then, the Russian intelligence operation to intervene in the American election – including efforts to infiltrate and influence the Trump campaign – had begun.

Mr. Papadopoulos, the 28-year-old campaign adviser, did not know this when he met in the cafe of the London hotel with Mr. Putin's "niece" (he has no niece) and an obscure Maltese professor in late March. The academic had taken an interest in Mr. Papadopoulos when he joined the campaign.

F.B.I. agents have identified the professor, Joseph Mifsud, as a likely cutout for Russian intelligence, sent to establish contact with Mr. Papadopoulos and possibly get information about the direction of the Trump campaign. He disappeared after his name surfaced last October, and his whereabouts is unknown. At one point he changed his WhatsApp status to a simple, if cryptic, message: "Alive."

Professor Mifsud arranged an email introduction between Mr. Papadopoulos and a Russian foreign ministry official. The American also exchanged emails with Olga Polonskaya, the woman in the cafe. "We are all very excited by the possibility of a good relationship with Mr. Trump," she wrote in one message, and the two discussed a possible meeting between Mr. Putin and Mr. Trump.

Over time, though, Mr. Papadopoulos came to question whether the messages were actually from Ms. Polonskaya. The woman he had met in the cafe barely spoke English. The emails he received were in nearly perfect English.

"I even remember sending her a message asking if I'm speaking to the same person I met in London because the conversations were so strange," he said during an interview this month.

In late April, Mr. Trump gave his first major foreign policy address in the ballroom of a historic Washington hotel. Some of the speech was a familiar litany of Republican policy positions – hawkish warnings to Iran and pledges to be tough on terrorism. But midway through the speech, as Russia's ambassador to the United States watched from the front seats, Mr. Trump pivoted and said the United States and Russia should look for areas of mutual interest.

"Common sense says this cycle, this horrible cycle of hostility, must end, and ideally will end soon," he said.

"That's the signal to meet," Mr. Papadopoulos wrote in an email to his Russian foreign ministry contact that evening, meaning that Mr. Trump's favorable comments about Russia suggested he might be interested in meeting Mr. Putin.

Just one day earlier, Professor Mifsud had told the campaign aide about a possible gift from Moscow: thousands of hacked emails that might damage Mrs. Clinton's candidacy.

It was a breathtaking revelation. But there was no evidence that Mr. Papadopoulos – while ambitious and eager for advancement in the bare-bones campaign – passed the information along to anyone inside the Trump circle.

More than two years later, Mr. Papadopoulos says he has "no recollection" of telling anyone in the campaign about the emails. He said he was supposed to have a phone call that day with Stephen Miller, a top campaign adviser, but it was postponed. If the two men had talked, Mr. Papadopoulos said, he might have shared the information.

"How fate works sometimes, I guess," said Mr. Papadopoulos, who has been sentenced to 14 days in jail for lying to the F.B.I.

As Mr. Trump continued to win primaries and vacuum up convention delegates late in the spring, the Russians made multiple attempts to establish contact with campaign officials.

A Republican operative connected to the N.R.A. tried to arrange a meeting between Mr. Trump and a Russian central banker at an N.R.A. convention in Kentucky in May. "Putin is deadly serious about building a good relationship with Mr. Trump," wrote the operative, Paul Erickson, in an email with the subject "Kremlin connection."

"Ever since Hillary compared Putin to Hitler, all senior Russian leaders consider her beyond redemption."

Mr. Page, the foreign policy adviser, was invited to deliver the commencement address at the prestigious New Economic School in Moscow. That invitation now appears to have been an effort both to gain information about the Trump campaign and to influence it by feting Mr. Page in the Russian capital. Russian television that year was

describing him as a "famous American economist," but he was an obscure figure in this country.

At that time, the last American to give the commencement speech was Mr. Obama, who used the opportunity to criticize Russia for its treatment of Georgia and Ukraine.

Mr. Page, though, criticized the "hypocrisy" of the United States and its NATO allies for lecturing Russia about bullying its neighbors, which were former Soviet republics, while the Westerners were taking "proactive steps to encourage regime change overseas." During his time in Moscow, Mr. Page met with at least one top Russian official and numerous business leaders.

And there was the now infamous June 2016 approach to Donald Trump Jr. by Russians whom he and his father had known from their days taking the Miss Universe pageant to Moscow. The Russians met at Trump Tower in Manhattan with top campaign officials after promising damaging information on Mrs. Clinton.

See the timeline of events that surround the Trump Tower meeting.

What exactly transpired during the meeting is still a mystery, but it appears that the Russians pulled a bait-and-switch. They used the session to push for an end to the crippling economic sanctions that Mr. Obama had imposed on Russia.

Donald Trump Jr. has said how disappointed he and other campaign advisers were that they didn't get what the Russians had promised. The campaign's reaction to the Russian attempts to discredit Mrs. Clinton's campaign was not to rebuff them or call law enforcement – it was to try to exploit them.

Experts who have studied Russian operations for decades see the catalog of contacts and communications between Russians and Mr. Trump's advisers as a loosely coordinated effort by Russian intelligence both to get insight into the campaign and to influence it.

"The Russians aren't reckless, and I don't see them going through with this effort without thinking they had a willing partner in the dance," said Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, a former C.I.A. officer who served as the spy agency's station chief in Moscow.

By midsummer 2016, the Russian contacts sounded alarms inside the F.B.I., where agents had received a tip about Mr. Papadopoulos and puzzled over Mr. Page's Moscow visit. The bureau sent a trusted informant to help understand what was happening: Stefan Halper, a former Nixon and Reagan adviser and professor at Cambridge University, reached out to Mr. Page and Mr. Papadopoulos under false pretenses.

American officials have defended Professor Halper's work, saying the use of such a confidential informant is routine in a counterintelligence investigation. Mr. Trump and his allies in Congress and the media have called him something different: a "spy" sent by the Obama administration to infiltrate the campaign.

Eventually, Mr. Trump would use such episodes as a foundation for his view that America's law enforcement agencies had been aligned against him from the beginning – ammunition for a looming war with the "deep state." This idea would consume Mr. Trump after he became president, feeding his sense of grievance that the legitimacy of his victory was under attack and shaping his decisions as he tried to blunt the widening Russia investigation. The long-promised "dirt" the Russians had on Mrs. Clinton would soon be made public. Three days after the Trump Tower meeting, the founder of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, appeared on a British Sunday television show.

He said that his website would soon be publishing a raft of emails related to Mrs. Clinton. And he said something at once ominous and prescient: "WikiLeaks has a very big year ahead."

Guccifer's

Game

Using a hacker persona, Russian military intelligence officers began to reveal documents stolen from the Democrats.

A website made its splashy debut three days later, presenting a jaunty hacker who called himself Guccifer 2.0. He had broken into the Democratic National Committee's computer network, Guccifer said, offering as proof a selection of purloined documents.

"Here are just a few docs from many thousands I extracted when hacking into the DNC's network," Guccifer wrote on June 15. "The main part of the papers, thousands of files and mails, I gave to WikiLeaks," he added – which

seemed to explain Mr. Assange's boast.

Russian intelligence had worked fast. Just the day before, D.N.C. officials and their cybersecurity contractor, CrowdStrike, had announced that Russian hackers had penetrated the committee's computer network. Overnight, Russian military intelligence officers set up the website and created the Guccifer persona to counter the D.N.C. accusations. Guccifer -- a name borrowed from a real Romanian hacker -- was presented as a jovial Romanian, a "lone hacker," who in his posts wanted to make one thing very clear: He had nothing whatsoever to do with Russia.

"It seems the guys from CrowdStrike and the DNC," he wrote, "would say I'm a Russian bear even if I were a catholic nun."

In fact, beyond the conclusions of CrowdStrike and the F.B.I., there were clues from the start that Guccifer's posts came from Moscow: The name of the founder of the Soviet secret police was embedded in Guccifer's documents, written using a Russian version of Microsoft Word.

Yet the Guccifer gambit would prove remarkably effective at creating doubt about Russia's responsibility for the hack. Republican operatives working on congressional campaigns emailed "Guccifer" and received hacked documents relevant to their races. For journalists, the claims of the supposed "lone hacker" made the role of Russian intelligence seem to be a disputed allegation rather than a proven fact.

Today there is no doubt who hacked the D.N.C. and the Clinton campaign. A detailed indictment of 12 officers of Russia's military intelligence agency, filed in July by Mr. Mueller, documents their every move, including their break-in techniques, their tricks to hide inside the Democrats' networks and even their Google searches. See the timeline of hacking that led to the indictment.

The agency, now called the Main Directorate but often referred to by its former abbreviation, the G.R.U., proved agile, brazen and not terribly discreet -- the same pattern it would show two years later in the nerve-agent poisoning in England of its former officer, the defector Sergei V. Skripal.

The hacking might have drawn little attention had the G.R.U. stopped there, simply stealing emails to peruse for intelligence clues. But the Russians' decision to leak the emails to undercut Mrs. Clinton's candidacy was a huge escalation.

The Russian officers' political skills proved equal to their hacking expertise. They deftly manipulated a long list of Americans and Europeans, many of whom embraced Guccifer's tall tale and took seriously the claim that the other Russian false front, DCLeaks.com, was run by American "hacktivists."

"Guccifer 2.0" addressed a cybersecurity conference in London via messages to one of the organizers. The purported Romanian josted with a suspicious reporter for Motherboard, insisting: "I don't like Russians and their foreign policy. I hate being attributed to Russia." When Twitter suspended the DCLeaks account, the Fox News host Lou Dobbs accused the company of "Leftist Fascism." The account was swiftly reinstated.

But the Russians' masterstroke was to enlist, via the Guccifer persona, the help of WikiLeaks. Neither of the Russians' websites, Guccifer 2.0 or DCLeaks.com, had much reach. But WikiLeaks had a large global audience. Its editor, Mr. Assange, shared Mr. Putin's hatred of Mrs. Clinton and had a soft spot for Russia.

Mr. Assange assisted with the subterfuge. He repeatedly denied that he'd received the documents from Russia; whether he was really taken in by the "Guccifer" ruse is uncertain.

But he also obscured the Russian role by fueling a right-wing conspiracy theory he knew to be false. He offered a \$20,000 reward for information about the murder in Washington of Seth Rich, a young D.N.C. staffer shot to death in an apparent bungled street robbery. Trump supporters were suggesting Mr. Rich had leaked the D.N.C. emails and been killed in retaliation, and Mr. Assange played along.

In a discussion about WikiLeaks' sources on Dutch television in August 2016, Mr. Assange suddenly brought up Mr. Rich's killing.

"That was just a robbery, I believe, wasn't it?" the interviewer said. "What are you suggesting?"

"I'm suggesting that our sources take risks," Mr. Assange said -- and then declined to say if Mr. Rich was a source. Such misleading interviews helped camouflage the Russian origin of the leak, and WikiLeaks' adept timing gave

the emails big impact. After some technical problems, according to Mr. Mueller's indictment, "Guccifer" passed the entire archive of D.N.C. emails to WikiLeaks. The website published 19,252 of them on July 22, 2016 – three days before the Democratic National Convention.

The Russians' work detonated with powerful political effect. The emails' exposure of D.N.C. staffers' support for Mrs. Clinton and scorn for Senator Bernie Sanders, her chief rival, forced the committee's chairwoman, Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz, to resign. The resentment of the Sanders delegates deepened, leaving the party even more bitterly divided as it turned to the general election.

Unknown to the feuding Democratic delegates, a cyberdrama had been playing out in secret for weeks, as CrowdStrike experts tried to root out the Russian hackers who had penetrated the D.N.C. and its sister organization, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Robert S. Johnston, a lead investigator for CrowdStrike, said the Russian hackers, uniformed officers of military intelligence, were "like a thunderstorm moving through the system – very, very noisy."

CrowdStrike had begun watching the Russians in April, asking D.N.C. staffers to keep quiet about the intrusion. "We only talked over Signal," an encrypted text and call service, said Mr. Johnston, a former Marine and veteran of the United States Cyber Command who is now chief executive of the cybersecurity firm Adlumin. Only by following the hackers for several weeks could CrowdStrike be certain it had found the Russians' tools and blocked their access.

But somehow, possibly by intercepting communications inside the D.N.C. or the F.B.I., which was investigating the breach, the G.R.U. officers learned they had been spotted. On May 31, two weeks before the public disclosure of the hack, Ivan Yermakov, a G.R.U. hacker who had used American-sounding online personas -- "Kate S. Milton," "James McMorgans" and "Karen W. Millen" -- suddenly began searching online for information about CrowdStrike. He sought to find out what the cybersleuths knew about the Russians' main tool, a nasty piece of malware called X-Agent, the indictment noted.

After that, the spy-versus-spy contest escalated. "We knew it was the Russians, and they knew we knew," Mr. Johnston said. "I would say it was the cyber equivalent of hand-to-hand combat."

The candidate favored by the Russians alternated between denying their help and seeming to welcome it. On June 15, the day after the D.N.C. hack was disclosed, the Trump campaign pitched in with a novel idea to deflect blame from the Russians: The D.N.C. had somehow hacked itself.

"We believe it was the D.N.C. that did the 'hacking' as a way to distract from the many issues facing their deeply flawed candidate," the statement said. Later, Mr. Trump tried out other alternative theories: Perhaps the hack had been carried out by "somebody sitting on their bed that weighs 400 pounds," or a "some guy in his home in New Jersey," or the Chinese, or almost anyone.

But at other times, he appeared to accept that Russia was responsible.

"The new joke in town," Mr. Trump tweeted on July 25, "is that Russia leaked the disastrous DNC emails, which should have never been written (stupid), because Putin likes me."

And two days later, he famously invited the Russians to try to retrieve 30,000 emails that Mrs. Clinton had deleted from her computer server on the basis that they involved personal matters and not State Department business.

"Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," Mr. Trump said during a Florida news conference. The Mueller investigation discovered that the Russians were evidently listening: The same day as the news conference, the G.R.U. hackers began sending so-called spearphishing emails to accounts associated with Mrs. Clinton's personal office.

Mr. Trump's pronouncements stood in striking contrast to the responses of past presidential candidates who had been offered assistance by foreign powers. In 1960, both Adlai E. Stevenson and John F. Kennedy refused quiet offers of help from Khrushchev.

"Because we know the ideas of Mr. Stevenson, we in our hearts all favor him," Khrushchev said in a message passed on by the Soviet ambassador. "Could the Soviet press assist Mr. Stevenson's personal success? How?"

Mr. Stevenson declined the offer, in language that reflected the broad American political consensus about foreign

election interference. "I believe I made it clear to him," Mr. Stevenson wrote, "that I considered the offer of such assistance highly improper, indiscreet and dangerous to all concerned."

Russia did not deliver on Mr. Trump's request for Mrs. Clinton's deleted emails. But it had obtained something just as useful: 50,000 emails of John Podesta, Mrs. Clinton's campaign chairman, stolen via a phishing attack by the G.R.U. Roger Stone, a political operative and longtime Trump friend, seemed to have advance word. "Trust me," he wrote on Twitter on Aug. 25, it would soon be "Podesta's time in the barrel."

But WikiLeaks withheld the Podesta emails for months after receiving them from "Guccifer" in June, evidently waiting for the right moment to have the biggest impact on the race. The time came on Oct. 7, amid two blows to the Trump campaign.

See the timeline of events that surround the release of the emails.

That day, American intelligence agencies made their first official statement that the Russian government, with the approval of its "senior-most officials," was behind the hacking and leaking of the Democratic emails.

And then came a potentially lethal disclosure for the Trump campaign: the shocking "Access Hollywood" recording in which Mr. Trump bragged of groping and sexually assaulting women. The candidate desperately needed to change the subject -- and that was the moment WikiLeaks posted the first of thousands of Mr. Podesta's emails. They were invaluable for political journalists, offering embarrassing comments from staffers about Mrs. Clinton's shortcomings and the full texts of her highly paid speeches to banks and corporations, which she had refused to release. WikiLeaks assisted by highlighting interesting tidbits in yellow.

Soon, Mr. Trump was delighting his supporters by reading from the stolen emails on the campaign trail. "Now, this just came out," he told a fired-up crowd in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., in October, brandishing a page of highlights.

"WikiLeaks! I love WikiLeaks!"

"Crooked Hillary" had said "behind closed doors," Mr. Trump declared, that terrorism was "not a threat"; that she had "a great relationship with the financial industry"; that ISIS might infiltrate groups of refugees coming to the United States; that a politician needed to have "both a public and private position" on policies; and on and on. The quotes were taken out of context, of course, and subjected to the most damaging interpretation. But they seemed to offer a glimpse of Mrs. Clinton's hidden views.

For the last month of the campaign, in daily releases that kept the Clinton team on the defensive, WikiLeaks delivered the Russians' gift. If the July D.N.C. dump had been an explosion, the October series was more like unrelenting sniper fire. Whether the timing was decided by the Russians or by Mr. Assange, it proved devastatingly effective.

Imaginary

Americans

Russian trolls, using fake accounts on social media, reached nearly as many Americans as would vote in the election.

David Michael Smith, a Houston political scientist and activist, spotted the alarming call on Facebook. A group called Heart of Texas was suddenly urging Texans to come at noon on May 21, 2016, to protest a 14-year-old Islamic center in downtown Houston.

"Stop Islamization of Texas," the post declared, with a photo of the Islamic Da'wah Center, which it called a "shrine of hatred." It invited protesters to prepare for battle: "Feel free to bring along your firearms, concealed or not!"

"We immediately asked, 'What the blank is the Heart of Texas?'" recalled Mr. Smith, who started calling friends to organize a counterprotest.

Months later, he would find out.

Heart of Texas, which garnered a quarter-million followers on Facebook, was one of 470 Facebook pages created 5,000 miles from Houston at the Internet Research Agency, the oddly named St. Petersburg company that would become the world's most famous manipulator of social media. The two Russian employees who had visited Texas during that 2014 American tour, Ms. Bogacheva and Ms. Krylova, evidently had returned home with big ideas about how to exploit the emotional chasms in American politics and culture.

Just as the Russians' Guccifer character had reached out to American activists, journalists and WikiLeaks, the Russian online trolls understood that their real political power would come from mobilizing Americans. The Russian company's formula was simple: tap into a simmering strain of opinion in the United States and pour on the fuel.

Consider the Texas protest. After the Russians put up the "Stop Islamization" Facebook post, several dozen like-minded Texans added their own incendiary comments. "Allah Sucks," wrote one, adding a threat to kill any Muslim who tried to visit him. Another wrote of the Islamic center, "Need to Blow this place up."

A dozen yelling white supremacists turned out for the protest, at least two of them with assault rifles and a third with a pistol. Others held Confederate flags and a "White Lives Matter" banner.

Houston police managed to keep them away from a much larger crowd of counterprotesters – some of whom had responded to a second Russian Facebook call. In a blatant attempt to create a confrontation, another Internet Research Agency page, this one called United Muslims of America, had asked people to rally at exactly the same time and place to "Save Islamic Knowledge."

The event had no lasting consequences, though clearly it could have ended in tragedy. Still, it demonstrated that young Russians tapping on keyboards in 12-hour shifts could act as puppet masters for unsuspecting Americans many time zones away.

When Facebook first acknowledged last year the Russian intrusion on its platform, it seemed modest in scale. The \$100,000 spent on ads was a trivial sum compared with the tens of millions spent on Facebook by both the Trump and Clinton campaigns.

See the timeline of events that surround the social media campaign.

But it quickly became clear that the Russians had used a different model for their influence campaign: posting inflammatory messages and relying on free, viral spread. Even by the vertiginous standards of social media, the reach of their effort was impressive: 2,700 fake Facebook accounts, 80,000 posts, many of them elaborate images with catchy slogans, and an eventual audience of 126 million Americans on Facebook alone. That was not far short of the 137 million people who would vote in the 2016 presidential election.

And Facebook was only the biggest of the engines powering the Russian messages.

On Instagram, there were 170 ersatz Russian accounts that posted 120,000 times and reached about 20 million people. Twitter reported that in the 10 weeks before the election some 3,814 Internet Research Agency accounts interacted with 1.4 million people – and that another 50,258 automated "bot" accounts that the company judged to be Russia-linked tweeted about the election. The trolls created at least two podcasts, posted Vine videos, blogged on Tumblr, sought donations via PayPal and even exploited the PokéMon Go craze.

Without American social media companies, the Russian influence campaign could not have operated. The St. Petersburg trolls tapped the power of Silicon Valley for their stealth intervention in American democracy.

Darren Linvill, a professor at Clemson University who has studied three million Internet Research Agency tweets, said he was "impressed with both their level of absurdist creativity and keen understanding of American psychology." They knew "exactly what buttons to press" and operated with "industrial efficiency," he said.

The Russian troll operation had gotten its start two years before, focusing at first on government targets closer to home.

In 2014, Vitaly Bespalov, then 23, finished a journalism degree in the Siberian city of Tyumen and signed on as a "content manager" at the Internet Research Agency, which looked vaguely like a digital marketing firm and offered a relatively generous salary of \$1,000 a month.

Mr. Bespalov was surprised to discover that his job was to write or swipe stories to post on counterfeit Ukrainian websites, spinning the conflict there to fit the Russian government's view. He had to be sure always to use the word "terrorists" for the Ukrainian fighters opposed to the Russian invasion that was tearing the country apart. "My first days on the job I was in shock – I had no idea what kind of an operation this was," Mr. Bespalov said in a recent interview while vacationing in Ukraine: his first visit to the country about which he had written so many bogus stories.

He was put off by the company's work but said he chose to stick around for several months, in part to study its operations. "It was very monotonous and boring," Mr. Bespalov said. "It seemed that almost no one liked this work. But almost nobody quit, because everyone needed the money."

Soon he began hearing about a new, secretive department inside the St. Petersburg company that was recruiting English speakers to focus on the United States.

Like Peter the Great, the Internet Research Agency borrowed Western technology while shunning Western notions of democracy. As Mr. Bespalov quickly realized, the company was not a normal business but a well-compensated tool of the Russian state. It was owned by Yevgeny V. Prigozhin, who overcame an early prison sentence for robbery to create a thriving catering business. He then built a fortune as a loyal contractor willing to provide internet trolls, mercenary soldiers or anything else required by his patron, Mr. Putin.

In the company's new department, some 80 young English speakers worked in shifts to feed Facebook pages and Twitter accounts imitating the snark and fury of outraged Americans. They stole photos, favoring attractive young women, for their Twitter profiles. They copied or created sharp poster-like commentaries on American life and politics, only occasionally slipping up with grammatical mistakes. They focused their efforts on pages that touched American nerves, with names like "Guns4Life," "Pray for Police," "Stop All Invaders," "South United" and -- mimicking Mr. Trump -- "America First."

If Mr. Trump was borrowing the hacked emails from the Russians for his stump speeches, the online trolls in St. Petersburg returned the favor, picking up the candidate's populist rhetoric. Even pages that seemed nominally hostile to him often worked in his favor: "Woke Blacks" critiqued Mrs. Clinton for alleged hostility to African-Americans; "United Muslims of America" showed her with a woman in a head scarf and a slogan -- "Support Hillary, Save American Muslims" -- that seemed aimed at generating a backlash.

The Russians managed to call a dozen or more rallies like the one in Houston, sometimes paying unwitting American activists for their help via money transfer. The same method may have been used to get the bridge banners of Mr. Putin and Mr. Obama hung.

An Internet Research Agency Twitter account, @cassishere, posted a photo of the Putin banner on the Manhattan Bridge, winning a credit from The New York Daily News. In Washington, the Russian account @LeroyLovesUSA tweeted about suspending the Obama banner, then added more tweets with critiques of Mr. Obama's foreign policy in stilted English.

Facebook, reluctant to step into the divisive politics of the Trump presidency, did not acknowledge the Russian intrusion until nearly a year after the election, asserting that Russia had chiefly aimed at sowing division. A closer look suggested a more focused goal: damaging Mrs. Clinton and promoting Mr. Trump.

Many of the Facebook memes portrayed Mrs. Clinton as angry, corrupt or crazed. Mr. Trump was depicted as his campaign preferred: strong, decisive, courageous, willing to shun political correctness to tell hard truths. The Russian operation also boosted Jill Stein, the Green Party candidate who had dined with Mr. Putin in Moscow, to draw votes from Mrs. Clinton. It encouraged supporters of Mr. Sanders to withhold their votes from Mrs. Clinton even after he endorsed her.

The impact is impossible to gauge; the Internet Research Agency was a Kremlin fire hose of influence wielded amid a hurricane of a presidential election. Christopher Painter, who had served under President George W. Bush at the Justice Department and as the State Department's coordinator for cyberissues from 2011 to 2017, said the propaganda flood and the leaked emails certainly affected the vote. But no one can say whether it made the difference in an election decided by the tiniest of margins, fewer than 100,000 votes in three states.

"It's impossible to know how much voter suppression it caused, discouraging people from coming out," Mr. Painter said. "It's impossible to know how many votes it changed."

He added that "people don't like to admit they've been fooled" -- hence the strenuous efforts from Mr. Trump and his supporters to deny or dismiss the significance of the Russian interference.

A case in point would be Harry Miller, a devoted Trump supporter in Florida who was paid to organize a rally in which a woman portraying Mrs. Clinton sat behind bars on the back of his pickup truck. It turned out that the

people who had ordered up the rally, "Matt Skiber" and "Joshua Milton," were pseudonyms for Russians at the Internet Research Agency, according to the Mueller indictment.

But don't tell that to Mr. Miller. Contacted via Twitter, he insisted that he had not been manipulated by Russian trolls.

"They were not Russians, and you know it," Mr. Miller wrote, adding, "If you don't then you are the one snookered."

'It's a Hoax,

O.K.?'

The president has created doubts about the investigation and an affinity for Russia among his supporters.

The White House statement released at 7:21 p.m. on May 17, 2017, was measured, even anodyne. Reacting to the news that Mr. Mueller had been appointed special counsel for the Russia investigation, the statement quoted Mr. Trump saying that he was "looking forward to this matter concluding quickly," and that in the meantime he would be fighting "for the people and issues that matter most to the future of our country."

Exactly 12 hours and 31 minutes later, early in the morning without his staff around him, he told the world what he really thought.

"This is the single greatest witch hunt of a politician in American history!" he wrote in a tweet.

It had been little more than a week since the president had fired his F.B.I. director, James B. Comey, but the "Russia thing" wasn't going away. Now the president was up against someone who could become even more formidable -- a careful, tenacious former Marine whose stewardship of the F.B.I. during the Bush and Obama years had been praised by Washington's establishment.

Mr. Trump's instinct was to fire Mr. Mueller, but he settled for a different strategy. He has used all his power to try to discredit the special counsel's investigation.

Revelation upon revelation about Russian encounters with Trump associates has followed in the months since Mr. Mueller was appointed, intensifying the fear in the White House. Mr. Trump has used his Twitter pulpit to repeatedly assault the Mueller inquiry, and has made scathing remarks at rallies about claims of Russian interference. "It's a hoax, O.K.?" he told a Pennsylvania crowd last month. The attacks have had an impact on how Americans view the country's national security apparatus, how they view the Russia story, even how they view Russia itself.

See the full timeline of Mr. Trump's repeated attacks.

The strategy has helped sow doubts about the special counsel's work in part because Mr. Mueller and his prosecutors only rarely go public with the evidence they have been steadily gathering in secret interviews and closed-door sessions of a grand jury.

During a period of 146 days over this year -- between the Feb. 16 indictment of the Internet Research Agency operatives and the July 13 indictment of Russian intelligence officers -- Mr. Mueller's office was effectively silent. The president was not, sending at least 94 tweets that denied he had been involved in "collusion," called the Russian interference a "hoax" or labeled the Mueller investigation a "witch hunt."

By July, one poll showed that 45 percent of Americans disapproved of how Mr. Mueller was handling the investigation, a 14-point increase from January. The shift was even more dramatic among Republican voters: from 49 percent to 78 percent. More recent polls, conducted since the indictment of the G.R.U. officers and Mr. Manafort's conviction, have shown a reversal of the trend.

The president's aides hardly make a secret of their goal to discredit the investigation before a jury of the public. There is little expectation that Mr. Mueller would ignore Justice Department guidelines and try to indict a sitting president, so Mr. Trump's lawyers see Congress and impeachment as the only threat. Turn the public against impeachment, the thinking goes, and Congress is less likely to act.

"Mueller is now slightly more distrusted than trusted, and Trump is a little ahead of the game," Rudolph W. Giuliani, the president's omnipresent lawyer, told The New York Times last month, without citing any data to buttress his assertion.

"So I think we've done really well," he said. "And my client's happy."

Mr. Trump's frustration with the Russian investigation is not surprising. He is right that no public evidence has emerged showing that his campaign conspired with Russia in the election interference or accepted Russian money. But the inquiry has buffeted his presidency, provoked concern that his attempts to thwart the investigation amount to obstruction of justice and fed his suspicion that the F.B.I. and intelligence agencies -- what he calls "the deep state" -- are conspiring against him.

The desire of the president to make deals with Mr. Putin, and the longstanding skepticism of the intelligence community about Russian intentions and actions, might have made a clash inevitable. But Mr. Trump appears to have had success in persuading some Americans that the spy and law enforcement agencies are corrupt and hyperpartisan. He has scrambled alliances that solidified over decades, including the Republican Party's reflexive support of the national security agencies. A president in open war with the F.B.I., once inconceivable, is now part of the daily news cycle.

Mr. Trump began laying the foundation immediately after he won the presidency, when he questioned the intelligence agencies' findings that Russia had disrupted the election, and likened America's spies to Nazis. Since taking office, he has worked with partners in Congress to cast the agencies as part of an insurgency against the White House.

It continued in July, when he stood next to Mr. Putin in Helsinki, Finland, and declared that he trusted the Russian president's assurances that Moscow was innocent of interfering in the 2016 election.

And it continues today. Early one morning last week, hours before flying to Pennsylvania to honor the victims of the flight that crashed on Sept. 11, 2001, the president fired off a tweet that appeared to quote something he had seen on Fox News.

"We have found nothing to show collusion between President Trump &Russia, absolutely zero, but every day we get more documentation showing collusion between the FBI &DOJ, the Hillary campaign, foreign spies &Russians, incredible."

The reshuffling of alliances has seeped into the media, where the president's reliable allies have been joined by voices on the left to dismiss the Russia story as overblown. They warn of a new Red Scare.

On Fox News, the network where Sean Hannity fulminates nightly about Mr. Mueller and his team, the journalist Glenn Greenwald, a founder of the left-leaning news site The Intercept and a champion of government whistleblowers, has appeared regularly to dismiss revelations about the investigation and decry officials "willing to leak, even at the expense of committing crimes," in order to damage Mr. Trump.

Multiple frenzied television segments and hyped news stories have given credence to the concerns of Mr. Greenwald and others about a 21st-century McCarthyism. And critics of the "deep state" were given powerful ammunition after the release of text messages between two F.B.I. officials involved in the Russia investigation, Peter Strzok and Lisa Page, that revealed their animosity toward Mr. Trump. The pair, who were involved in a romantic relationship at the time, have been skewered regularly on Mr. Hannity's show as the "Trump-hating F.B.I. lovebirds."

Meanwhile, Mr. Trump's glowing words about Mr. Putin and Russia have created a new affinity for Russia -- in particular its social conservatism and toughness on terrorism -- among Mr. Trump's most devoted supporters. During a period of myriad accounts about Russia's attempts to disrupt the last election, the percentage of Republicans who view Mr. Putin favorably has more than doubled (from 11 percent to 25 percent), according to a poll by the Pew Research Center. Democrats are now far more likely than Republicans to see Russia as a threat. An October 2017 poll showed that 63 percent of Democrats and just 38 percent of Republicans said they saw "Russia's power and influence" as a significant threat to the United States.

Once again, Mr. Trump has flipped the script in the party of Reagan: A country that was once seen as a geopolitical foe is now embraced by many Republicans as a bastion of Christianity and traditional values.

Michael McFaul, ambassador to Russia during the Obama administration, said that despite the country's relative economic and military weakness, Mr. Putin had often played a poor hand deftly. "Across many dimensions, Putin is using all kinds of instruments of power," he said.

"It feels to me," the former ambassador said, "like he's winning and we're losing."

On July 16, the president woke early in Helsinki, hours before he was to sit face to face with Mr. Putin. The meeting came three days after Mr. Mueller indicted the 12 Russian intelligence officers. Once again, Mr. Trump dashed off a tweet.

"Our relationship with Russia has NEVER been worse thanks to many years of U.S. foolishness and stupidity and now, the Rigged Witch Hunt!" he wrote.

Russia's foreign ministry responded with a simple tweet hours later.

"We agree."

The Story Behind the Story

To help make sense of the Russia investigation, reporters looked for lessons from the coverage of another complex White House affair: Watergate. A Times Insider column tells the story.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Credit: SCOTT SHANE and MARK MAZZETTI; Kitty Bennett contributed research. Graphics by Larry Buchanan, Karen Yourish, Derek Watkins and Denise Lu. Produced by Andrew Rossback.

Photograph

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KREMLIN, ERIC THAYER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, JEWEL SAMAD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES, WHITTEN SABBATINI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, THE WHITE HOUSE) (F1); A banner of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia hung in Manhattan. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NATHAN TEMPEY) (F2); A Moscow protest against Mr. Putin in 2011. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREY RUDAKOV/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES) (F4); PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY PHOTOGRAPH BY THE KREMLIN) (F5); The Moscow headquarters of the G.R.U., a spy agency. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NATALIA KOLESNIKOVA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (F9); PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY REUTERS; ASSOCIATED PRESS; BROOKS KRAFT/CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES; ASSOCIATED PRESS) (F10); A post on a page made by Russian trolls. (F11) DRAWINGS (DRAWINGS BY MATTHIEU BOUREL) (F1; F3; F5; F8; F10)

DETAILS

Subject:	Social networks; Nominations; Political campaigns; Photographs; Diplomatic &consular services; Foreign policy
Location:	Russia New York United States-US
People:	Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130
Publication title:	New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y.
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Document 69 of 176

Corrections

Publication info: New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]20 Sep 2018:
A.20.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

FRONT PAGE

An article on Wednesday about accusations against Judge Brett M. Kavanaugh referred incorrectly to the 1992 elections. That year was a presidential election year, not a midterm election year.

An article on Wednesday about a settlement between the Diocese of Brooklyn and men who were sexually abused as children at a Brooklyn church misstated the location of the Dorothy Bennett Mercy Center. It is next to St. Lucy's-St. Patrick's Church in Clinton Hill, not in Fort Greene.

INTERNATIONAL

An article on Wednesday about a television interview with two Russian men accused of poisoning Sergei V. Skripal,

a former Russian spy, referred incorrectly to the nerve agent Novichok. It is a chemical weapon, not a biological one.

NATIONAL

An article on Wednesday about the increasing severity of damage from hurricanes in the Carolinas referred incorrectly to Garland, N.C. Garland is a town in Sampson County; there is no Garland County in the state.

OPINION

An Op-Ed article on Saturday about the lack of American conductors at major orchestras misstated the origin of the Philadelphia Orchestra's leader. Its music director, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, is Canadian, not European.

ARTS

An article on Friday about an exhibition of Russian avant-garde art at the Jewish Museum rendered incorrectly in several instances the surname of an artist whose work appears in the exhibition. He is El Lissitzky, not Lissitsky. Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.

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Company / organization:	Name: Philadelphia Orchestra; NAICS: 711130
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Document 70 of 176

Corrections

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FULL TEXT

An article on Wednesday about a television interview with two Russian men accused of poisoning Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, referred incorrectly to the nerve agent Novichok. It is a chemical weapon, not a biological one.

DETAILS

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Document 71 of 176

In Interview With Two Russians, Credibility Is the Half of It

Higgins, Andrew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]19 Sep 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – The reviews were not kind when two Russians accused of slipping into England and poisoning a turncoat spy appeared on TV to profess their innocence. They were, the men said, just a couple of sports nutritionists taking a weekend jaunt to a cathedral town.

"One of the biggest information warfare blunders ever," declared a BBC diplomatic editor. Others said the interview on Russian state television was a skit worthy of Monty Python. The British government said it was "an insult to the public's intelligence."

But foreigners rolling their eyes and dismissing the men's account as patently implausible may be missing the point. For Russia, the yardstick of success for the interview was not credibility.

"It is a slap in the face of the West," said Peter Pomerantsev, a fellow at the London School of Economics and author of "Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible," an account of his time as a television producer in Moscow. Russia, said Mr. Pomerantsev, "gave up a long time ago on trying to convince anybody that it is telling the truth." But the Kremlin works hard to confuse and distract, and to convince everyone, whether inside Russia or beyond, that President Vladimir V. Putin is so strong he can set his own truth, no matter how hard it may be to believe. From Moscow's viewpoint, the interview on RT, a Kremlin-funded network formerly known as Russia Today, was a masterpiece of in-your-face defiance. It also reprised the greatest hits of Russian propaganda under Mr. Putin. In just 25 minutes, the interview distilled the favorite tropes of the Kremlin's propaganda machine: Russia always gets blamed by the West for crimes it did not commit. Its people thirst for a Europe of churches and traditional culture, but are frustrated in their high-minded aspirations by obstacles thrown up abroad, in this case the English weather.

There was even a cameo role for the Kremlin's old standby, homophobia, with heavy hints that the two men accused by Britain, Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, may well be gay and therefore could not possibly be Russian military intelligence officers deployed, as Britain says they were, for the manly business of assassination. Konstantin von Eggert, a political commentator and former talk show host on independent television, said the appearance of the two men on RT was not really meant to convince anybody of Russia's innocence in the Salisbury attack but only to deliver a message to foreign critics and domestic foes that "nothing you say or do will change anything."

The Kremlin, he said, "is telling the West: 'Yes, we did it, yes, we messed up, and yes, we will do it again if we want.'" That Mr. Putin had a hand in orchestrating the interview was clear from the fact that, a day before it was broadcast by RT on Thursday, he declared Mr. Petrov and Mr. Boshirov innocent of any crimes and, speaking at an economic conference in Vladivostok, urged them to come forward to tell their story. They swiftly obliged.

By the end of the same day, they had contacted Margarita Simonyan, the RT editor in chief, and sat down in front of the camera to answer a series of softball questions. These did not include the most obvious question: How did the hotel room where the men stayed in London come to have traces of Novichok, the nerve agent used against Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy.

Mr. Skripal survived the attack, and Mr. Putin's role has set off speculation that he may have ordered military commanders to make Mr. Boshirov and Mr. Petrov appear on television to punish them for their bungling performance in Salisbury, England.

Mr. Putin, however, has no history of publicly sanctioning, even less of humiliating, his so-called siloviki, the military and security service officials who dominate his administration, no matter how disastrously incompetent or corrupt they or their underlings might be.

Instead of killing Mr. Skripal, the nerve agent attack landed him and his daughter, Yulia, in the hospital, along with a British police officer and a Salisbury resident – and left Moscow open to condemnation for an act of state terrorism with a military grade biological weapon.

Then, on top of that, according to British investigators, the two men discarded a vial that carried the Novichok so carelessly that a British woman died after her boyfriend found it months later and, thinking it was perfume, brought the bottle home as a gift.

In the RT interview, Mr. Petrov and Mr. Boshirov insisted that they had such a keen interest in medieval ecclesiastical architecture and burning desire to see Salisbury's cathedral that they traveled to Britain for a weekend getaway that included two separate trips to Salisbury and two nights in a grungy London hotel. They firmly denied any connection to Russian military intelligence, now called the G.U. but until recently known as the G.R.U.

Their account -- which included claims of knee-deep slush and "transport collapse" that forced them to abandon a first visit to Salisbury on March 3 and try again on March 4, the day of the nerve agent attack -- struck many Britons as so risible that a columnist in The Guardian suggested that "comedy is now diplomacy by other means."

There was some snow in Salisbury at the time but none of the weather-induced "havoc" cited by Mr. Petrov and nothing that might normally deter two fit Russian men accustomed to harsh winters from walking a few hundred yards from the railway station to the cathedral. And why, if they were so keen to see the cathedral, did they head in the opposition direction from the station and wander into Mr. Skripal's neighborhood on the other side of town? "The whole situation is some kind of extraordinary coincidence -- that's all," Mr. Petrov told RT, "What are we guilty of?"

Their story certainly did not win over many people in Britain and elsewhere, or help burnish Russia's image. The interview also left many Russians, even some sympathetic to the Kremlin, shaking their heads. It was so bizarre that a television critic, Arina Borodina, claimed that Ms. Simonyan, the RT editor, had not really met the two men and that footage of her asking them questions had been spliced together with their answers, delivered in a secret location under supervision.

Jakub Kalensky, who leads efforts to counter disinformation at the head of a European Union unit in Brussels that analyzes Russian disinformation, said the two men's story was so hard to believe that Russia's "message may simply be this: 'We just don't care how credible or incredible what we say sounds.'"

But the two men did manage to build a high – if not very believable – wall of denial. And they also "succeeded in turning the tragedy in Salisbury into a farce," said Mr. Pomerantsev, the former Russian television producer.

Still, on Saturday, Russian claims that Mr. Petrov and Mr. Boshirov were innocent, fun-loving civilians took a blow when Novaya Gazeta, an opposition Russian newspaper, reported that the Moscow telephone number listed for Mr. Petrov in official records belonged to the Russian Defense Ministry.

And an investigation by Bellingcat, an online platform, found that there is no record of either Mr. Boshirov or Mr. Petrov in an official database of residential and passport information before 2009, when they were issued internal passports under the names they now use. It said this suggested that the two men had previously used other names and that their current names are "cover identities for operatives of one of the Russian security services." Mr. Petrov's official file, Bellingcat said, is marked "top secret."

The overriding message from the RT interview, as with all of Russia's responses to foreign accusations against the country, was that blameless Russians have again fallen victim to Western lies and prejudice. In a near-permanent state of high-dudgeon over Western accusations of misbehavior, Russia invariably responds to criticism by condemning the critic.

Just this week, the Foreign Ministry summoned the Swiss and Dutch ambassadors to Moscow to complain that their countries were damaging relations after reports the Netherlands expelled two Russian spies accused of plotting cyber-sabotage of a Swiss defense laboratory analyzing the nerve agent used in Salisbury.

In their interview, Mr. Petrov and Mr. Boshirov adopted the same plaintive tone used by Mr. Putin and his officials in response to past accusations. Among them: that Russian missiles shot down an airliner in July 2014 over eastern Ukraine; that Russian troops supported a bloody separatist rebellion there; and that Russian hackers meddled in the 2016 presidential election in the United States.

"We just want to be left in peace," Mr. Boshirov said, demanding that Britain apologize for all the grief it has caused him and Mr. Petrov.

Photograph

Above, the scene in Salisbury, England, on March 8 where a former Russian spy and his daughter were poisoned. Left, Ruslan Boshirov, left, and Alexander Petrov in Salisbury on March 4. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN STANSALL/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES; METROPOLITAN POLICE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Propaganda; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Espionage; Diplomatic &consular services; Information warfare
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Location:	England Russia United Kingdom--UK
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/18/world/europe/skripal-poisoning-russia.html
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Pussy Riot Activist May Have Been Poisoned in Moscow, German Doctors Say

Schuetze, Christopher F; Eddy, Melissa . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]19 Sep 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

BERLIN -- German doctors treating a Pussy Riot activist who lost his sight, speech and mobility after spending time in a court in Moscow said on Tuesday that it was "highly plausible" that he had been poisoned, as their tests had found no evidence that he was suffering from a long-term illness.

The activist, Pyotr Verzilov, 30, was treated for several days in the toxicology wards of two hospitals in Moscow after falling ill. On Saturday, he was flown to Berlin and admitted to the Charité hospital. His doctors in the German capital told reporters at a news conference that he was in an intensive care unit but was not in life-threatening condition.

"We are working on the assumption of a poisoning that has lasted about a week," Dr. Kai-Uwe Eckardt, director of the hospital's medical center, said. "Test results indicate certain active ingredients, but the exact substance has not yet been determined."

Allegations of the poisoning of a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, in Britain in March have injected fresh fears of Cold War-era tactics coming from the Kremlin as a way to silence critics. London accuses Moscow of using a highly sophisticated nerve agent in a botched attempt to assassinate Mr. Skripal, also poisoning his daughter and three others, including one who died.

The doctors in Berlin said they had been unable to identify the specific toxin that appeared to be making Mr. Verzilov ill. But they said his symptoms indicated that the active agent appeared to belong to a class of substances that are widely used, including in drops to dilate pupils during eye examinations.

Doctors at the Charité have ordered a lab toxicology report, but said they had little hope of determining the exact substance because of the time elapsed since it was ingested. Also, Mr. Verzilov's Russian doctors pumped his stomach and cleaned his blood by dialysis, making the original agent more difficult to trace, they said.

Last Tuesday, Mr. Verzilov, who is a dual Canadian and Russian citizen, spent roughly five hours in a Moscow court building. He had been awaiting the release of Veronika Nikulshina, who is also a member of Pussy Riot, according to a chronology presented by his family.

Immediately after returning home, he began to lose his vision and coordination, said Ms. Nikulshina, his partner, speaking in an interview from Berlin.

At the time, however, Mr. Verzilov chalked it up to extreme fatigue and lay down to rest, she said. When he awoke, they noticed that he had started to slur his speech and she saw his pupils were extremely dilated, leading her to call an ambulance.

Dr. Karl Max Einhäupl, the head of the Charité, said that the doctors who had cared for him in Moscow had "done a good job" and been "very cooperative" in sharing information with their colleagues in Berlin.

Mr. Verzilov's mother, Elena Verzolova, and Ms. Nikulshina said they believed he might have been deliberately poisoned by the Russian security authorities. They decided to take him out of Russia, and accompanied him to Berlin.

"I think he will be more safe here," Ms. Verzolova said, adding that she felt reassured to have a second opinion on his condition.

"It would be really dangerous for him to go back, because probably it was assassination attempt -- if not it was intimidation -- because probably he knew something that he wasn't supposed to know," said Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, one of the original Pussy Riot activists, who used to be married to Mr. Verzilov and met the family in Berlin.

Pussy Riot, widely known as a punk band unsparing in its criticism of President Vladimir V. Putin and the Russian government, gained notoriety in 2012 when three of its members were sentenced to two years in prison on charges of hooliganism, leading to worldwide protests.

Mr. Verzilov and Ms. Nikulshina were two of the four activists who interrupted the soccer World Cup final on July 15 that was attended by Mr. Putin. They were sentenced to 15 days in jail each.

Two weeks ago, Ms. Nikulshina was once again arrested at a traffic stop and was detained by the police for two nights, she said. On the day he fell ill, Mr. Verzilov and other friends had spent the afternoon in and around the courthouse, waiting for her release.

Ms. Tolokonnikova said she believed that her former husband was targeted. "They definitely knew that he would be around," she said.

Although both women underline that their theories are mere conjecture, they say they've grown weary of heavy-handed state tactics by the police.

"Cops casually come to our apartment, they knock at the door, they ask our neighbors about us; they are influencing our lives and not in a pleasant way," Ms. Tolokonnikova said.

Mr. Verzilov's medical team in Berlin said they expected him to make a full recovery, but they were unable to predict how long it would take. Although his friends and family fear for his safety in Russia, they do not expect him to stay in Berlin after he leaves the hospital.

"Something tells me once he will be able to buy a ticket back to Russia, he will do it," Ms. Tolokonnikova said. "It's a point of honor to stay in Russia and try to make things better."

Photograph

Left, Pyotr Verzilov in Berlin on Saturday. He fell ill in Moscow days earlier. Right, Mr. Verzilov at a Moscow court hearing in July. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CINEMA FOR PEACE FOUNDATION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS; SERGEI KARPUKHIN/REUTERS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Toxicology; Activists; Professional soccer
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Tolokonnikova, Nadezhda
Company / organization:	Name: Pussy Riot; NAICS: 711130
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LINKS

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Document 73 of 176

Thwarting a Debut in Londongrad

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]17 Sep 2018:
A.4.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Among the casualties of the March poisoning of a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, is London's sumptuous Russian Debutante Ball, where, once a year, the daughters of Soviet-born businessmen have been ushered into adult society in an atmosphere of frothy pre-Revolutionary nostalgia.

Elisabeth Smagin-Melloni, who has organized similar coming-out balls for wealthy Russians in 12 cities, said she decided to cancel the sixth annual London event because, in the rancorous atmosphere around the spy scandal, Russians planning to travel for the ball had complained of difficulty getting British visas.

"Over the summer it became even worse, with all these poisoned spies or not-poisoned spies, and we decided finally at the end of August that we wouldn't do it," Ms. Smagin-Melloni said. She said it was the first time she had

encountered this problem since she began organizing such events, in 2003.

"I am not discussing politics here, I think," she said. "If I like Mr. Putin or don't like Mr. Putin should not be an item to be discussed. We should not make a political question out of normal human relationships."

It has been an anxious season for London's wealthy Russians.

The government is reviewing the residency rights of around 700 well-connected Russians who secured investor visas before 2015, when little effort was made to ensure that their wealth was not acquired through crime or corruption, The Observer reported last week. Officials have also promised to step up the use of "unexplained wealth orders," which allow the government to freeze the assets of individuals who cannot legally account for their riches.

And next year, Parliament is likely to vote on legislation requiring property owners to register under their real names. Some 40,000 buildings in London are owned anonymously, through companies registered in offshore jurisdictions that allow secrecy, said Rachel Davies Teka, director of advocacy for Transparency International. But in Londongrad, as the Russian community here is sometimes called, any widespread effect of these measures remains a long way off.

Trevor Abrahmsohn, a real estate agent who sells luxury properties in northwest London, said he had seen Russian purchases of high-end properties pick up over the past 18 months, probably because of the weakness of the pound. He said some of his clients had noted mild disruptions, like heightened searches of private jets arriving from Russia.

"The truth is, I think that the immigration officers and the Russians being questioned, they all understand that it's necessary to go through the hoops and hurdles because it is a political imperative, and the government needs to be seen to be taking some measures to curtail Putin's cronies," Mr. Abrahmsohn said. Business people close to the Kremlin, he added, are already heavily invested in Britain, having educated their children in elite schools.

"It doesn't really make any difference," Mr. Abrahmsohn said. "Life goes on for the Russians."

But the ball, usually held in November, apparently will not.

Ms. Smagin-Melloni -- a Viennese linguist who organized her first Russian debutante ball in Moscow in 2003 and rapidly expanded to Rome; Biarritz, France; and Baden-Baden, Germany -- insists on gold-braided military-style uniforms and evening gowns with tiaras.

Young women must audition, and ticket prices range from \$380 to \$780, based on distance from the dance floor. Her goal is to transport the women to the final years of czarist Russia, a period of history she says was stripped from them by 74 years of Communist rule.

"They are not rooted at all," Ms. Smagin-Melloni said. "Their roots have been taken away."

She pays close attention to commentary about Russia. In March, after Mr. Skripal was found slumped on a bench in the city of Salisbury, she noticed a sharp rise in anti-Russian comments on the ball's Facebook page. Already, Britain's plan to leave the European Union had raised a swarm of visa questions for her clients. At the end of August, Ms. Smagin-Melloni decided to pull the plug.

"I think all these politics, sorry for saying that, they are all crazy," she said.

Ms. Smagin-Melloni is shifting her attention to China, a nation whose yearning for Viennese balls is, if anything, more ardent, she says. She said she hoped the London Russian Debutante Ball would resume in a year or two, when Britain and Russia are on friendlier terms.

"Very often the situation is changing very quickly, so it might be that there would be another politician in power, maybe May won't be there, maybe there will be a new party," she said, referring to Prime Minister Theresa May. Anastasia Kuatkhina, 28, a designer from St. Petersburg who attended the London ball in 2017, said it evoked the ball scenes in Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina," and also provided fertile networking opportunities. She had already begun work on a ball gown, open-backed, with a tulip-shaped magenta skirt, and accepted an invitation to this year's event from a friend, Lord Michael Buckmaster-Brown.

"It's a pity, because when you see the fabric, you can imagine how it would swirl and move when you are dancing," Ms. Kuatkhina said. "Maybe I can wear it to another ball."

Photograph

The 2014 Russian Debutante Ball in London. This year's event has been canceled. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW LLOYD/GETTY IMAGE)

DETAILS

Subject:	Politics
Location:	China Russia France Germany United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Tolstoy, Leo (1828-1910) May, Theresa
Company / organization:	Name: Transparency International; NAICS: 813319; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/16/world/europe/russia-skripal-debutantes-britain.html
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Document 74 of 176

Russians Planned Attack On Lab, the Swiss Say

Schreuer, Milan . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]15 Sep 2018: A.4.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

BRUSSELS – Two Russian spies caught in the Netherlands and expelled had been plotting cyber sabotage of a Swiss defense laboratory analyzing the nerve agent used to poison a former Russian agent in Britain, Swiss officials said Friday.

The story -- first reported by the Dutch newspaper NRC and the Swiss newspaper Tages-Anzeiger, and confirmed by Swiss officials -- adds a new dimension to the charges by Western governments that the Kremlin is waging a sophisticated and unconventional campaign to work its will abroad, and undermine adversaries and their alliances. Britain contends that Russia sent two other spies to a quaint English cathedral city in March, carrying a military-grade poison to assassinate a turncoat former colleague, Sergei V. Skripal, which the Kremlin denies. The two men, publicly identified and charged by the British authorities, appeared on Russian television on Thursday to deny involvement in the poisoning that sickened Mr. Skripal and three others, and killed one person, insisting that they were sports nutritionists, not spies.

The Dutch authorities declined to comment on any expulsion of Russians or any plans for a cyber attack. The Swiss described the events as having taken place "earlier this year" but declined to be more specific. It was not clear if the Russians were among the diplomatic employees -- many suspected of being intelligence agents -- expelled by Western governments in retaliation for the Skripal attack.

The two Russians, whose names have not been made public, came to the attention of the Swiss authorities during an investigation that began in March into "suspicion of political espionage," said Linda von Burg, a spokeswoman for the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland.

That led to a joint investigation by Swiss, Dutch and British intelligence services, which concluded that the two Russians, working in The Hague, were spies for the Russian government and were preparing "illegal actions against a Swiss critical infrastructure," according to Isabelle Gruber, a spokeswoman for the Swiss Federal Intelligence Service.

She did not specify the intended target. But Andreas Bucher, a spokesman for the defense laboratory in the Swiss town of Spiez, confirmed that the laboratory had been the intended target. Mr. Bucher said he did not know about the Russians being identified, detained or expelled from the Netherlands.

The Dutch media reports said that when they were intercepted by the Dutch military intelligence service, the two Russians had cyber tools for sabotaging the laboratory.

Sergey V. Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, said on Friday that he would not comment until more information was available. Russia's foreign intelligence service declined to comment.

The Spiez laboratory is part of the Swiss Federal Office for Civil Protection, which falls under the Swiss Defense Department, and is the designated lab in Switzerland for several international organizations, including the United Nations.

The lab was one of two designated by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to provide independent analysis of the poison used against Mr. Skripal. The organization, which monitors compliance with a global treaty on chemical weapons, confirmed the British conclusion that the chemical belonged to a class of nerve agents developed by the Soviet Union, known as Novichok.

The lab also analyzed samples from the chemical attack near Damascus, Syria, in 2013 that killed more than 1,000 people. The United Nations concluded that the toxin in that attack was another nerve agent, sarin. Western governments have said it was used by forces of President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, which Russia supports in the Syrian civil war.

Workers at the Spiez lab need security clearances and most are Swiss nationals, though some are foreign fellows or visiting researchers, according to Mr. Bucher, the spokesman.

"We have indications of several attacks against our institutions, including possible cyber attacks in the last few months," Mr. Bucher said. "But we took the necessary precautions and haven't been compromised."

Mr. Skripal, a former officer in Russian military intelligence, was imprisoned by the Russians for selling information to Britain. In 2010, he was sent to Britain in a spy swap, and settled in Salisbury, a small city in southwestern England famous for its church spire.

On March 4, he and his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, who was visiting from Russia, became seriously ill, as did one of the police officers who responded, Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey. It was quickly determined that a nerve agent was the cause, and parts of Salisbury were shut down amid a widespread search for traces of the poison, as local residents waited in fear for the results.

British investigators concluded that the toxin was Novichok, applied to the handle of Mr. Skripal's front door, and long before they named the suspects they would eventually charge, officials said Russia had been responsible.

Several Western countries expelled Russian officials, and denounced the attack as a violation of international norms, like Russia's aggression in Ukraine, its interference in other countries' elections, and assassinations and cyber attacks carried out abroad.

Almost four months after the Skripal attack, two more people became seriously ill, apparently from handling a discarded bottle of the nerve agent. One of them, Dawn Sturgess, died, and the other, her boyfriend, Charlie Rowley – like the Skripals and Sergeant Bailey – recovered.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Credit: MILAN SCHREUER; Oleg Matsnev contributed reporting from Moscow.

Photograph

The site in Salisbury, England, where a former Russian spy was poisoned in April. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT CARDY/GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject: Laboratories; Local elections; Election results; International organizations; Biological &chemical weapons; Military intelligence; Poisons; Espionage; Intelligence services

Location: Switzerland Netherlands Russia Union of Soviet Socialist Republics–USSR United Kingdom–UK England Syria Ukraine

People:	Lavrov, Sergei V Sturgess, Dawn Skripal, Sergei V Assad, Bashar Al Rowley, Charlie
Company / organization:	Name: United Nations--UN; NAICS: 928120
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/14/world/europe/russians-salisbury-swiss-lab-sabotage.html
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Database:	Global Newsstream,U.S. Newsstream,ProQuest Central

LINKS

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Hit Men? We Were Just Tourists, Skripal Suspects Claim on Russian TV

Higgins, Andrew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]14 Sep 2018: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – Two Russians named by Britain as the prime suspects in a nerve agent attack that nearly killed a former Soviet spy popped up on Russian television on Thursday to deny any involvement in the assault, claiming they were in the fitness industry and not working as hit men.

In an interview with RT, a state-funded network formerly known as Russia Today, the men identified themselves as Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, names that Britain released last week but said were probably aliases. They insisted they were simple tourists who had traveled to the "wonderful" English city of Salisbury to look at its cathedral spire and 14th-century clock.

The two men, who told RT the names were real, resembled the suspects shown in pictures released by British investigators trying to unravel the March 4 attack on Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia.

British prosecutors formally charged Mr. Petrov and Mr. Boshirov last week with the attempted murder of the Skripals and of a police officer who fell ill while investigating the case.

Speaking with RT's editor in chief, Margarita Simonyan, the men denied being officers of Russian military intelligence, as Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain has said, or part of a murder plot gone awry. They said they were sports nutritionists who had visited Salisbury to see the sights and scout for new nutrition products. "Our friends had been suggesting for a long time that we visit this wonderful town," Mr. Petrov said.

They did not offer any explanation for how the London hotel room they had stayed in came to have traces of Novichok, the military-grade nerve agent that Britain says was used in the Salisbury attack. Nor did they explain why two sports nutritionists would travel all the way to Britain on March 2, make two trips to Salisbury on consecutive days, and then fly back to Moscow on the evening of March 4, just hours after the attack on the Skripals.

The 25-minute interview, during which the two men declined to give personal details, signaled a new and bizarre departure in Russia's official response to an attack that led to a series of tit-for-tat expulsions of diplomats and helped push Russia's relations with the West to their lowest ebb since the end of the Cold War.

Though broadcast by a television network aimed mostly at foreign audiences, the account of their trip to England largely seemed meant to convince Russians that Britain's version of events was part of a smear campaign against Moscow.

A spokeswoman for the British government dismissed the interview as more posturing by the Kremlin. "The government is clear these men are officers of the Russian military intelligence service – the G.R.U. – who used a devastatingly toxic, illegal chemical weapon on the streets of our country."

"We have repeatedly asked Russia to account for what happened in Salisbury in March," she added. "Today -- just as we have seen throughout -- they have responded with obfuscation and lies."

Even the RT anchor seemed unconvinced, saying, "This interview will leave more questions than answers."

But the interview hammered on a theme that plays well in Russia and that figures in all of the Kremlin's responses to foreign accusations of wrongdoing by Moscow: Russians are victims, not culprits.

"When your life is turned upside down, you don't know what to do and where to go," Mr. Boshirov said. "We're afraid

of going out. We fear for ourselves, our lives and lives of our loved ones.

"We just want this to be over."

He said he expected an apology from Britain once the "real culprits" were found.

Mr. Petrov said he and Mr. Boshirov were in the "fitness industry, related to sport nutrition, vitamins, micro-elements, proteins, gainers and so on."

"We act as consultants," he said, adding, "the trend is to consult not about growing your biceps but about building your figure, healthy lifestyle, healthy diet."

The appearance of Mr. Boshirov and Mr. Petrov, previously incommunicado, came after President Vladimir V. Putin made a statement on Wednesday, exonerating the men of any criminal activity and calling on them to come forward to explain their story. Russian officials had previously denied having any knowledge of the men and even suggested that the British authorities had invented them to fan "anti-Russia hysteria."

Mr. Boshirov, who did much of the talking, said he and Mr. Petrov had no idea that Salisbury was the home of Mr. Skripal, a former military intelligence officer who was convicted of treason in Russia in 2006 and moved to Britain in 2010 as part of a spy swap.

British investigators say that surveillance camera footage shows the men wandering far from the usual tourist attractions and into Mr. Skripal's neighborhood. Mr. Boshirov said it was possible that they had "maybe passed" Mr. Skripal's house but denied knowing its location or ever hearing his name "before this nightmare started."

British investigators say Novichok, a nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union, was transported to Salisbury in a vial made to look like a bottle of Nina Ricci Premier Jour perfume. Mr. Boshirov said there was no way he or Mr. Petrov could have passed through British customs controls with such a bottle.

"Don't you think that it's kind of stupid for two straight lads to carry perfume for ladies? When you go through customs, they check all your belongings. So, if we had anything suspicious, they would definitely have questions," Mr. Boshirov said. "Why would a man have perfume for women in his luggage?:

Ms. Simonyan, the RT editor, asked the two men indirectly whether they were gay and later raised the same question on Twitter.

The possibility that Mr. Petrov and Mr. Boshirov could be gay would, for a Russian audience, immediately rule out the possibility that they serve as military intelligence officers, as Britain says.

British investigators say the two men first visited Salisbury on March 3 as part of a scouting mission and returned the next day to try to kill Mr. Skripal as part of what Prime Minister May described as an assassination operation approved by senior Russian officials.

Mr. Boshirov and Mr. Petrov, however, said they made two trips because of bad weather, with so much slush on the streets of Salisbury during their first visit that they decided to return to London and try again the next day.

There was some snow at the time in Salisbury, but seemingly nothing that would send men with many years' experience with Russian winters rushing back to their hotel for shelter.

A spokesman for Ms. May dismissed the RT interview as "an insult to the public's intelligence."

Credit: ANDREW HIGGINS; Oleg Matsnev contributed reporting.

Ruslan Boshirov, left, and Alexander Petrov told an interviewer on Thursday that they were sports nutritionists whose two-day trip to England was to see sights and scout for new products. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RT CHANNEL, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject: Nutritionists; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Assassinations &assassination attempts; Prime ministers

Location: Russia Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK England

People:	May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Nina Ricci; NAICS: 541490; Name: Russia Today; NAICS: 515120
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Database:	Global Newsstream,U.S. Newsstream,ProQuest Central

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American Spies Scramble to Protect Russian Defectors From Putin's Reach

Goldman, Adam; Barnes, Julian E; Schmidt, Michael S; Apuzzo, Matt . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]14 Sep 2018: A.18.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- When a suspected hit man for Russian intelligence arrived in Florida about four years ago, F.B.I. surveillance teams were alarmed.

The man approached the home of one of the C.I.A.'s most important informants, a fellow Russian, who had been secretly resettled along the sunny coast. The suspected hit man also traveled to another city where one of the informant's relatives lived, raising even more concerns that the Kremlin had authorized revenge on American soil. At F.B.I. headquarters, some agents voiced concern that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, himself a former intelligence officer known to reserve scorn for defectors from their ranks, had sent an assassin to kill one he viewed as a turncoat. Others said he would not be so brazen as to kill a former Russian spy on American soil.

Ultimately, the Russian defector and his family remained safe. But after the poisoning in March of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian intelligence officer living in Britain, and his daughter, American intelligence officials have begun to reassess the danger facing former spies living in the United States, according to current and former American intelligence officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss classified operations.

[Why did Russia risk so much in the Skripal case? Read the spy story.]

Moscow's intelligence agencies have in recent years tracked down several Russians who secretly served as C.I.A. informants and were resettled in the United States through a highly secret agency program to protect former spies, according to the current and former officials.

Counterintelligence officials have done a wide-reaching review of every former Russian informant now in the United States, according to an American official. They have examined security measures to protect the former spies and searched for potential liabilities. Intelligence agents have tried to assess how easy it would be to find the informants through social media accounts, information shared with relatives and other clues.

The British government has accused two Russian military intelligence officers of carrying out the Skripal poisoning, which they denied on Thursday in a bizarre television interview. It is not clear whether Mr. Putin directed the assault, but American officials have expressed concern that he may shift from rattling cages in the United States to mounting other attacks, according to current and former American intelligence officials.

"The possibility of them doing the same thing here cannot be discounted – especially in light of them interfering in the 2016 election and Skripal," said Frank Montoya Jr., a former top F.B.I. counterintelligence official. He said he was not familiar with the episode in Florida.

A C.I.A. spokesman declined to comment.

The New York Times is withholding details about the former C.I.A. informant in Florida because intelligence officials believe his life is in danger. Both he and at least one other former C.I.A. asset were resettled through the agency's protection division, the National Resettlement Operations Center, after Russian intelligence found their homes, according to current and former officials.

Russia's pursuit of informants intensified around the time relations with the West soured over Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea. As Mr. Putin has sought to reassert Russia's power, its largest military intelligence unit, the

Main Directorate -- also known as the G.R.U. -- has been linked to a number of brazen plots abroad, including the shooting down of a passenger jet over Ukraine and the theft of Democratic emails that were a major part of Russia's interference campaign in the 2016 American presidential election.

American officials have long believed that Mr. Putin, who was sent home from his post as a K.G.B. officer in East Germany during the fall of the Soviet Union, has a deep antipathy toward former intelligence agents who aid Western countries, but that he would be unwilling to order a strike in the United States. After Mr. Skripal's poisoning, American intelligence agencies can no longer discount it.

Killing or even attempting to kill a former Russian spy in the United States would not only further damage relations between Moscow and Washington but would also be likely to prompt an American response. After Britain publicly accused Russia of poisoning Mr. Skripal and his daughter with a military-grade nerve agent, the United States, Britain and other Western countries expelled scores of Russian diplomats, plunging relations between the two sides into an even deeper freeze.

The Russian government already uses threats against former spies to try to intimidate current informants into going quiet and to dissuade others from aiding Western intelligence, current and former officials say.

In the mid-1990s, a former senior agency official said, the C.I.A. located an explosive device under a car that belonged to a Russian intelligence officer who had spied for the C.I.A. At the time, it was not clear to the C.I.A. whether the Russians intended for the device to explode or merely to serve as a chilling warning.

"The threat from Putin in this area is real and pervasive," said Mike Rochford, a former F.B.I. counterintelligence agent who helped expose Russian spies. "It is a dark legacy of a dead Soviet regime."

The Russians, according to former officials, have used a variety of means to track the former informants.

Many, including the one in Florida, were relocated to the United States along with their family members, and Russians have tracked relatives' social media accounts to find the families, according to former officials.

The Russians have also used more time-tested techniques, waiting for informants to grow homesick or using honey traps -- fake romantic overtures to lure a target. Alexander Zaporozhsky, a Russian colonel, defected to the United States and lived quietly in Maryland until he decided to return to Russia in the early 2000s; a romantic interest lured him back, former agency officials said. He was taken into custody but freed as part of a spy swap with the United States in 2010.

Defectors often reach out to friends and family in their native lands, communications that are typically vulnerable to eavesdropping by Russian intelligence officers, former C.I.A. officials said.

In late 2013 or early 2014, the Russian operative who traveled to Florida entered the United States on a valid visa, and American intelligence agencies, which knew enough about his identity to be concerned that he had traveled to the country, began tracking him and discussed whether to stop and question him.

But detaining a Russian who arrived in the country legally is difficult, F.B.I. officials said, and would be likely to prompt the officer to abort his operation, denying American counterintelligence agents a chance to gain valuable intelligence about his activities. Instead, officials decided to monitor the man and watched as he visited the Florida home of the former informant.

The decision to spy on the Russian was also a gamble and showed the level of concern by intelligence agencies. Surveillance is risky because trained spies can detect it. If spies determine how American intelligence officers spotted them, C.I.A. officials worry, that can compromise the method of spying.

Officials said at the time that they were seeing a swarm of suspected Russian operatives entering the United States on legal visas before the American government began tightening requirements after Russia's annexation of Crimea.

Moscow was trying to put more operatives in the field who were not working out of the Russian embassy to make it more difficult for the F.B.I. to track them, according to current and former officials.

F.B.I. officials suspected these Russians were collecting secret messages at dead-drop locations or gathering details about potential vulnerabilities of American internet infrastructure networks.

Similar to the witness protection program, the C.I.A.'s resettlement center is responsible for more than 100 agency

assets at any time. They are given American citizenship and asked where they want to live. Many, a former senior C.I.A. officer said, prefer Florida.

On a case-by-case basis, the C.I.A. decides whether to give defectors new identities. In the case of Russians, the decision depends on how much Moscow knows about an informant and the level of interest from Russian intelligence.

But giving people new identities and hiding them in the United States is becoming more difficult, according to former officials, in part because of the online presence of family members.

Many Russians and their families have been resettled over the years, including the intelligence officer who provided critical information about Robert Hanssen, the former F.B.I. agent who was convicted of espionage and sentenced to life in prison in 2002.

The C.I.A. moved him and his son to a beach house in California nearly two decades ago, bought them B.M.W.'s and provided him an annuity worth millions of dollars.

Photograph

American officials have long believed President Vladimir Putin has a deep antipathy for turncoats. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXEY NIKOLSKY/SPUTNIK, VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE – GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Diplomatic &consular services; Intelligence gathering; Intelligence services; Poisoning; Social networks; Defections; Surveillance; Political asylum; Military intelligence; Espionage
Location:	Russia Crimea East Germany United Kingdom--UK Maryland Florida France Ukraine New York United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR California
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Hanssen, Robert Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120
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Document 77 of 176

Putin Declares Skripal Suspects Are Civilians, Not Criminals

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia said on Wednesday that his country had found the two Russians that Britain accuses of trying to use a rare nerve agent to kill a former Soviet spy, and identified them as civilians who had done nothing criminal. He also said he would like the men, who Britain says are Russian military intelligence officers, to come forward to tell their story.

Mr. Putin's statement, made at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, Russia, was far from an admission of Russia's involvement in the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in Salisbury, England, on March 4. But it does amount to an abrupt shift from Russia's previous position that it had no idea who the two suspects named by Britain were, and that they may have been invented to blacken Russia's name.

"We of course checked who these people are. We know who they are, we found them," Mr. Putin said at the economic forum. "They are civilians, of course."

He said that he would like the two to come forward. "It would be better for everyone," he said "I can assure you that there is nothing special, nothing criminal there. We will see very soon."

State television reported that one of the men, Aleksandr Petrov, who identified himself as an employee of a pharmaceutical company in Tomsk, said he might speak publicly at some point. "No comment for the moment," he said. "Maybe later. Next week, I think."

The British government quickly dismissed Mr. Putin's statement. "We have repeatedly asked Russia to account for what happened in Salisbury in March, and they have replied with obfuscation and lies," said the spokesman for Prime Minister Theresa May. "I can see nothing to suggest that has changed."

Nevertheless, Mr. Putin's remarks, clearly intended to project candor and transparency, suggested that the Kremlin had decided to recalibrate its response to a poisoning case that has roiled relations between Moscow and the West.

In another effort to present a less snarling face to the outside world, Mr. Putin also said on Wednesday that Russia and Japan should finally sign a treaty this year to formally end hostilities from World War II. Decades of diplomatic efforts to accomplish that goal have foundered as a result of a dispute over islands that both countries claim. The territory, which Russia calls the southern Kurile Islands and Japan calls the Northern Territories, were seized by the Soviet Union at the end of the war.

Mr. Putin, who has a talent for shifting rapidly between proud belligerence and butter-wouldn't-melt-in-his-mouth reasonableness, was speaking just a week after the release by the British authorities of detailed forensic evidence relating to the Salisbury poisoning that pointed to involvement by Russia, or at least by two men who arrived in London from Moscow on Russian passports two days before the Skripals were poisoned.

The evidence included claims that British investigators had found traces of the nerve agent used in Salisbury in a London hotel room used by the two suspects, Mr. Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov.

Britain says the names are probably aliases but nonetheless charged the pair with the attempted murder of Mr. Skripal and his daughter, as well as a police officer who fell ill while investigating the case.

Prime Minister Theresa May told Parliament that British intelligence agencies had concluded that the men were "officers of the Russian military intelligence service also known as the G.R.U."

The plot to kill Mr. Skripal, himself a former officer in the G.R.U., "was not a rogue operation" and was "certainly approved outside the G.R.U. at a senior level of the Russian state," she said.

The Russian Foreign Ministry responded to the British accusations by denying any knowledge of the two suspects. "The names, as well as the photos, published in the media mean nothing to us," Maria Zakharova, the ministry's spokeswoman said. The ministry accused Britain of fanning a campaign of "anti-Russian hysteria" and, in a statement on what it called the "so-called Skripal case," scoffed at the attempted murder charges against "two allegedly Russian citizens."

Mr. Putin has a history of walking back often risibly implausible statements issued by his ministries and press officers, who invariably respond to all accusations against Russia with categorical denials and a fog of wild alternative theories.

After months of Russian officials issuing angry denials about any Russian interference in the 2016 election in the United States, Mr. Putin said last year that "patriotic hackers," Russian individuals with no links to the state, may indeed have been involved.

In much the same fashion, he retreated from incredible denials that Russian military officers were aiding separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, acknowledging the presence of Russians in that region but saying they were "volunteers."

Credit: ANDREW HIGGINS; Ivan Nechepurenko contributed reporting.

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Intelligence gathering; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Intelligence services; Economic summit conferences
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Location:	Kurile Islands Russia United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK England Ukraine Japan
People:	May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/12/world/europe/putin-russia-skripal.html
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LINKS

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Document 78 of 176

A Turncoat Spy Went Free. Putin Never Forgave Him.

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – Sergei V. Skripal was a little fish.

This is how British officials now describe Mr. Skripal, a Russian intelligence officer they recruited as a spy in the mid-1990s. When the Russians caught Mr. Skripal, they saw him that way, too, granting him a reduced sentence. So did the Americans: The intelligence chief who orchestrated his release to the West in 2010 had never heard of him when he was included in a spy swap with Moscow.

But Mr. Skripal was significant in the eyes of one man – Vladimir V. Putin, an intelligence officer of the same age and training.

The two men had dedicated their lives to an intelligence war between the Soviet Union and the West. When that war was suspended, both struggled to adapt.

One rose, and one fell. While Mr. Skripal was trying to reinvent himself, Mr. Putin and his allies, former intelligence officers, were gathering together the strands of the old Soviet system. Gaining power, Mr. Putin began settling scores, reserving special hatred for those who had betrayed the intelligence tribe when it was most vulnerable. Six months ago, Mr. Skripal was found beside his daughter, Yulia, slumped on a bench in an English city, hallucinating and foaming at the mouth. His poisoning led to a Cold War-style confrontation between Russia and the West, with both sides expelling diplomats and wrangling over who tried to kill him and why.

Last Wednesday, British officials offered specifics, accusing Russia of sending two hit men to smear Mr. Skripal's front door handle with a nerve agent, an accusation vigorously denied by Moscow. British intelligence chiefs claim they have identified the men as members of the same Russian military intelligence unit, the G.R.U., or Main Intelligence Directorate, where Mr. Skripal once worked.

It is unclear if Mr. Putin played a role in the poisoning of Mr. Skripal, who survived and has gone into hiding. But dozens of interviews conducted in Britain, Russia, Spain, Estonia, the United States and the Czech Republic, as well as a review of Russian court documents, show how their lives intersected at key moments.

In 2010, when Mr. Skripal and three other convicted spies were released to the West, Mr. Putin had been watching from the sidelines with mounting fury. Asked to comment on the freed spies, Mr. Putin publicly daydreamed about their death.

It hardly mattered that Mr. Skripal was a little fish.

'Enrich Yourselves'

In the late 1990s, Sergei Skripal returned from Madrid, where he was posted undercover in the office of the Russian military attaché. Russia was in disarray. Coal miners, soldiers and doctors had not been paid in months. Workers took control of a St. Petersburg nuclear power plant, threatening to shut it down unless they received their back pay.

Mr. Skripal was good fun, though, happy in the company of other men. Oleg B. Ivanov, who worked with him in the Moscow regional governor's office, recalled him as a man struggling to keep up with changes in the country, more "Death of a Salesman" than John le Carré. He lived in a shabby housing block in a field of identical housing blocks, drove a rattletrap Niva and told endless stories about his days as a paratrooper.

One thing didn't fit: At restaurants, he insisted on paying for everyone. "That was something that set him apart," Mr. Ivanov said. "I don't know where this came from." In their crowd there were many other former Soviet spies, who had devoted the first part of their life to qualifying as intelligence officers. Now it all seemed pointless.

"You have to understand, the Soviet Union collapsed," Mr. Ivanov said. "All the Soviet ideology that underpinned our government also disappeared into history. There was a slogan at that time: Enrich yourselves."

That was Mr. Skripal's story, he said: Always looking for side hustles. "By his psychological type, he was a materialist," Mr. Ivanov said. "He simply loved money."

And that, he said, explained his friend's betrayal. In 2006, Mr. Ivanov was driving in his car when heard Mr. Skripal's name on the news. Prosecutors said that, while posted in Spain, Mr. Skripal had entered into a business partnership with a Spanish intelligence agent, who "bumped" him to a recruiter from Britain's foreign intelligence service. Mr. Skripal had been meeting his handler secretly since 1996, they said, passing on secrets in exchange for \$100,000.

It was not a large amount, around \$12,500 a year. Prosecutors asked for a sentence of 15 years, five less than the maximum, and the judge reduced it to 13, because Mr. Skripal was cooperative.

Mr. Ivanov found Mr. Skripal's betrayal, if not especially honorable, at least comprehensible.

"It was a period of building up capital," he said. "It was affecting everyone in the government, including structures like the G.R.U. He also came under the influence of needing to make money. The time came. The oath he gave to the Soviet Union -- it seems to me, at least -- you didn't need to adhere to it anymore."

Those were years of free-fall. Who could define loyalty?

'Moscow Is Silent'

Vladimir V. Putin, another midcareer intelligence officer, was living through the same loss of status.

In 1990, he was sent home early from his post at K.G.B. headquarters in Dresden. His salary had not been paid in three months and he had nowhere to live -- so many spies were returning that the government could not house them. He arrived home with nothing to show for his years abroad but some hard currency and a 20-year-old washing machine, a goodbye gift from a neighbor in East Germany.

The unraveling had felt personal for Mr. Putin, who was unable to protect all his German contacts from exposure. One day Mr. Putin pleaded with the Soviet military command to defend the K.G.B. headquarters, which was surrounded by German protesters eager to seize files. In a panic, they were stuffing them into a furnace.

"Moscow is silent," an officer told him. He would recall that phrase again and again in the years that followed.

"I had the feeling then that the country was no more," he said later.

His friend Sergei Roldugin said he had never seen Mr. Putin so emotional as when he spoke about those East German informants whose identities had been revealed. "He said it was equal to treason," Mr. Roldugin told Mr. Putin's biographer, Steven Lee Myers. "He was very upset, extremely."

Scores of intelligence agents turned to the West at that time, as defectors or informants, and Mr. Putin cannot speak of them without a lip curl of disgust. They are "beasts" and "swine." Treachery, he told one interviewer, is the one sin he is incapable of forgiving. It could also, he said darkly, be bad for your health. "Traitors always meet a bad end," he once said. "As a rule they either die of heavy drinking or drug abuse."

When he came to power, Mr. Putin went after traitors the same way he dealt with other ills of the chaotic 1990s, the oligarchs and crime bosses. His first years in office were marked by a barrage of spy convictions, some clearly meant as revenge.

The tone was set around the time of Mr. Putin's first election as president in 2000 -- the day before, in fact. That was when the Federal Security Service, which Mr. Putin had recently commanded, leaked the identity of a British MI6 officer who was a prodigious recruiter of Russian spies. It was a careful, meticulous leak, intended to savage the man's career, a deliberately personal attack: The spy service also revealed the officer's wife's name and the fact that he had two daughters.

That officer, it was later revealed, was the man who had recruited Mr. Skripal.

A Family Collapses

After Mr. Skripal was convicted in 2006, he was "untouchable," said Mr. Ivanov, his former colleague. The Skripal family, suddenly alone, kept their shame private. Ivan V. Fedoseyev, 76, their next-door neighbor, noticed that Mr. Skripal was gone and assumed he had left his wife, Lyudmila, for another woman. "It was embarrassing to ask about it," he said.

Lyudmila ruminated bitterly about friends who had testified against her husband, said Viktoria Skripal, Mr. Skripal's niece. She complained to Viktoria that plenty of their G.R.U. colleagues had decided to live in the West after the Soviet collapse. "Why has nobody called them traitors, she said," Viktoria recalled.

By then, Mr. Putin's Russia was in full flower. He had brought Russia's business tycoons to heel, and his own allies, mostly former intelligence officers from St. Petersburg, took the helm of Russia's key industries. Mr. Putin's friends took their place among the world's superrich, buying up yachts and Mayfair mansions.

But Lyudmila Skripal was reduced to begging for money. She could no longer afford to send the monthly allotment that her husband needed in prison, for food and toiletries, so she asked that his mother's pension, roughly \$500 or \$600 a month, be diverted to him, Viktoria Skripal said. In sheaves of legal appeals, she begged a long list of Russian military officials – the defense minister himself, finally – to restore her husband's pension.

"I am forced to appeal to you for help due to the difficult situation that I, a pensioner, find myself in at the current time," she wrote. For her efforts, over two years, she was awarded 33,148 rubles and 89 kopeks, which at the time was worth about \$1,000.

She had stopped taking care of herself. The family's apartment was falling apart, the walls warped and the linoleum stained, said Lilia Borisovna, who bought the apartment later. "The apartment was decaying," she said. So was Mrs. Skripal's body. She was experiencing symptoms of endometrial cancer, as it metastasized, untreated, from her womb to other parts of her body. It was clear something serious was wrong, and Viktoria Skripal urged her to seek medical help. But Mrs. Skripal refused to see a doctor, she said, "until Sergei Viktorovich came home." Mr. Skripal was trying to get out of prison early and submitted a detailed appeal to a military court. In his trial, he had confessed to passing classified information to a British intelligence officer. But in his appeal, according to court papers, he said he had mistaken the officer for a businessman who "simply made him an offer to come work for his firm abroad after his retirement from diplomatic service."

The appeals court did not buy it.

While the Skripals waited, their son, Sasha, was slipping into a deep hole. Much of his life had been built around his father's G.R.U. contacts: His wife, Natalya, was the daughter of another colonel who lived in the same complex. His job had come through the G.R.U. network. After his father's betrayal became public, it all slipped away from him. Sasha abruptly quit his job, Mr. Ivanov said. His father-in-law told Moskovsky Komsomolets, a Russian newspaper, that Sasha was drinking heavily and that he recommended his daughter divorce him. Sasha was treated for kidney disease and died in 2017 at the age of 43.

A Trade Is Proposed

Dialing the number of his Russian counterpart from his office in Langley, Va., Leon Panetta, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was not feeling optimistic.

Mr. Panetta had once met Mikhail Fradkov, the head of Russia's foreign intelligence service. They had dined together in Washington, and as the meal was wrapping up Mr. Panetta asked his companion what he thought was Russia's biggest intelligence failure. America's, he volunteered, was the case for invading Iraq.

Mr. Fradkov paused for a long time, then responded simply, "Penkovsky."

Mr. Panetta was taken aback; the answer spoke volumes about the way the Russian system viewed moles. Oleg Penkovsky was a colonel in the G.R.U. who had spied for the C.I.A. and British intelligence during the 1950s and 1960s, providing information that guided the Kennedy administration during the Cuban missile crisis. He was apprehended by Soviet authorities and, it is believed, shot.

Now it was the summer of 2010, and Mr. Panetta was on the phone with Mr. Fradkov, hoping to set in motion a deal that would free another G.R.U. mole. Days earlier, the F.B.I. had executed Operation Ghost Stories, arresting 10 Russian sleeper agents, who had been operating in the United States for nearly a decade.

"These people are yours," Mr. Panetta said he told Mr. Fradkov.

"I said, 'Look, we're going to prosecute them; it could be very embarrassing for you,'" Mr. Panetta recalled saying in an interview. "You've got three or four people who we want, and I propose that we make a trade."

Normally, Mr. Panetta said, such an offer would have been met with denials and obfuscation. But it was the summer of 2010, and the two Cold War adversaries were enjoying a brief thaw.

Mr. Putin had stepped away from the presidency, installing a faithful deputy, Dmitri A. Medvedev. It was a scheme that allowed Mr. Putin, who became prime minister, to hold onto power without violating constitutional term limits, but also a test of cooperation with the West. Mr. Medvedev had built a rapport with Barack Obama during a trip to Washington, meeting for cheeseburgers at a hole-in-the-wall diner called Ray's Hell Burger.

After the phone call with Mr. Panetta, the Russians agreed to a swap. Mr. Panetta gave Russia four names, including Mr. Skripal's.

"I think it was our Russia people at the C.I.A. who came up with his name," Mr. Panetta said. "And he was added to the list."

On a hot July day, guards at Correctional Colony No. 5 in the Russian Republic of Mordovia came to Mr. Skripal's cell and told him to gather his things. He was taken to Moscow's Lefortovo prison, where he met briefly with his family before being loaded onto a small Yak plane belonging to Russia's Ministry of Emergency Situations. With him were three other former prisoners. All were silent for the three-hour flight to Vienna.

The mood was much different aboard the United States government-chartered Vision Airlines 737 sent to retrieve the four men. After takeoff federal agents popped champagne bottles and poured whiskey to toast the men's freedom, according to someone present on the flight. One former K.G.B. major gave a boisterous speech. They were free.

'Have to Hide Their Whole Lives'

One man, however, was stewing.

"A person gives over his whole life for his homeland and then some bastard comes along and betrays such people," Mr. Putin, practically snarling, said when asked to comment about the swap on live television. "How will he be able to look into the eyes of his children, the pig. Whatever they got in exchange for it, those 30 pieces of silver they were given, they will choke on them. Believe me."

Even if they didn't die, he added, they would suffer. "They will have to hide their whole lives," Mr. Putin said. "With no ability to speak with other people, with their loved ones." Then he stiffened his back, squared his shoulders and spoke straight to the camera.

"You know," he concluded, "a person who chooses this fate will regret it a thousand times."

Did he know the names of the traitors who had betrayed their comrades, a journalist had asked him shortly after the swap. "Of course," Mr. Putin said. Would he punish them? Wrong question, Mr. Putin replied mysteriously. "This can't be decided at a press conference," he said. "They live by their own rules, and these rules are well known by everyone in the intelligence services."

Mr. Putin was becoming impatient with Mr. Medvedev's cooperation with Mr. Obama.

In 2011, he erupted over the French-led bombing campaign in Libya, blaming Mr. Medvedev for yielding to American pressure and failing to use Russia's veto power at the United Nations Security Council to stop it. His livid criticism of that campaign, which he likened to a "medieval call to a crusade," presaged what happened next: He took back power in 2012, and set about undoing every element of Mr. Medvedev's little thaw.

But Mr. Skripal and the other traitors, delivered into the hands of Western intelligence agencies, had already scattered.

Lonely in Exile

It was hard to miss Mr. Skripal in Salisbury. Matthew Dean, the head of Salisbury's City Council, recalled spotting him one day in the Railway Social Club, a modest establishment with electronic poker machines and framed prints of racehorses. Mr. Dean is a pub owner, familiar with Salisbury's categories of drinkers. This one did not belong.

"It was a Sunday afternoon, and he was drinking neat vodka," Mr. Dean recalled. "He was extremely loud, and he

was wearing a white track suit. I remember saying, 'Good God, who is this person?' And they told me he was their only Russian customer."

Mr. Skripal tiptoed around the question of his past, at least at the beginning. In an English-as-a-second-language class at Wiltshire College, he introduced himself as the head of a construction company, recently arrived from Spain. Ivan Bombarov, a Bulgarian cabdriver who had friends in the same class, said they all smirked about his cover story.

"We in Bulgaria, we see a lot of mafia guys," he said. "We was like, 'Yeah, whatever.'"

Mr. Skripal's solitude deepened after Lyudmila died of cancer in 2012, two years and three months after the swap. In 2017, Sasha died, collapsing on a weekend trip to St. Petersburg. His last family member, Yulia, was back in Moscow with her boyfriend.

Last year, he struck up a conversation with a Russian émigré couple at a grocery store in London, and startled them by entreating them – perfect strangers – to come visit him in Salisbury. As he described the deaths of his wife and son, his eyes filled with tears, said the businessman, Valery Morozov.

"He missed Russia," said Ross Cassidy, a burly former submariner who became one of his closest friends. Lisa Carey, another neighbor, observed the Russian on his daily rounds, walking to the Bargain Stop in his tracksuit to buy scratch tickets.

"He used to boast about being a spy, and we would all laugh at him," she said. "We thought he was mental."

He did have secrets, though. Mr. Skripal traveled regularly on classified assignments organized by MI6, offering briefings on the G.R.U. to European and American intelligence services. Such assignments may be devised as a way to keep a former spy busy, said Nigel West, a British intelligence historian. It is not unusual, he said, for defectors to feel bored and underappreciated, something he called "post-usefulness syndrome."

"Case officers are very aware of it," Mr. West said. "When the time comes, and they say 'Don't call me, I'll call you,' you may well say, 'I've got something very interesting to do.' That's what tends to happen. Their status has been slightly exaggerated and enhanced, and they start swallowing their own bathwater."

Contacts with fellow intelligence officers took him back to the old days. He made repeated visits to consult with the CNI, the spy service in Spain. He traveled to Estonia and the Czech Republic, among other places.

"Basically they were meetings of people from the same field who used to sit on opposite sides," said a European intelligence official, speaking on the condition of anonymity to characterize Mr. Skripal's 2012 visit to Prague.

"They had lunch together. It lasted for hours. It was great fun."

The British government, which helped arrange Mr. Skripal's assignments, has said nothing about them, and British espionage experts shrug them off as unremarkable lectures. But it remains unclear what information Mr. Skripal was passing on. And Russian officials may have been more judgmental than their British colleagues suspected, said Aleksei A. Venediktov, editor in chief of the Moscow radio station Ekh Moskvy, which has reported extensively on the case.

"When you're over there, you do not work against us, that's the rule," Mr. Venediktov said. "It's not written anywhere, but it's known. You were pardoned for your past and in the future, live on your pension, grow flowers, calm and quiet. These are the conditions. You do not use your military skills against Russia, against the Soviet Union. What did Skripal do? It's confirmed, he violated that rule."

Two Trips From Moscow

Yulia Skripal had something important to do in England.

She had sold her father's old apartment, together with the old furniture and the double-headed eagle, the symbol of Russia, that he hung on the wall. She bought herself a small place in western Moscow. But recently she had cleared out to make way for workers to start renovations.

The key change was a tiny room that Yulia wanted redecorated, so it could be used as a nursery, according to Diana Petik, whom Ms. Skripal hired to oversee the renovations. Yulia, she said, was planning to marry her long-term boyfriend and become a mother.

But there was one thing she felt she had to do first. Mr. Skripal could not safely travel to Russia for the wedding, so

she wanted to at least have his blessing. This was her intention, Ms. Petik said, when she buckled herself into a seat on an Aeroflot flight bound for London on March 3.

A day earlier, according to British authorities, two Russian intelligence officers arrived in London aboard a different Aeroflot flight. They were inconspicuous, dressed like Russian provincials in parkas and tennis shoes.

In one of their bags was a specially made bottle, disguised as a vial of Nina Ricci's Premier Jour perfume, loaded with a military grade nerve agent.

As Yulia Skripal went through customs at Heathrow Airport and waited for her luggage, the two men, according to British investigators, were already in Salisbury, carrying out surveillance ahead of the attack.

The next afternoon, shortly after 4 p.m., a woman named Freya Church was leaving her job, at a gym called Snap Fitness, when she came across two figures slumped on a bench in the picturesque center of Salisbury. The woman was leaning against the man. The man was gazing up at the sky, as if he saw something there, making strange, jerky movements with his hands, she told the BBC.

By that time the two men were boarding a train at Salisbury station, the first leg of their escape back to Moscow. News of the crime would begin to ripple outward, through the intelligence services of a dozen countries, through the United Nations Security Council and the global body tasked with banning the use of chemical weapons. For the agencies that oversee the army of spies that remained behind after the Cold War, it would throw into question every understood rule of engagement.

But for now, it was a finished job. A middle-aged G.R.U. officer facing an uncertain future had betrayed his tribe. In accordance with rules well known by everyone in Russia's intelligence services, two assassins came to England and took care of a little fish.

Credit: MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ and ELLEN BARRY; Michael Schwirtz reported from Moscow, and Ellen Barry from Salisbury, England.

Photograph

Family photos of the former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal with his wife, Lyudmila, in 1972 and his daughter, Yulia, in the late 1980s. Mr. Skripal and Vladimir V. Putin, top, were both intelligence officers for the former Soviet Union.

(POOL PHOTO BY MAXIM MARMUR) (A1); From left, Sergei Skripal in primary school in Ozersk, 1966; military school in Kaliningrad, 1969; and military academy in Uzbekistan, 1975.; Oleg Ivanov, a work colleague, recalled Mr. Skripal as more "Death of a Salesman" than John le Carré, except that Mr. Skripal always insisted on paying for everyone at restaurants. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Vladimir V. Putin with Dmitri A. Medvedev last year. He was displeased by Russia's thaw with the United States during Mr.

Medvedev's presidency. (PHOTOGRAPH BY YEKATERINA SHUTNIKA/SPUTNIK) (A6); The Federal Security Service, the successor to the Soviet K.G.B., in Moscow. Mr. Putin once ran it. (A6-A7); Viktoria Skripal, Mr. Skripal's niece, in her family's country home at Yaroslavl, about 168 miles from Moscow. She said his wife was reduced to begging for money after he went to prison. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); bottle disguised as a vial of Nina Ricci's Premier Jour perfume, loaded with a military grade nerve agent.; Military personnel in protective clothing investigating the nerve agent attack against Mr. Skripal in Salisbury, England. At left, surveillance footage showing the Russian agents that British officials accuse of poisoning Mr. Skripal and his daughter. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NEIL HALL/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK; LONDON METROPOLITAN POLICE) (A7)

DETAILS

Subject:	Cold War; Poisoning; Military schools; Biological &chemical weapons; Surveillance; Criminal investigations; Espionage; Nuclear power plants; Intelligence services
Location:	Russia Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK

People:	Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
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Two Men Britain Accuses of Poisonings Left Few Traces Even in Russia



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FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – Before the authorities in Britain identified Ruslan Boshirov and Aleksandr Petrov as assassins sent by the Russian government to poison a former spy living in England, men with these names traveled several times within Europe, worked in the pharmaceutical industry and kept social media profiles.

But the portraits sketched by public records and social media are very thin, and even in places where people would be expected to know them, no evidence has emerged that anyone did. British officials say the names are probably aliases.

The meager details of two lives sketched from records reported by Russian news organizations could show the real biographical information of people who just did not leave much of a trail, cases of mistaken identity, or the meticulous work of a spy agency creating a cover, a "legend" in espionage parlance, for agents before a mission. British officials contend that the two men used a powerful agent known as Novichok on March 4 in an effort to assassinate Sergei V. Skripal in Salisbury, England. Mr. Skripal, a former Russian intelligence officer, had secretly fed information to Britain, was imprisoned in Russia and was then sent in 2010 to live in England as part of a spy swap.

Prosecutors charged the men on Wednesday with attempted murder and other offenses. Prime Minister Theresa May, who had previously said the Kremlin was responsible for the attack, said they were believed to have been working for the Russian military intelligence agency G.R.U.

Mr. Skripal, his daughter and a police officer were sickened by the nerve agent but recovered. Two other people took ill almost four months later, apparently after finding the container with the poison, and one of them died.

According to Fontanka, a Russian news website, records show that Mr. Boshirov was born on April 12, 1978, in Dushanbe, now the capital of Tajikistan, and then the principal city of one of the Soviet Union's republics.

A Mr. Boshirov had listed as an address a 25-story residential building on Bolshaya Naberezhnaya, a quiet street in a bedroom district of northwest Moscow. But when the news site called neighbors, they were told that an elderly woman lives in the apartment and that no men were among her visitors.

The website also reported evidence that Mr. Boshirov was cited for two traffic violations a few days apart in July 2015. But the case numbers for the two enforcement proceedings did not match typical sequences, and two public databases that would normally include traffic violations did not list the infractions.

Mr. Boshirov's pages on Facebook and VKontakte, a Russian social media site, identify him as a graduate of Moscow State University's geography department who specialized in land hydrology and worked at Headway, a Moscow company that operates a system for monitoring drug purchases. The only photo on his Facebook account, uploaded in October 2014, shows a view of Old Town Square in Prague.

The Daily Mail, a British newspaper, reported that until this week, Mr. Boshirov had a single friend on Facebook, a woman named Yuliya Chopivskaya from Dnepr, Ukraine. She told The Daily Mail that her only encounter with the man who identified himself as Ruslan was about five years ago in Prague and lasted for just half an hour, after which she added him as a friend on Facebook.

After Mr. Boshirov was charged in the nerve agent attack, Ms. Chopivskaya was inundated with inquiries and chose to delete him from her friends list. She said she did not recognize the man in the photograph released by the British authorities.

A news channel on the messaging service Telegram reported that the email address used to register Mr. Boshirov's Facebook page was associated with an account on Moy Mir, another social media website. That

account, according to the Telegram news channel, Chudesa OSINT, had subscribed to a group called Men's Club and downloaded a game called Zombie Fight, all typical online activities.

The Moy Mir account was active even after the poisonings last spring, with the most recent login registered on July 19.

Less is known about Aleksandr Petrov, a common combination of name and surname for Russians.

According to the flight manifests, Fontanka reported, he was born on July 13, 1979. The site found that someone with that name and birth date worked at Microgen, a state-owned Russian pharmaceutical company specializing in vaccines. But when contacted by RT_Russian, a Telegram channel associated with the state television channel RT, this Aleksandr Petrov said it was a case of mistaken identity, as he had never traveled to London.

Fontanka reported that the passports the two men used to fly to Britain had numbers suggesting they were issued no earlier than 2016, and flight records show that from September 2016 to March 2018, they visited between them five European cities: Amsterdam, Geneva, London, Milan and Paris.

According to the website, Mr. Petrov and Mr. Boshirov both had return tickets for two different Moscow-bound flights, and took the one that left from London earlier.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Dmitry Peskov, spokesman for President Vladimir V. Putin, said Russia had nothing to do with the poisonings. So far, he said, "legal basis" was lacking for Russia to investigate the charged men, because there had been no official request from Britain.

"If they see no point, we can only regret this," he added.

DETAILS

Subject:	Web sites; Pharmaceutical industry; Social networks
Location:	Tajikistan Russia Union of Soviet Socialist Republics–USSR United Kingdom–UK England Ukraine Europe
People:	May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130; Name: Moscow State University; NAICS: 611310
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Skripal Perhaps Helped Spain Fight Russian Mob

Schwartz, Michael; Bautista, Jose . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]07 Sep 2018: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Sergei V. Skripal, the former Russian spy poisoned in Britain with a powerful nerve agent, appears to have been working in recent years with intelligence officers in Spain, a country locked in a pitched battle with Russian organized crime groups, some with ties to the Russian government.

The account of Mr. Skripal's activities in Spain, provided by a senior Spanish official and an author who tracks the Spanish security apparatus, adds new details to a case that has inflamed relations between Russia and the West. Rather than merely living an isolated life in retirement, Mr. Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer, continued to provide briefings to spies in the Czech Republic and Estonia, according to European officials. Now, it appears he was also active in Spain.

The revelation adds another striking parallel between Mr. Skripal and another former Russian intelligence operative, Alexander Litvinenko, who died in London in 2006 after being poisoned by a radioactive isotope,

polonium 210. The Spanish authorities have acknowledged enlisting Mr. Litvinenko in a campaign against Russian organized crime figures in Spain.

Mr. Skripal has a long history in Spain. As a colonel in Russia's military intelligence agency, widely known as the G.R.U., he was posted in Madrid in the mid-1990s, working undercover as a military attaché at the Russian embassy.

It was there, according to Russian court records, that he was recruited as a spy by the British intelligence service. That set off a chain of global events: his arrest in Russia in 2004, his release in a spy exchange with the United States in 2010 and his resettlement in England that same year.

But in recent years, Mr. Skripal returned to Spain for several meetings with officers from its intelligence service, CNI, though the content and precise timing of those meetings are classified, according to the senior Spanish official and the Spanish author, Fernando Rueda.

"He continued coming to Spain," said Mr. Rueda, citing conversations with Spanish intelligence officers.

Then last March, Mr. Skripal and his daughter Yulia were poisoned with a rare and deadly strain of nerve agent, known as Novichok, at their home in Britain. It nearly killed them both.

Britain has accused Russia of poisoning Mr. Skripal, and on Wednesday it announced the first charges in the case, singling out two G.R.U. intelligence officers. In making their case, British investigators released security camera images tracking the two Russians to the scene of the crime, and then back to Moscow.

On Thursday, the leaders of the United States, France, Germany and others released a statement expressing "full confidence" in Britain's assessment that the attack on Mr. Skripal had been carried out by the two officers.

Speaking at the United Nations Security Council, Britain's ambassador, Karen Pierce, raised the possibility of additional sanctions on Russia, which has vociferously denied any involvement in the poisoning.

The findings of the British investigation, particularly the involvement of two G.R.U. officers, suggest that the poisoning was carried out as an act of retribution by Mr. Skripal's former colleagues.

But retribution for what, exactly?

Six months after the poisoning, a clear picture of the motive remains elusive. Was it a purely symbolic attack, a warning to other Russian operatives to remain loyal? Or did Mr. Skripal do something specific to anger his former comrades?

In the years after his resettlement in England, Mr. Skripal lived openly in his adopted city of Salisbury, drinking at the local pubs and grilling sausages in his yard.

But he traveled to Prague in 2012, where he spent a boozy lunch with Czech intelligence officers. And he went to the Estonian capital, Tallinn, in 2016 to brief local spies. On each of the trips, which were organized and approved by the British foreign intelligence service, MI6, he shared insights into Russian spycraft and possibly contributed information that led to the expulsion of undercover operatives.

"It contributed to improving our work," said a European official with knowledge of the meetings.

Still, Spain is a special case.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, Spain has been a haven for Russian crime bosses and corrupt officials fond of Lamborghinis and sprawling villas on the Costa del Sol. Some are believed to have ties to the Kremlin.

Mr. Skripal's continued visits to Spain were confirmed by a current senior official, who would not provide additional details. But former officials said that Mr. Skripal would have been especially useful in crackdowns on Russian organized crime.

"From the beginning we had a big problem," said a retired Spanish police chief, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential investigations. "We ignored the Russian phenomenon and its organized crime. We didn't know how they operated."

"Skripal, Litvinenko," he said, "they gave a more accurate idea of the reality."

Spanish prosecutors and police investigators have acknowledged working with Mr. Litvinenko, an expert in Russian organized crime who fled to England after publicly falling out with Vladimir V. Putin when he was director of the Federal Security Service.

At the British inquest into Mr. Litvinenko's death, his family's lawyer claimed that he was also a paid agent of the Spanish intelligence agency and had planned to travel to Spain to hand over evidence about possible links between the Kremlin and Russian organized crime figures. He was killed before he could make the trip. Officials would not say whether Mr. Skripal was involved in similar work, or, as in Estonia and the Czech Republic, was simply giving lectures to Spanish spies. Such visits would not have been illegal, nor are they uncommon for former spies trying to remain useful.

Mr. Skripal's Russian colleagues, though, might have viewed things differently.

Aleksandr Gusak, a retired Federal Security Service colonel, has spent a lot of time thinking about traitors. He was Mr. Litvinenko's superior officer at the time he defected to Britain. Russians, he said, had a kind of genetic antipathy toward traitors, though he added that if he had carried out the attack on Mr. Skripal he would have used "a sword rather than a spray."

"I was raised on Soviet ideas," Mr. Gusak said. "For me, a traitor, you spit on them, grab them and shoot them. Or hang them and piss on their grave."

Photograph

Surveillance footage of the former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in a store in Salisbury, England, the month before he was poisoned. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA AGENCIE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Security services; Poisoning; Diplomatic & consular services; Meetings; Organized crime; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Espionage; Intelligence services
Location:	Czech Republic Estonia Russia Spain United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR Germany United Kingdom--UK England Costa del Sol France
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Secret Intelligence Service-UK; NAICS: 922120; Name: United Nations Security Council; NAICS: 928120
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LINKS

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Document 81 of 176

Britain's Web of Cameras Cracks Poisoning Case

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]06 Sep 2018:
A.1.

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FULL TEXT

LONDON -- In March, when British detectives began their investigation into the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, the former Russian spy, they had little to work with but mounds of CCTV footage. Heads bent over their desktop computers, they began the unglamorous work of poring through it, looking for an assassin.

Britain is one of the most heavily surveilled nations on earth, with an estimated one surveillance camera per 11 citizens. It has cutting-edge technology for visually identifying criminals, and software so sensitive it can scan an airport for a tattoo or a pinkie ring. And then there is that team of genetically gifted humans known as "super-recognizers."

On Wednesday, the authorities announced that the effort had paid off: Two Russian intelligence officers had been charged with attempted murder, the first criminal charges in a case that has driven a deep wedge between Russia and the West.

Investigators released a cache of evidence, including security camera images that captured the progress of the two men from an Aeroflot flight to the scene of the crime, and from there back to Moscow. They also released

photographs of the delicate perfume bottle that was used to carry a weapons-grade nerve agent, known as Novichok, to the quiet English city of Salisbury where the attack took place.

In the days leading up to the March 4 poisoning, the same two Russian men kept popping up on cameras. "It's almost impossible in this country to hide, almost impossible," said John Bayliss, who retired from the Government Communications Headquarters, Britain's electronic intelligence agency, in 2010. "And with the new software they have, you can tell the person by the way they walk, or a ring they wear, or a watch they wear. It becomes even harder."

The investigation into the Skripal poisoning, known as Operation Wedana, will stand as a high-profile test of an investigative technique Britain has pioneered: accumulating mounds of visual data and sifting through it.

Neil Basu, Britain's top counterterrorism police official, broke months of silence in a hastily convened Scotland Yard news conference on Wednesday, taking the unusual step of stripping journalists of their electronic devices to keep the news under wraps until arrest warrants for the two men, Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, had been issued. Two hours later, Prime Minister Theresa May announced that British intelligence services had identified the men as officers in the G.R.U., Russia's military intelligence service.

Russian officials responded witheringly, declaring in a Foreign Ministry statement that "we decisively reject these insinuations."

"It is impossible to ignore the fact that both British and American colleagues act according to the same scheme: Without bothering themselves to produce any evidence, they announce a list of some 'Russian agents' in order to justify London and Washington's witch hunt," said Maria Zakharova, a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman.

Mr. Bayliss said that all along, investigators have been acutely aware that the suspects would be protected in Russia and never tried, though Interpol red notices and domestic and European arrest warrants were issued.

"There are a lot of people who would sort of give up on it, because what's the point?" he said. "They're in Russia, we're not going to get them back. But the thing is, once you've got it to that point, that means those people can't leave Russia."

Beyond that, Mr. Bayliss said, "there is a satisfaction of getting to the truth, to be able to prove to the Western world that the Russians did this."

The day of the attack, Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were found barely conscious on a bench beside the Avon River. (They both recovered, but months later, two Britons, Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley, fell ill after being exposed to the poison. Ms. Sturgess died.)

In the days that followed the Skripal attack, investigators began by collecting 11,000 hours of video from ports, train stations, shop windows, car dashboards and the roadways around Mr. Skripal's house.

Before searching for a needle, investigators said wryly, they first had to build their own haystack.

The investigation drew on some of Scotland Yard's most storied assets, like its Super-Recognizer Unit. Its officers are selected for their superior ability to remember faces -- the opposite of prosopagnosia, also known as "face-blindness."

"They don't concentrate on the obvious: the graying hair or the mustache or the glasses," the unit's founder, Mick Neville, told Sky News last week. "They look at the eyes, the mouth, the ears -- the things that don't change. They can recognize a face from the tiniest glimpse of part of it."

In cases such as the Skripal investigation, which begin with an enormous pool of potential suspects, super-recognizers can help by singling out people who seem to move suspiciously, experts say. Local police officers are often brought in to help them eliminate bystanders, like small-time drug dealers, who may also appear suspicious. Those results were then overlaid with passport data for Russians who left the country shortly after the poisoning, bringing the pool of suspects down to a manageable number. The police were able to cross-reference suspects in other ways, mapping mobile phone and bank card use, for example.

"It's a bit like a funnel, the top of the funnel has a vast amount going in, and by the time the liquid comes out at the bottom, it narrows down to a tiny stream," Mr. Bayliss said.

Investigators had one bit of luck: Heavy snow fell through the weekend of the attack, reducing the number of people on the streets.

A big breakthrough took place nearly two months after the Skripals were poisoned, when the police arrived at the City Stay Hotel in East London, where the two suspects had spent the two nights before the attack. Officers took samples from the room where the two men had stayed, and sent them for laboratory testing. Two of them showed trace contamination for the nerve agent used in the attack.

On Wednesday, as news of the charges spread, neighbors peered curiously at the building, which had smeared windows and dingy artificial grass.

"I just got a shiver, a cold shiver," said Debbie Weekes, 47, who lives nearby. "It's just shocking, I'm at a loss for words. You never know who's around."

Some wondered why they had not received a warning in May, when the police found the nerve agent traces in the hotel.

"Obviously we don't feel safe," said Shehan Ravindranath, 43, the manager of a supermarket across the street. "We can only take protection if we know about it."

In Salisbury, though, the announcement about the charges was greeted with relief. Matthew Dean, the head of Salisbury's City Council and owner of a local pub, the Duke of York, said he hoped it would put to rest conspiracy theories circulating about the crime.

"This is a piece of closure," he said.

Ceri Hurford-Jones, the managing director of Salisbury's local radio station, saluted investigators for their "sheer skill in getting a grip on this, and finding out who these people were."

It may not have been the stuff of action films, but Mr. Hurford-Jones did see something impressive about the whole thing.

"It's methodical, plodding," he said. "But, you know, that's the only way you can do these things. There is a bit of Englishness in it."

Credit: ELLEN BARRY; Iliana Magra and Richard Perez-Pena contributed reporting from London, and Oleg Matsnev from Moscow.

The British authorities released photographs on Wednesday of two men suspected in the March poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter. They said a perfume bottle sample, top center, was used to carry Novichok, a potent nerve agent. (A1); The British authorities issued arrest warrants for Ruslan Boshirov, far left, and Alexander Petrov, near left, who are charged with attempted murder in the poisoning of the ex-Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, bottom far left, with Novichok, a weapons-grade nerve agent. The suspects were videotaped walking in Salisbury in March. Three months later, two Britons, Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley, bottom near left, fell ill after being poisoned. Ms. Sturgess died. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY METROPOLITAN POLICE, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (A6)

DETAILS

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Location:	Russia Avon River United Kingdom--UK
People:	Sturgess, Dawn May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Skripal, Yulia Rowley, Charlie
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Corrections

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FULL TEXT

FRONT PAGE

An article on Saturday about C.I.A. informants in Russia falling largely silent misstated when President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia spoke publicly against former intelligence agents he viewed as traitors. It was in 2010, not shortly before the assassination attempt on a former Russian intelligence officer, Sergei V. Skripal. The article also referred incorrectly to the public comments Mr. Putin made. They were menacing, but not direct threats.

INTERNATIONAL

An article on Saturday about an announcement by the Trump administration that it would cut aid for Palestinians referred incorrectly to the Israel Project. The organization identifies itself as nonpartisan, not right-leaning. Because of an editing error, an article on Tuesday about deteriorating relations between the United States and North Korea referred incorrectly to the South Korean foreign minister. Kang Kyung-wha is a woman.

NATIONAL

An article on Wednesday about a proposal to rename the Russell Senate Building misstated the position of a senator from Georgia on the proposal. Senator Johnny Isakson supports the formation of a committee to consider how to honor Senator John McCain; he did not say he supported renaming the building after Mr. McCain.

An article on Wednesday about a federal court ruling declaring that North Carolina's congressional district map was unconstitutional misstated the middle initial of an election-law scholar at the Moritz College of Law at Ohio State University. He is Edward B. Foley, not Edward F.

An article on Wednesday about the 1968 Democratic National Convention misstated the age of a press organizer for the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. The organizer, Don Rose, was 37 at the time of the convention, not 29.

BUSINESS DAY

An article on Tuesday about a \$500 million investment in Uber made by Toyota, using information from Uber, misstated the valuation of the ride-hailing company. It is \$76 billion, not \$72 billion.

SPORTS

An article on Wednesday about the extreme heat policy at the United States Open misstated the length of the new serve clock. It is 25 seconds, not 20 seconds.

ARTS

An article on Tuesday about Pierre Hache, a French D.J., misstated when the ballroom scene originated. It was in Harlem in the 1920s, not the 1980s.

The "Here to Help" article on Sunday about biographies of Aretha Franklin misspelled the surname of a gospel singer. She is Mavis Staples, not Staple.

OBITUARIES

An obituary on Aug. 20 about the socialist activist David McReynolds referred incorrectly to his childhood in Los Angeles. His father was a journalist, not head of the local water reserve, and his grandfather was the general manager of a private water company, not a farmer.

Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.

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FULL TEXT

An article on Saturday about C.I.A. informants in Russia falling largely silent misstated when President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia spoke publicly against former intelligence agents he viewed as traitors. It was in 2010, not shortly before the assassination attempt on a former Russian intelligence officer, Sergei V. Skripal. The article also referred incorrectly to the public comments Mr. Putin made. They were menacing, but not direct threats.

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Tighter Sanctions Rain on Putin's Parade

MacFARQUHAR, NEIL . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]13 Aug 2018: A.1.

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FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – From Moscow to Washington to capitals in between, the past few days have showcased the way President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia nimbly exploits differences between the United States and its allies. Yet recent events have also highlighted the downside to Mr. Putin's geopolitical escapades and accentuated where he falls short on matters of vital importance to both himself, and ordinary Russians. President Trump had barely finished catapulting a belligerent tweet and new sanctions at Turkey on Friday before Mr. Putin was working the phone with his Turkish counterpart, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. It was vintage Putin, showcasing his seizure of any opportunity to divide the West. But at the same time, the Western sanctions he hoped to get lifted have only been tightened this past week, pushing the ruble down to its lowest levels in years. At home, Mr. Putin's standing with Russians is suffering as a result. For all the strategic success Mr. Putin has had -- including diminishing NATO and the European Union by bolstering populist governments in Europe as well as Middle East autocrats -- he has failed to persuade or pressure the West to lift successive waves of American and European economic sanctions imposed on Russia since its 2014 annexation of Crimea. In fact, the State Department threatened last week to enact yet another round of such measures, just days after the United States Senate brandished its own. The European Union, some of whose members had signaled in the past few years that they were ready to consider granting Moscow some relief, has held tough on sanctions, especially in the wake of the British government's finding that Russia was responsible for an attempted assassination on British soil using a banned nerve agent.

Mr. Putin could certainly claim a tactical victory after his call to Turkey. Mr. Erdogan, whose country is a NATO member, soon crowed that Turkey's growing economic and military relations with Russia "make us stronger," while he fulminated against the "economic war" waged by Washington.

But the failure to make progress in freeing the Russian economy from the sanctions is a setback for Mr. Putin both domestically and globally.

In Mr. Trump, Mr. Putin and some in the Kremlin thought they had a get-out-of-sanctions-free card. Despite the lack of concrete agreements, the first summit meeting between the two leaders, in Helsinki, Finland, last month, reinforced Russian expectations that the American president would fulfill his campaign promise to mend ties.

"Many hoped that the Helsinki summit would reset U.S.-Russia relations, and if not help lift the existing sanctions, then at least avoid further rounds," Maria Snegovaya, a United States-based Russia analyst and columnist for the newspaper *Vedomosti*, wrote in an email.

Much to the Kremlin's dismay, however, the Trump administration has developed into a kind of pushmi-pullyu of the diplomatic world, acting toward Russia something like the two-headed llama of Dr. Doolittle fame. One head, in the form of Mr. Trump, repeatedly promises improved ties with Moscow, while the other, representing senior officials in his own administration and bipartisan sentiment in Congress, growls about new sanctions and other chastisements.

In Moscow, the policy zigzags prompted both confusion and anger as the Kremlin floundered to respond.

"People are bewildered because they keep getting very mixed signals about the state of relations," said Andrei V. Kortunov, the director general of the Russian International Affairs Council, a research group that advises the Kremlin.

The Kremlin's standard response since the Crimea annexation has been to rally Russians around the flag, depicting the country as a besieged fortress. After four years, however, ordinary Russians find that formula tiresome, analysts said, and Mr. Putin's declining popularity can be attributed partly to his inability to mend fences with the West.

"People are saying, 'Please maintain Russia as a great power, but not at the expense of our income,'" said Lev D. Gudkov, the director of the Levada Center, an independent polling organization. "When they started to sense that Putin's foreign policy became too expensive, the attitude began to change and the sense of irritation is growing." After the Helsinki summit meeting, 42 percent of Russians in one poll said they held a favorable view of both the United States and Europe. That is the highest level since Moscow claimed Crimea.

At the same time, Mr. Putin's approval rating, still elevated by Western standards, has been sinking. In July it dropped 15 percentage points, to 64 percent from 79 percent, according to a Levada poll. The survey of 1,600 people had a margin of error of around three percentage points.

A poll released on Friday by FOM, the Public Opinion Foundation, which often works for the Kremlin, showed even lower numbers. Just 45 percent of respondents said they would vote for Mr. Putin in a presidential election now, a five-year low, while the number who expressed distrust in him jumped to 35 percent from 19 percent in May. The poll, conducted this month, surveyed 3,000 respondents with a margin of error of 2.5 percentage points.

Mr. Gudkov, the Levada pollster, cited several reasons for the suddenly more favorable view of the West.

First, hundreds of thousands of lively foreigners flooded Russia in June and July for the World Cup. State television, a virtual monopoly, dropped its habitual xenophobic attacks during those weeks, which came just before the July 16 summit meeting between Mr. Putin and Mr. Trump.

More important, the changing view of the West reflects a general exasperation with domestic problems including plans to overhaul pensions, higher taxes and several years of rising prices in tandem with decreasing incomes, Mr. Gudkov said.

"It is a way for people to say it is time to end this confrontation," he said.

Initially, it seemed that the Helsinki talks opened the door for lower-level diplomats, military officers, intelligence agents and other experts to begin discussions about cooperation between Russia and United States on at least a few issues, including the wars in Syria and Ukraine, international terrorism and nuclear proliferation.

"We would slowly start moving out of this hole that we have dug for ourselves," Mr. Kortunov said. Instead, Mr. Trump's cozy attitude toward Mr. Putin backfired at home and the confrontation deepened. First, the United States arrested a Russian citizen, Maria Butina, on charges of acting as an unregistered foreign agent.

Then a bipartisan group of senators, dismayed that Mr. Trump had not publicly confronted Mr. Putin over Russia's election meddling, released draft legislation that would limit the operations in the United States of Russian state-owned banks and that would impede their use of the dollar. Passage of such a bill would impose some of the most damaging sanctions yet.

On Wednesday, the State Department said it would impose new sanctions by the end of August in response to the attempted assassination in March of a former Russian spy living in Britain, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal. American law mandates such sanctions, with a second stage possible later this year, after any attack using chemical weapons.

The August sanctions, targeting goods related to national security, are expected to have little effect because such trade is so low anyway.

The banking sanctions threatened by the Senate are far more serious. Some Russian analysts see the lighter sanctions emerging from the State Department as an attempt by the Trump White House to head off a new, more damaging round, and to make Mr. Trump look tough on Russia before the November midterm elections.

In either case, Russia has only limited means to respond without bruising its own economy -- existing sanctions, including those imposed by Europe, have already damaged economic growth.

On Thursday, the prospect of new sanctions pounded the ruble, which dropped to its lowest level against the dollar in two years. Share prices in Moscow also plunged. The market turmoil prompted sensational headlines in the Russian news media like "The Ruble Drowned in a Wave of Sanctions."

The sudden dashed expectations for improved ties and the lack of options in response clearly angered and frustrated senior officials, who ratcheted up the rhetorical flourishes about United States seeking not just to punish Russia, but to destroy it.

Igor Korotchenko, the editor of the Russian magazine National Defense, reflected the attitude of Kremlin hard-liners who are always suspicious of the United States when he dismissed the idea that the sanctions were merely a symptom of domestic American politics.

"It's an attempt to destroy the modern Russian state," he said on a heated television talk show.

Dmitri A. Medvedev, the unpopular prime minister, suggested an economic war was brewing and threatened retaliation. "It would be necessary to react to this war economically, politically or, if needed, by other means," he said.

The Kremlin and the Russian Foreign Ministry responded in more measured tones, saying that the new, "unfriendly" measures contradicted at least the spirit of the Helsinki meeting.

"You can expect anything from Washington now, it is a very unpredictable international actor," said Dmitri S. Peskov, Mr. Putin's spokesman.

The immediate problem for the Kremlin is how to respond. It denies any involvement in the actions outside Russia's borders that prompted the move, like the hacking of Democratic Party emails or the poisoning of the Skripals.

Russia has largely skirted the fallout from previous sanctions, and it has the example of countries like Iran, which survived such measures for decades.

Yet each new round feeds the concern that they will be harder to escape, said Aleksandr Morozov, co-director of the Boris Nemtsov Academic Center for the Study of Russia in Prague.

"Now they are in a diplomatic vacuum," he said. "It is not clear where and how even minimal contacts can be moved."

NEIL MacFARQUHAR Follow Neil MacFarquhar on Twitter: @NeilMacFarquhar.

Credit: NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Reporting was contributed by Ivan Nechepurenko, Lincoln Pigman and Sophia

Kishkovsky from Moscow; Steven Erlanger from Brussels; and Gardiner Harris from Washington. President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia Faces New Waves of Sanctions Despite Years of Working to Exploit Western Divisions. (Photograph by Anatoly Maltsev/Epa, Via Shutterstock) (A8)

DETAILS

Subject:	Polls &surveys; Presidents; Sanctions; International relations; Geopolitics; Foreign policy; Diplomatic &consular services
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LINKS

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Document 85 of 176

U.S. Action On Russia Sends Ruble Into Tailspin

Kramer, Andrew E . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 Aug 2018: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – Russia's currency fell on Thursday to its lowest dollar value in nearly two years, jarred by new American sanctions imposed in response to a nerve-agent attack on a former Russian spy in Britain. For several years, the Russian economy has appeared able mostly to shrug off the effects of a series of Western sanctions tied to its incursions into Ukraine and its election meddling. Buoyed by rising oil prices, the economy even grew modestly this year.

But the ruble's precipitous decline may be a clear sign that the sanctions have begun to cloud the country's long-term economic outlook.

As the ruble slumped through the day, officials in Moscow expressed dismay that the new restrictions came so soon after what they saw as a positive summit meeting between President Trump and Vladimir V. Putin, in Helsinki, Finland last month.

"Such decisions made by the American side are absolutely unfriendly, and you cannot associate them with the constructive, even if difficult, atmosphere we had during the last meeting of the two presidents," Dmitry S. Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, told journalists in a conference call.

When Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin met, Russia's foreign minister, Sergey L. Lavrov, called the summit "better than super" for Russia. But investors were taking a different view this week.

A domestic bond issue was met with lackluster demand despite rising interest rates. And at times, Russian media reported, liquidity dried up on currency exchanges as ruble sellers far outnumbered buyers.

Market turmoil began earlier this month after Republican and Democratic lawmakers in the United States Congress introduced a draft bill to punish Russia for election meddling, and accelerated with the announcement of the separate chemical weapons sanctions on Wednesday.

Before the sanctions scare began, it cost just 62.5 rubles to buy a dollar, but by the end of the day Thursday, the Russian currency had weakened to 66.5 to the dollar. Russia's main stock index, the Micex, dipped on news of the chemical weapons sanctions but recovered losses by the close.

Some companies were hit harder. Shares in Aeroflot, the national airline, fell 11.4 percent before bouncing back later in the day. The chemical weapons sanctions could ban flights between the United States and Russia within three months, a State Department official told reporters in Washington.

The Trump administration said it was acting in compliance with the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and

Warfare Elimination Act of 1991, which mandates that once the government has determined that a country has used chemical or biological weapons in violation of international law, sanctions must be imposed.

British officials have declared that Russia was to blame for the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian intelligence officer once imprisoned for selling secrets to the British, and his daughter, Yulia. They were exposed to a rare nerve agent belonging to a class of Soviet-developed chemical weapons known as Novichok. The Skripals survived, but a woman later exposed to the same chemical in Britain died.

The restrictions cover exports to Russia of anything with a potential national security purpose, such as gas turbine engines, electronics, and testing and calibration equipment.

The ruble tumbled despite what economists considered a modest direct effect on Russia's economy of this sanction, which will come into force later this month.

The new measures, wrote Lilit Gevorgyan, a principal economist at IHS Markit, are "less menacing" than sanctions announced in April that targeted politically connected oligarchs. But they unnerved investors because they signaled the American government's willingness to keep taking steps.

"The escalating 'sanctions war' between the U.S. and Russia, especially the uncertainty surrounding the long-term investments in critical energy projects, will damage the overall investment activity," Ms. Gevorgyan wrote. "The investor community is unsettled."

Most economists have attributed a recession in Russia that began in 2014, after the Russian annexation of Crimea and military intervention in eastern Ukraine, to falling global oil prices rather than Western sanctions. The economy has since resumed growing.

Russia has \$458 billion in gold and hard currency reserves it could use to prop up the ruble, but the central bank has been allowing its value to drop, and did so again this week. The policy helps domestic industry and agriculture. Russia has been subjected to successive waves of sanctions. The Obama administration imposed sanctions for Russia's actions in Ukraine and for meddling in the 2016 presidential election. The Trump administration in April sanctioned oligarchs and government officials over the election meddling and other "malign" activities, and this week over the nerve agent attack in Britain.

Russia has few economic means to retaliate. Sergey N. Ryabukhin, a member of the upper house of Parliament, suggested banning sales of Russian engines used on some American rockets, though the American space industry has other options.

In Moscow, some officials described the new sanctions in terms of American domestic politics. They were imposed, the Russians said, as part of a struggle in the United States between Mr. Trump and his supporters, who wanted to engage with Russia, and a "deep state" of national security bureaucrats, who were determined to worsen relations.

"This means more pressure on Russia as well as those U.S. politicians who want a rapprochement with Russia, with the ultimate aim of exacerbating the situation," Aleksei V. Chepa, the deputy chairman of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, told the state-controlled broadcaster RT.

Vladimir I. Batyuk, a scholar of the United States at the Russian Academy of Sciences, told the RIA news agency that, "all the positive moments that were noted after the meeting of the two presidents in Helsinki will be all but completely offset, naturally."

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Credit: ANDREW E. KRAMER; Sophia Kishkovsky and Lincoln Pigman contributed reporting.

DETAILS

Subject:	Investments; National security; Oligarchy; Sanctions; Biological &chemical weapons; Gas turbine engines; American dollar
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Location:	Russia United States–US Crimea United Kingdom–UK Ukraine Finland
People:	Trump, Donald J Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120; Name: Russian Academy of Sciences; NAICS: 541711; Name: Aeroflot Russian Airlines; NAICS: 481111; Name: IHS Markit; NAICS: 511210, 519130, 541512, 541910
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/09/world/europe/russia-sanctions-ruble.html
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U.S. to Impose New Sanctions Against Russia

Gardiner, Harris . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]09 Aug 2018: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- The Trump administration said on Wednesday that it would soon impose new sanctions against Russia in response to the attempted assassination in March of a former Russian spy living in England and his daughter.

Under the terms of the sanctions, any attempt by an American company to obtain an export license to sell anything with a potential national security purpose -- gas turbine engines, electronics, integrated circuits and testing and calibration equipment -- will be automatically denied. Exporters can attempt to prove that the goods will be used for legitimate purposes, but that is a tough hurdle to clear.

An administration official described the list of affected items as "enormously elaborate," but outside experts said the actual amount of exports involved is fairly small because the Obama administration already banned exports to Russia that could have military purposes.

Tougher measures are called for in the legislation, however, if Russia fails to prove that it is no longer using chemical weapons.

"Today's step is an important but moderate set of sanctions," said Peter Harrell, a sanctions official in the Obama administration, adding that further sanctions expected in three months "could be among the most severe yet, but could also be quite modest, depending on where the Trump administration wants to go."

The sanctions were imposed under the provisions of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991, which mandates that once the government has determined that a country has used chemical or biological weapons in violation of international law or even made "substantial preparations" to do so, sanctions must be imposed.

British officials had declared that Russia was to blame for the attempted poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a British citizen, and his daughter Yulia, in large part because of the obscure poison involved. It was one of a strain of nerve agents known as Novichok that they say is kept under tight control by the Russian authorities.

The Trump administration agreed with the determination by the British government that set in motion the sanctions. The legislation requires that sanctions be put in place within 60 days, and Representative Ed Royce, Republican of California and the chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, sent a letter to President Trump two weeks ago chiding the administration for missing it.

The announcement by the State Department came three and a half weeks after Mr. Trump's meeting with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia in Finland. The meeting elicited angry reactions from both Democrats and Republicans, who said that the Mr. Trump's solicitous behavior was inappropriate, given evidence that Russia intervened in the 2016 election.

Before the meeting, administration officials had insisted that whatever the president's public remarks, the United States has deployed time-tested diplomatic weapons against Moscow.

In response to the attempted poisoning, the Trump administration joined more than two dozen Western countries in expelling more than 150 Russian diplomats, including 60 from the United States. Russia responded with a similar number of diplomatic expulsions and ordered the closure of the United States Consulate in St. Petersburg,

Russia's second-largest city.

According to an internal government document, the United States has imposed sanctions on 213 Russian-related targets – including close associates of Mr. Putin's – since January 2017, as punishment for Russia's cyberattacks and its predatory behavior in Ukraine.

The State Department shut down the Russian Consulate in San Francisco in a tit-for-tat move after Russia struck back against the sanctions.

"Yet again, these new rounds of sanctions underscore that the Trump administration has one policy toward Russia, while Trump himself has his own personal policy," said Michael A. McFaul, a former American ambassador to Russia. "I generally support the former, not the latter."

Mr. McFaul, who teaches at Stanford University, added, "I hope the two policies come into alignment -- before the next summit with Putin."

That dichotomy seemed apparent in Wednesday's announcement. Trump administration officials said the decision to impose the sanctions was a legal procedure and did not arouse significant internal debate. The National Security Council was involved in the process, the officials said, but the State Department, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, were in the lead. No statement was forthcoming from the White House.

"The professionals in government were just doing their jobs here," said Daniel Fried, an assistant secretary of state in the George W. Bush administration who also served as a special envoy under President Barack Obama.

The new sanctions are expected to go into effect on Aug. 22. The provisions of the biological and chemical weapons act have previously been used only twice – against Syria in 2013, for its chemical weapons attack on its own population, and this year against North Korea, for the alleged assassination of Kim Jong-un's half brother with a banned nerve agent in Malaysia.

American officials said some exceptions will be allowed: for equipment that the United States relies upon to send goods and people to the International Space Station, as well as for commercial aircraft equipment involved in the safety of passengers.

Trade between the United States and Russia has been declining since 2013, as relations between the countries have grown increasingly cold. With other sanctions already imposed over the past year against Russia – on its military equipment vendors, on officials engaged in human rights abuses and on oligarchs with close ties to Mr. Putin – trade is likely to tumble even more.

The legislation calls for tougher sanctions to be imposed three months from now if Russia fails several tests, including a determination that it is no longer using chemical or biological weapons, that it provides reliable reassurances that it will not use them in the future, and that it allows international inspectors to ensure compliance – tests that Russia is unlikely to meet.

In a call with reporters on Wednesday, a senior official refused to say whether the United States had any new information on Russia's involvement in the case. He said the Trump administration accepted months ago that the poison used in the attempt on Mr. Skripal's and his daughter's lives was Novichok and that Russia was to blame. Many in Washington praised the new sanctions.

"We must stand with our British allies, and I'm pleased to see the Trump administration hold Russia accountable for its actions by imposing additional sanctions," Senator Rob Portman, Republican of Ohio, said in a statement. Sanctions have in recent years become popular with both Congress and the White House to punish countries and individuals who defy American foreign policy goals.

John Glaser of the Cato Institute, however, is one of many scholars who argue that there is little evidence that they work.

"Sanctions are a very weak tool of coercive diplomacy and have a poor track record in terms of actually driving policy changes in the target state," Mr. Glaser said.

One of the few widely hailed successes of sanctions efforts was Iran's agreement to the 2015 nuclear deal. Mr. Trump walked away from that accord in May, in a step that is seen by critics as undermining the deterrent effects of any future sanctions.

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Credit: GARDINER HARRIS; Ellen Barry contributed reporting from London, and Mark Landler from Washington.

Photograph

Salisbury, England, in March. A former Russian spy and his daughter were poisoned there. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WILL OLIVER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) (A8)

DETAILS

Subject:	Diplomatic &consular services; Federal legislation; International relations; Presidents; Sanctions; Poisons; International trade; Bans; Poisoning; National security; Biological &chemical weapons; Gas turbine engines; Assassinations &assassination attempts
Location:	Russia Iran England Malaysia Syria Ukraine San Francisco California North Korea United States-US Ohio California Finland
People:	Trump, Donald J Pompeo, Mike Skripal, Sergei V Bush, George W Obama, Barack Kim Jong Un Royce, Ed Putin, Vladimir Portman, Rob
Company / organization:	Name: National Security Council; NAICS: 928110; Name: Cato Institute; NAICS: 541711; Name: International Space Station; NAICS: 927110; Name: Stanford University; NAICS: 611310; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130; Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130
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LINKS

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Document 87 of 176

British Victim of Nerve Agent Says He Thought the Bottle Contained Perfume

Schwartz, Michael; Schmitt, Eric . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]25 July 2018: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Charlie Rowley does not remember exactly where he picked up the box containing the small glass bottle, but he does recall what was inside. It was definitely not perfume as he had originally supposed, but an oily substance that had very little smell at all.

It was only when he regained consciousness weeks later in a British hospital that the police told him what the substance was: a military-grade nerve agent known as a Novichok that British authorities believe was most likely left behind by Russian assassins.

"I was in complete shock when they told me it was Novichok," Mr. Rowley said in an interview with the British television channel ITV on Tuesday, his first public remarks since he and his girlfriend, Dawn Sturgess, fell ill on July 1 in the town of Amesbury in southern England. Ms. Sturgess died a week later.

British authorities say the nerve agent is the same substance that was used to poison a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia. Investigators believe Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess were most likely exposed accidentally when Mr. Rowley picked up the container it was carried in and took it home.

In the interview, Mr. Rowley, who was released from the hospital last week, offered new clues about how Russian agents might have transported the nerve agent. Mr. Rowley said he found the bottle wrapped in cellophane inside a three-by-three-inch box, though he did not say where he had found it. Friends described Mr. Rowley as a "skip

diver," who would rummage through trash bins for valuable items and, occasionally, trinkets he would give to his girlfriend as gifts.

He said some of the liquid spilled into his hands when he tried to put the pump dispenser on the bottle, but he quickly washed it off. For Ms. Sturgess, though, the exposure was more potent.

"I do have a memory of her spraying it on her wrist and I guess rubbing it, rubbing them together," Mr. Rowley said. "I think within 15 minutes I believe Dawn said that she felt she had a headache."

After that, Mr. Rowley said, Ms. Sturgess deteriorated quickly.

"She asked me if I had any headache tablets," he said. "I had a look around the flat and within that time she said she felt peculiar and needed to lie down in the bath, which at the time I thought seemed a bit strange. And then within minutes I went into the bathroom and found her in the bath, fully clothed in the bath, in a very ill state."

The death of Ms. Sturgess, who was 44, inflamed what was already an intense diplomatic standoff, with Britain accusing Russia of dispatching assassins to Salisbury, a small English city, in a botched attempt to kill a former spy with a highly potent nerve agent that, perhaps inadvertently, poisoned several others. A police officer, Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey, was also sickened when he responded to Mr. Skripal's home in Salisbury.

The latest poisoning raised the prospect that in their haste to flee the area, the would-be assassins simply tossed aside a top secret, Soviet-designed weapon that the British authorities, despite a cleanup operation that lasted weeks, failed to discover.

"I think it's very irresponsible for people to leave the poison, you know, for anybody to pick up," Mr. Rowley said. "It could have been children or anything. It was just so unfortunate. I'm just very angry."

Four and half months after Mr. Skripal and his daughter were poisoned, the authorities have begun to zero in on possible suspects. Using surveillance camera footage, airline passenger data and facial recognition software, British investigators have identified at least two people who flew into London shortly before the Skripals were sickened on March 4 and left immediately after, said a person briefed on the investigation, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss its details. The names the suspects used to enter the country are also known, though it is possible they used aliases, the person said.

British authorities believe that the suspects were probably current agents or veterans of the same military intelligence agency, widely known as the G.R.U., that once employed Mr. Skripal. Long known as a rugged battlefield intelligence service, the G.R.U. in recent years has been involved in more unconventional missions, from whipping up ethnic tensions in Eastern Europe to helping to seize territory in Ukraine and Syria.

In an indictment released by the Justice Department this month, 12 Russian intelligence officers from that agency were accused of hacking into the computer systems of the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton's campaign in an effort, officials said, to disrupt the 2016 presidential election in the United States.

Russia has categorically denied any involvement in either the Skripal case or the election interference. In their one-on-one meeting in Finland this month, President Trump and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia said they had discussed the election meddling. Mr. Putin even offered to allow American prosecutors to sit in on interrogations of the 12 intelligence officers charged in the case. But in exchange he asked that Russian investigators be allowed to interrogate William F. Browder, a vociferous Kremlin critic, and Michael A. McFaul, a former American ambassador to Moscow, among others.

It was unclear, though, whether the two leaders discussed the Skripal case, which prompted the Trump administration to expel from the United States 60 Russian diplomats believed to have been working undercover as spies, by far the most expulsions of Russian officials by any country.

Even if suspects are identified in the Skripal case is it unlikely that the British will ever get prosecute them. After the 2006 death of Alexander V. Litvinenko, the last known former Russian intelligence operative to be poisoned on British soil, British officials tried in vain to get their hands on the two prime suspects, Andrei K. Lugovoi, a former K.G.B. bodyguard, and Dmitri V. Kovtun, a Red Army deserter. Despite volumes of evidence, including a trail of radioactive polonium that investigators were able to trace practically to Moscow, Russia refused to hand over the two men. Mr. Lugovoi later became a member of Parliament, giving him immunity from prosecution at home.

Another lingering mystery in the Skripal case is motive. As many skeptics of Russia's involvement point out, any information Mr. Skripal possessed from his time with the G.R.U. was dated, and it is unknown whether he had access to new intelligence from the agency. He retired from the G.R.U. in 1999 and was arrested by Russian counterintelligence agents in 2004 for espionage. He spent the next six years in prison before suddenly being released early in 2010 as part of a spy swap.

After settling in England, though, Mr. Skripal did not remain idle. He traveled widely, offering briefings on Russian spycraft to foreign intelligence agencies in the Czech Republic, Estonia and possibly others. In one meeting with Czech officials in 2012, he explained to his former foes the intricacies of G.R.U. operations, said a European official with knowledge of the meeting. In the following months, several Russian diplomats were kicked out of the Czech Republic for spying, though the official could not say whether Mr. Skripal's revelations led to the expulsions.

Photograph

Dawn Sturgess and Charlie Rowley both fell ill from Novichok. Ms. Sturgess, who rubbed it on her wrists, died.

DETAILS

Subject:	Investigations; Immunity from prosecution; Diplomatic & consular services; Intelligence gathering; Poisons; Intelligence services; Poisoning; Political campaigns; Voter fraud; Biological & chemical weapons; Espionage
Location:	Czech Republic Estonia Russia United Kingdom–UK England Syria Ukraine United States–US Eastern Europe Finland
People:	Trump, Donald J Sturgess, Dawn Skripal, Sergei V Clinton, Hillary Rodham Putin, Vladimir Rowley, Charlie
Company / organization:	Name: Democratic National Committee; NAICS: 813940
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/24/world/europe/russia-uk-poison-charlie-rowley.html
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LINKS

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Document 88 of 176

British Nerve-Agent Victim Leaves Hospital

Specia, Megan . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]21 July 2018:
A.5.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

A British man who was poisoned by a military-grade nerve agent in an episode that killed his partner and substantially worsened relations between Britain and Russia was released from a hospital in Salisbury, England, on Friday.

The man, Charlie Rowley, 45, and his partner, Dawn Sturgess, 44, were poisoned by the chemical on July 1 in Amesbury, in southern England, after handling a small bottle of Novichok, a nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union.

Both Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess were hospitalized after being found unresponsive, and Ms. Sturgess died on July 8.

Their case was linked to the March poisoning of a Russian double agent, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia. British authorities say the Skripals were poisoned by the same nerve agent, though Russia has denied the accusations that it was to blame.

The working theory is that Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess accidentally came into contact with residue from materials used to carry out the attack on the Skripals.

Lorna Wilkinson, director of nursing at Salisbury District Hospital, said in a statement that Mr. Rowley's release was "also a day tinged with sadness" over the death of Ms. Sturgess.

"Charlie has been through an appalling experience most of us could never imagine," Ms. Wilkinson said in a statement released by the hospital. "Today is a very welcome milestone in his recovery."

She said the hospital worked closely with public health officials to determine that Mr. Rowley posed no risk to others in the community, and that he had been "decontaminated."

The poisoning of Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess, months after the Skripals were sickened in Salisbury, stunned and alarmed residents, many of whom worried about their own potential exposure to the deadly agent.

The police have assured the public that the risk of exposure is low, but they have advised that people in Amesbury and Salisbury "not pick up any objects such as syringes, bottles, cosmetic containers or vessels."

"Searches are still expected to continue for several weeks, if not months, as officers gather further evidence to assist the investigation," the Wiltshire Police said in a statement. In some places, cordons are still in place.

Five people were exposed to the agent beginning with the Skripals in March, including a police officer who responded to the scene. The attack on the Skripals set off a diplomatic dispute between Britain and Russia.

The death of Ms. Sturgess furthered calls by British authorities for accountability. A murder investigation has been opened to look into her death.

Both Mr. Skripal and his daughter survived, though they spent significant time in the hospital. When Ms. Skripal was released in April, she described her recovery as "slow and extremely painful."

Author/Affiliation

Follow Megan Specia on Twitter: @meganspecia

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Biological & chemical weapons; Criminal investigations
Location:	England Russia Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Sturgess, Dawn Rowley, Charlie
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130
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LINKS

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Document 89 of 176

Greece's Expulsion of 2 Diplomats Angers Russia

Kitsantonis, Niki . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]20 July 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

ATHENS -- Russia's foreign minister has reportedly canceled a trip to Greece, as tensions escalated between the two countries over a decision by Athens to expel two diplomats accused of trying to stoke opposition to an agreement that would clear the way for Macedonia to join NATO.

The dispute over Macedonia's name was of little interest outside the region, but it has become wrapped up in more prominent conflicts, especially after President Trump's weeklong tour of Europe: Concern about the Kremlin's suspected attempts to manipulate Western politics, Mr. Trump's contradictory statements about both Russian meddling and his commitment to NATO, and Moscow's opposition to any broadening of the Western alliance. The strains between Athens and Moscow deepened after Macedonia agreed in June to change its name to North Macedonia following negotiations with officials in Greece and on July 11 was invited to join NATO, pending final approval of the agreement.

Greek officials said last week that Athens told Moscow on July 6 that it would expel two diplomats, and bar two other Russian citizens from entering the country, because of "irrefutable evidence" that Russia was trying to meddle in the Macedonia deal.

The dispute sharpened on Thursday when, according to Russia's Tass news agency, Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov canceled a trip to Athens scheduled for September. Tass quoted the Russian ambassador to Greece, Andrey Maslov, as saying the visit had become "irrelevant."

"We've already announced that mirror measures will be taken," he said, apparently referring to an expected tit-for-tat expulsion of Greek officials. "I don't know when, who and how many, but of course, in line with the existing practice, there will be countermeasures."

Greece had long opposed the accession of Macedonia, a tiny Balkan nation, to the alliance on the grounds that its name implied territorial ambitions against a northern Greek region of the same name.

Moscow had made no secret of its opposition to Macedonia's accession to NATO during months of United Nations-mediated negotiations leading to the landmark agreement.

Greece and Russia, both Orthodox Christian nations, have traditionally close ties, and Greece's current leftist-led government, notwithstanding its support for NATO expansion, has championed closer relations between Russia and the West and has defended Moscow in international disputes.

Unlike many other Western nations, it did not expel diplomats in the wake of the poisoning of a former Soviet double agent, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, in England in March, an attack that was widely attributed to Russia, and in 2015 the government denounced European Union sanctions over Ukraine.

But the Macedonia deal is of paramount importance to Greece, which accused four Russians of trying to whip up opposition to the agreement by encouraging protests against the agreement and of trying to bribe Greek state officials and clerics. The dispute led to an unusually strongly worded exchange on Wednesday between Athens and Moscow.

The Greek authorities should "communicate with their Russian partners and not suffer from dirty provocations, into which, unfortunately, Athens was dragged," the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, said, adding that "such things do not remain without consequences."

"We are fully aware that Greece was subjected to pressure at the highest level," she said a few days after the Russian ministry explicitly blamed Washington for the "anti-Russian decision of the government of Greece."

As Greek news media referred to a "Siberian chill" in bilateral relations, Athens answered with a strongly worded statement accusing Moscow of "constant disrespect for Greece."

"No one can or has the right to interfere in Greece's domestic affairs," the Greek Foreign Ministry said, adding that Athens had evidence for its claims. "In any case, the Russian authorities are very well aware of what their people do."

Despite the diplomatic tussle, Athens has insisted it wants to maintain friendly relations.

The controversial name change must be formally ratified before the country can join NATO, a move that would require approval in a referendum in Macedonia this fall and in both the Greek and Macedonian parliaments.

Rallies protesting the deal have been held in Greece and Macedonia, particularly in the run-up to the signing of the deal last month, and are expected to pick up in the fall ahead of the Macedonian referendum.

In the referendum, according to Macedonia's prime minister, Zoran Zaev, citizens will be asked: "Are you in favor of membership in the European Union and NATO by accepting the deal between the Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Greece?" The Associated Press reported.

Mr. Zaev said that the referendum would be "consultative" but added that "the people's say will be final for all political parties."

He made the announcement after a meeting in which Hristijan Mickoski, the leader of the main conservative opposition party, walked out, The A.P. reported.

Credit: NIKI KITSANTONIS; Oleg Matsnev contributed reporting from Moscow.

Photograph

Macedonians protesting an agreement to change the country's name. The agreement would clear the way for accession to NATO. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BORIS GRDANOSKI/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Agreements; Diplomacy; Diplomatic & consular services
Location:	Greece Russia Republic of Macedonia England Ukraine Europe
People:	Lavrov, Sergei V Trump, Donald J Skripal, Sergei V Zaev, Zoran
Company / organization:	Name: United Nations--UN; NAICS: 928120; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO; NAICS: 928120; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120
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Document 90 of 176

U.K. Poisoning Investigation Turns to Russian Agency in Mueller Indictments

Barry, Ellen; Schwirtz, Michael; Schmitt, Eric . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]16 July 2018: A.7.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The same Russian military intelligence service now accused of disrupting the 2016 presidential election in America may also be responsible for the nerve agent attack in Britain against a former Russian spy -- an audacious poisoning that led to a geopolitical confrontation this spring between Moscow and the West.

British investigators believe the March 4 attack on the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia, was most probably carried out by current or former agents of the service, known as the G.R.U., who were sent to his home in southern England, according to one British official, one American official and one former American official familiar with the inquiry, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence.

British officials are now closing in on identifying the individuals they believe carried out the operation, said the former American official. At the same time, investigators have not ruled out the possibility that another Russian intelligence agency, or a privatized spinoff, could be responsible.

President Trump and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia are to hold a much-scrutinized meeting on Monday in Helsinki, Finland. For months, Mr. Trump has angrily belittled the special counsel investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election. But on Friday, the Justice Department announced a bombshell indictment of 12 G.R.U. officers in the hacking of internal communications of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton presidential campaign.

The indictment by Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel, detailed a sophisticated operation, intended to disrupt America's democratic process, carried out by a Russian military intelligence service few Americans know about. But analysts and government officials say the G.R.U., now known as the Main Directorate of the General Staff, serves as an undercover strike force for the Kremlin in conflicts around the world.

The agency has been linked to Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine, as well as the annexation of Crimea in 2014. It has been involved in the seizing of Syrian cities on behalf of President Bashar al-Assad. In more peaceful regions, the G.R.U. is accused of creating political turmoil, mobilizing Slavic nationalists in Montenegro and funding protests to try to prevent Macedonia's recent name change.

The poisoning of Mr. Skripal and his daughter with a military grade nerve agent is a different type of operation, one that falls into the tradition of Russian and Soviet intelligence practices toward traitors. Mr. Skripal served in the G.R.U. for about 15 years but also worked as an informant for MI6, Britain's foreign intelligence service -- a rare betrayal among G.R.U. officers, and one that most likely required laborious effort to mitigate damage to the

agency's networks.

Russian officials have denied their country's involvement in the poisoning of the Skripals, even as their British counterparts have accused the Kremlin of ordering the attack.

On Sunday, Dmitri S. Peskov, a spokesman for Mr. Putin, dismissed the involvement of the G.R.U. "Russia is in no way involved in this episode," he said. "We consider this whole thing a major provocation."

The investigation seems to be progressing steadily, said Mark Galeotti, an expert on Russian intelligence services at the Institute of International Relations Prague.

"They have a pretty good sense of when these people traveled, they're going to be doing the full thing of checking the face of everyone on the plane, given that this is the land of CCTV," Mr. Galeotti said, referring to Britain. "At the very least, they have grainy photographs from CCTV of the people they assume were involved."

He added that the conclusions of the inquiry would have little impact on the military intelligence service.

"From the G.R.U. point of view, what really matters is the opinion of one man," he said, "and he already knows what they did or didn't do."

Relations between Britain and Russia are now deeply strained. In April, Britain and many of its allies, including the United States, expelled more than 150 Russian diplomats – many of them officers with the G.R.U. – as a protest against the poisoning. Russia retaliated with its own expulsions.

Before ordering the expulsions, Britain privately presented its case against Russia to other governments, including evidence that G.R.U. cyberspecialists had hacked the email accounts of Mr. Skripal's daughter in 2013. Both Mr. Skripal and his daughter were under surveillance before the attack, and her phone was possibly infected with malware to track her whereabouts, the BBC reported this month.

Mr. Skripal's final post with the G.R.U. was as a high-level personnel administrator, providing him with extensive knowledge of operations and individual agents. He was arrested in Russia in 2004 and later pleaded guilty to espionage, serving six years of a 13-year sentence before he was released in 2010 as part of a spy swap with the United States.

Mr. Skripal was living in Salisbury, England, before the poisoning attack. He and his daughter, who was visiting him from Russia at the time, have since recovered and are living in hiding. The crime's repercussions continued last week with the death of a 44-year-old British citizen, Dawn Sturgess, who, the police say, most likely accidentally touched residue of the nerve agent used in the attack.

From the earliest days of the Skripal investigation, the G.R.U. was a suspect, in part because harsh punishment for traitors is part of the agency's doctrine.

Viktor B. Suvorov, a G.R.U. officer who defected to Britain in 1978, wrote in a memoir that inductees were shown a gruesome film of a defector, strapped to a stretcher, being slowly rolled into a furnace and burned alive. Though his account was disputed by some of his countrymen, it is beyond doubt that G.R.U. defections were rare.

"Once you're a member of an elite military force like the G.R.U., there is no leaving it," said Nigel West, a British intelligence historian who has chronicled the lives of many defectors. "They do not defect. G.R.U. are a military, disciplined elite. They know the consequences."

During the Soviet era, intelligence services had a protocol around assassinations of agents who betrayed their services. It began with a trial, and the sentencing of the traitor to death in absentia. Then the decision would be distributed to counterintelligence officers stationed at Soviet embassies.

A declassified C.I.A. document from 1964 describes K.G.B. assassination teams known as "combat groups," which consisted of local agents or undercover "illegal staff" stationed all over the world in preparation for killings, known as "wet jobs." Rather than carrying out the assassination, agents would often use the sentence as leverage to persuade the individual to become a double agent.

In recent years, the Kremlin has steered clear of direct involvement in criminal acts, preferring hybrid operations that cannot be traced to the government, sometimes carried out by retired operatives like the Russian "volunteers" fighting in Ukraine and Syria, who are often veterans of the G.R.U. special forces.

"Our country has come to the understanding that the government should not be committing crimes," said Dmitri A.

Muratov, director of the editorial board at Novaya Gazeta, an independent newspaper that reports on the security services. Hybrid formations, he said, "are close to the government but not of the government."

He added, "These formations have infiltrated the political life of the country."

Russian authorities have never disclosed the extent of the damage Mr. Skripal caused the G.R.U., but there are indications it was significant. In "The Devil's Counterintelligence Dozen," a book about Mr. Skripal's years as a British spy, a Russian espionage expert, Nikolai Luzan, writes that the agent might have compromised as many as 300 Russian intelligence officers.

"When a mole is uncovered in any service, you have a massive operation to nail down everything he had access to," said Mr. Galeotti, the author of "Spetsnaz," a book about G.R.U. special forces, adding that many colleagues who worked closely with Mr. Skripal would most likely have had their careers ended as part of the sweep.

"If people defected earlier in their career, you might find an entire graduating class benched," he said.

Even after the swap, he was able to damage the G.R.U.'s infrastructure. In 2012, he visited intelligence officers in the Czech Republic who had long felt vulnerable in the face of Russia's unusually large intelligence presence in the country. Mr. Skripal, who stayed for a long, boozy lunch, was able to help, said a European official.

"In fact, Skripal was able to describe what types of operations they had, how they cover up their people, how they build their teams," the official said. "He didn't have to be concrete, to give up concrete names. It contributed to improving our work."

Over the months that followed, a number of Russian diplomats were expelled from the Czech Republic on suspicion of spying. Mr. Skripal "may have contributed some part of the puzzle" that led to the expulsions, the official said. "Whether he caused them, nobody can tell you."

In interviews, several former Russian intelligence agents were skeptical that the G.R.U. was behind the attack on the Skripals, in part because of its audacity.

In Soviet times, their more cosmopolitan K.G.B. colleagues referred to G.R.U. officers as "sapogi," or boots, suggesting that they were tough and rugged but not sophisticated in their methods, said Yuri B. Shvets, a former K.G.B. agent posted to Washington in the 1980s.

"The G.R.U. took its officers from the trenches," he said, unlike the K.G.B., which recruited from top universities. Irek Murtazin, who worked closely with the G.R.U. and now covers military affairs for Novaya Gazeta, said that the agency's assassinations tended to be unshowy affairs.

"He would have died from a heart attack or a stroke, a car would have run him over or a bum would have beat him up," Mr. Murtazin said. "There wouldn't have been any Novichok."

Assassinations, nonetheless, have long been part of Russian and Soviet intelligence practice, Mr. Galeotti said.

"That the G.R.U. kills people abroad has been amply demonstrated in a variety of other cases," he said. "The G.R.U. tends to be more of a kinetic agency – more a bullet in the head rather than an exotic poison. The ultimate point is, from the G.R.U. point of view, it's the outcomes that matter."

Credit: ELLEN BARRY, MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ and ERIC SCHMITT; Ellen Barry reported from London, Michael Schwirtz from Moscow, and Eric Schmitt from Washington.

AuthorAffiliation

Follow Ellen Barry, Michael Schwirtz and Eric Schmitt on Twitter: @EllenBarryNYT, @mschwirtz and @EricSchmittNYT.

Photograph

Investigators in Salisbury, England, in March after the former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were poisoned. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK TAYLOR/GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	International relations; Poisoning; Criminal investigations; Military intelligence; Poisons; Espionage; Intelligence services
Location:	Czech Republic England Russia United States--US United Kingdom--UK
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LINKS

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Britain Suggests Russia Is Behind Latest Case of Deadly Nerve Agent

Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 July 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The police scoured the area around Salisbury, England, for a container of a deadly chemical weapon on Monday, as high-ranking British officials suggested for the first time that Russia was probably responsible for a second set of nerve agent poisonings in the region.

British officials have said that a couple who were sickened this month in the Salisbury area, one of whom died on Sunday, had been poisoned with the same powerful nerve agent used in March, a few miles away, against a former Russian spy and his daughter.

But while government officials have accused the Kremlin of responsibility for the first poisonings, until Monday they refrained from assigning blame for the second, though they acknowledged a strong possibility that the two were related.

"The simple reality is that Russia has committed an attack on British soil which has seen the death of a British citizen," the defense minister, Gavin Williamson, said in the House of Commons. "That is something that I think the world will unite with us in actually condemning."

Sajid Javid, the home secretary, who has acted as the government's primary spokesman on the matter, was more cautious in addressing Parliament hours later. The investigation is still underway, he said, and the government will not jump to conclusions.

But when asked directly if Russia was responsible for the latest poisonings, he said it was hard to see any "other plausible explanation."

Dawn Sturgess, 44, and her boyfriend, Charlie Rowley, 45, became ill on June 30 at Mr. Rowley's home in Amesbury, a town near Salisbury, and were hospitalized. Ms. Sturgess, a mother of three who lived in Salisbury, died on Sunday, and the case is now a murder investigation. They had been exposed to an agent known as Novichok.

President Vladimir V. Putin's government has strenuously denied any involvement in either case, floating an array of theories about what might have happened and nominating an assortment of possible culprits.

The defense secretary's accusation came a few hours after Britain's top counterterrorism police officer, Neil Basu, made a sobering admission: Even after repeatedly searching the homes of the two recent victims and places they were thought to have been shortly before they took ill, hundreds of law enforcement officers and others combing the Salisbury area still have not found the object that poisoned them.

"Our focus and priority at this time is to identify and locate any container that we believe may be the source of the contamination," Mr. Basu, assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, told reporters outside New Scotland Yard.

That means it remains possible that someone else could be poisoned. "I simply cannot offer any guarantees," he said, reiterating the government's advice that people not pick up any unknown objects.

"Their reaction was so severe, it resulted in Dawn's death and Charlie being critically ill," Mr. Basu said. "This means

that they must have got a high dose, and our hypothesis is that they must have handled a container we are now seeking."

Chemical weapons experts say it was likely that whoever carried out the earlier attack transported the nerve agent in a sealed container, and discarded the container at another location, where it was found by Mr. Rowley or Ms. Sturgess. They say the poison could remain potent for months, particularly in a closed container.

Mr. Javid said, "the nerve agent that's been used in this incident is the same as the March 4 incident, but we have not, the scientists have not been able to identify or determine if it is the same batch."

Tensions are running high in Salisbury, where members of the public expressed anger at assurances given months ago that the risk to them was minimal. Many feared letting their children play outside.

On Monday, the authorities evacuated a bus in the city center and, for a few hours, established a wide security cordon around it, raising fears of another nerve agent incident. The police later said nothing out of the ordinary had been found.

A police officer was hospitalized out of fear that he might be showing symptoms of poisoning, but that, too, was a false alarm, and he was released.

The March attack sickened Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian intelligence agent who had sold information to Britain and was living in Salisbury; his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, who was visiting from Russia; and Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey of the Wiltshire Police, who was one of the first officers to look into the case. All three survived; officials have not said publicly whether they have any lasting impairments.

Laboratory testing showed the substance that poisoned them was Novichok, the British government has said, part of a class of nerve agents developed first in the Soviet Union and later in Russia. That conclusion was supported by further testing by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the international body that monitors compliance with a chemical weapons ban treaty. The organization – at Britain's behest and over Russia's objections – recently decided that it will not only investigate whether chemical weapons have been used but will try to determine who used them.

The attack on the Skripals worsened the already tense relations between Russia and the West, prompting the expulsion of Russian diplomats and embassy workers from several countries and retaliatory expulsions by Moscow.

The British government has also promised to tighten controls on wealthy Russians who moved their assets in and out of Britain, a move seen as a blow to Mr. Putin's powerful circle of allies, many of whom have ties to Britain. British officials have said they will raise the Novichok attack at a meeting of the leaders of NATO countries.

Photograph

Dawn Sturgess, in a photo from social media. She and her boyfriend became ill on June 30 at his home in Amesbury. She died on Sunday. Top, British police officers stood guard on Monday outside the home in Salisbury where she had been living. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATT CARDY/GETTY IMAGES; VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Diplomatic &consular services; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Poisons
Location:	Russia Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR Scotland United Kingdom--UK England France
People:	Williamson, Gavin Javid, Sajid Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
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British Woman Accidentally Poisoned by Russian Nerve Agent Dies

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- A 44-year-old British woman who was exposed to a nerve agent died on Sunday, bringing new urgency to a four-month-old diplomatic standoff in which Britain has accused Russia of sending the poison to a small city in southern England in a botched attempt to kill a former spy.

The British authorities have now opened a murder investigation.

"Today is the day we hoped would never come," said Chief Constable Kier Pritchard of the Wiltshire Police.

The police say the woman, Dawn Sturgess, 44, was most likely exposed accidentally to residue from a Soviet-developed, military-grade nerve agent used in a March attack on the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal. He lived near Ms. Sturgess in Salisbury.

After Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, collapsed, British officials declared confidently that Russia was at fault, in large part because of the obscure poison involved. It was one of a strain of nerve agents known as Novichok that they say is kept under tight control by the Russian authorities.

Russia has denied any involvement.

In recent months, investigators have said little about the evidence they have gathered and they have named no suspects. And the Skripals recovered, allowing the crime to fall off the front pages.

Ms. Sturgess's death is likely to change that, forcing Britain to reassert its suspicions just as Russia is enjoying an international spotlight as host of the 2018 World Cup.

"It becomes a murder, and it's involving a British national rather than a Russian national," said James Nixey, head of the Russia and Eurasia program at Chatham House, a research group in London. "It stiffens resolve where resolve was ebbing."

It also presents another urgent challenge for British authorities: The contamination, it appears, was more widespread than initially thought.

"It was widely assumed that, from the point of view of exposure, it was over," Mr. Nixey said. "If there was still stuff out there in concealed containers, then I think they will be unusually worried. It is, after all, the first duty of the state to protect its citizens."

Ms. Sturgess and her boyfriend, Charlie Rowley, 45, appear to have been accidental victims. Each had struggled with addiction, and when they fell ill on July 1, the police initially suspected an overdose or contaminated batch of drugs.

But their symptoms -- foaming at the mouth, pinpoint pupils and hallucinations -- were similar to those that had emerged with the three previous victims: the Skripals, and a detective who was exposed while responding to the crime.

Ms. Sturgess and Mr. Rowley were physically fragile after years of substance abuse, which compromises the liver's ability to detoxify the body. Mr. Rowley remains in critical condition.

The police have said that the nerve agent that poisoned them on Saturday was the same type used on Mr. Skripal and his daughter in March, but could not confirm that it was the same strain or batch.

Neil Basu, a top counterterrorism official with the Metropolitan Police, said the authorities were continuing to look into possible connections with the poisoning of the Skripals.

"This terrible news has only served to strengthen our resolve to identify and bring to justice the person or persons responsible for what I can only describe as an outrageous, reckless and barbaric act," Mr. Basu said in a statement on Sunday evening. "Detectives will continue with their painstaking and meticulous work to gather all the available

evidence so that we can understand how two citizens came to be exposed with such a deadly substance that tragically cost Dawn her life."

Ms. Sturgess's son, Ewan Hope, 19, told *The Mirror*, a daily newspaper, that he had visited her in the hospital, but was allowed to touch her only while wearing gloves.

"I touched her hair through the gloves and told her: 'I love you, Mum. I just want you to get better,'" he told the newspaper before she died. "I'm worried I'm going to lose my mum."

In Facebook posts, Ms. Sturgess had written of her difficulty finding housing, but recently she settled into a room at John Baker House, a supported-living facility in Salisbury for people with drug and alcohol problems. Her posts brightened in February 2017 when she began her relationship with Mr. Rowley, a recovering heroin addict who rented an apartment in Amesbury, eight miles away.

"Fell in love ... never bodes well for me," she wrote. "I trust Charlie with my life and he gets me the best gifts ever."

The police have meticulously traced the route that Ms. Sturgess and Mr. Rowley took during the hours before they collapsed, in an effort to find an object – perhaps an ampul or syringe – that the two had handled.

It is not yet clear how the British public will respond to Ms. Sturgess's death, said Olga Oliker, director of the Russia and Eurasia program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a research group in Washington.

"It's a little bit like the election interference in the U.S. elections – the interference happens, and when new evidence shows up, the anger rises," she said. "In this case you have the death of a person, which makes it different."

Ms. Oliker called the attack on the Skripals a "strange case," because it appeared to have been carried out carelessly.

"Past cases that looked similar were certainly much more professionally carried out," she said. "This is sloppy – so much evidence left behind, material left behind where people could find it."

After the new poisonings became public, Russia denied any involvement, and officials suggested alternative explanations. A Russian lawmaker said the British authorities might have concocted the case to sully Russia's image while the country was hosting the World Cup soccer tournament.

Though there have been a string of suspicious deaths of anti-Kremlin figures in Britain in recent years, only one has culminated in a full investigation and extradition request. The victim was Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former Federal Security Service officer who was killed in 2006. He was served tea spiked with Polonium 210, a radioactive isotope.

Author/Affiliation

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DETAILS

Subject:	Evidence; Poisoning; Tournaments & championships; Biological & chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Poisons; Soccer
Location:	Russia United States–US United Kingdom–UK England Eurasia
People:	Skripal, Sergei V
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Mirror Group Newspapers; NAICS: 511110; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130
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Document 93 of 176

Lives of 2 Britons Hang in the Balance A Week After Nerve-Agent Exposure

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]08 July 2018:
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FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Two British citizens remained in critical condition on Saturday, breathing with the assistance of ventilators and surrounded by the world's leading experts on Novichok poisoning, their odds of survival being closely tracked by Britain and Russia.

The couple, Dawn Sturgess, 44, and Charlie Rowley, 45, was exposed a week ago to traces of a Soviet-developed nerve agent. They likely came into contact with it by picking up a vial, syringe or ampul discarded by a would-be assassin who took to the city of Salisbury in southern England months ago to target a former Russian spy, police said.

Both victims had been in treatment after years of substance abuse, which compromises the liver's function as the body's detoxifier. That makes them more physically fragile than the three previous poisoning victims in Salisbury: the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal; his daughter, Yulia Skripal and a British police officer who took sick after responding to the poisoning in Salisbury.

If either of the two dies, it would present the British and Russian authorities with a new diplomatic scenario.

Among the great surprises of the March attack on Mr. Skripal and his daughter is that they did not die, most likely because they received a relatively small dosage. The police officer, Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey, also got better.

Their recoveries meant the attack fell off the front pages, allowing investigators to proceed with a slow, methodical search for evidence that might support their leading theory – that Russian agents were behind the attack. The emergence of additional victims "will give it a renewed sense of urgency," particularly if one of them succumbs, said James Nixey, head of the Russia and Eurasia program at Chatham House, a research group in London.

"The spines were weakening," Mr. Nixey said of the British authorities, "and if there are new crimes or misdemeanors on the part of the Russian state, then it means that those spines can be restiffened." If either victim dies, he added, "it becomes a murder investigation, and it's involving a British national rather than a Russian national."

Police said Friday that the couple remained in critical condition and that officials were "working to support their next of kin."

A policeman, who was admitted to Salisbury District Hospital on Saturday over fears he had been exposed to Novichok, was found not to have been and was released several hours later.

Toxicologists say that the first days after a poisoning are a crucial threshold for survival, as the body struggles to resynthesize an enzyme, acetylcholinesterase, which is inhibited by nerve agents. Novichok is believed to directly affect the brain's respiratory centers, and considerable time may pass before a patient can breathe on his or her own.

The recently poisoned couple were being treated at the same hospital that cared for the Skripals.

The hospital, in Salisbury, "has the most expertise in the world in dealing with people with this type of poisoning, but it very much depends on the state of the individual," said Alastair Hay, an emeritus professor of toxicology at the University of Leeds, England. "The fact that someone is frailer makes it more difficult, makes the outlook a little more bleak."

He said the couple's prospects for survival were "much more problematic, I think, given their overall state."

Scientific knowledge about Novichok poisoning was close to zero in March, when the Skripals and Sergeant Bailey fell ill, and medical staff members expected them to die, they told the BBC in May. A paper published in May in the scientific journal Clinical Toxicology noted that while a large dose of a nerve agent could kill a patient within minutes, "mild or moderately exposed individuals usually recover completely."

Mr. Rowley's symptoms were observed more closely than those of Ms. Sturgess or of the Skripals because a

friend, Sam Hobson, was with him at the time. Mr. Hobson described symptoms that progressed over a period of hours, beginning with profuse sweating and fever, then hallucination and dribbling.

Each of the two recent victims had long histories of addiction.

Ms. Sturgess referred to her troubles with drinking in wry Facebook posts, writing in 2016 that, after one spree, she was not sure how she had reached her room at John Baker House, a supported-living facility in Salisbury that houses people with drug and alcohol problems. She thanked her mother for feeding her when she was sick.

"Love her, she knows how to mend me when I'm lost and low," Ms. Sturgess wrote.

Her posts brightened in February 2017 when she began her relationship with Mr. Rowley, a recovering heroin addict who rented an apartment in Amesbury, eight miles away.

"Fell in love ... never bodes well for me," she wrote. "I trust Charlie with my life and he gets me the best gifts ever."

Peter Cook, 58, who lived in the same shelter as Ms. Sturgess, spoke fondly of her, saying she propped her door open with a sock so that friends could visit at any time. He said she had a loving relationship with Mr. Rowley and there was talk they might move in together.

"He had a nice flat; he was getting it together," he said.

But Becca Stewart, 20, who lived next door to Mr. Rowley in Amesbury, said Ms. Sturgess had become painfully thin and that she sometimes saw her walking in the neighborhood "stumbling all over the place."

The police on Friday released a detailed timeline of the couple's movements on June 30 and July 1, leading up to their hospitalization. They may have picked up the contaminated object in Queen Elizabeth Gardens, where they relaxed that afternoon before returning to Ms. Sturgess's room at the shelter and then to Mr. Rowley's apartment. Both residences became elaborate crime scenes on Friday, and investigators in protective suits have been seen entering. Mr. Rowley's brother, Matthew, said he had learned of the poisoning from a friend who heard it on the news.

"He's my younger brother. I loved him to bits. I wouldn't want anything to happen to him, and yet it has," Matthew Rowley told the BBC. "How would you deal with it? It's heartbreakin, really is."

Credit: ELLEN BARRY; Anna Schaverein contributed reporting from London.

Forensics officers removed items from a supported-living facility in Salisbury on Friday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RICK FINDLER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Toxicology; Criminal investigations; Murders & murder attempts
Location:	England Russia United Kingdom–UK Eurasia
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Skripal, Yulia
Company / organization:	Name: University of Leeds; NAICS: 611310; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130
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British Mystery: How Nerve Agent Reached Pair

Barry, Ellen; Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]06 July 2018: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

SALISBURY, England – Charlie Rowley may have been down on his luck, in and out of treatment for drug addiction, but he had a certain prowess as a "skip diver," sorting through trash for the valuables that his better-off neighbors

threw out. He would emerge with chandeliers, toasters, laptops and trinkets for Dawn Sturgess, his girlfriend. "It's like treasure hunting -- you'd find jewelry, you'd find rings," said Josh Harris, 28, a skip diver himself. "It was Charlie's thing."

And it was skip diving -- what Americans would call dumpster diving -- that Mr. Harris was thinking about on Thursday morning, after Mr. Rowley, 45, and Ms. Sturgess, 44, had become the fourth and fifth victims in a string of poisonings with Novichok, a military-grade nerve agent developed in the last years of the Soviet Union. As five new sites in Salisbury were sealed off by safety personnel, this stunned city was swept into a bizarre guessing game: How in the world could Ms. Sturgess and Mr. Rowley, a couple known, as one neighbor put it, as part of the "sitting-on-the-bench-drinking community," have come in contact with Novichok, a top-secret weapon known to have been used only once?

The mystery has captured the attention of much of the country. In the days after March 4, when Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter were poisoned, British officials declared confidently that Russia was at fault, but tight-lipped investigators have shared little of the evidence they have gathered. The poisoning of two more people, apparently by accident, may provide a new data point about how the assassin worked.

A fuller picture emerged on Thursday of the two victims, who are in critical condition. Ms. Sturgess lived at the John Baker House, a supported-living center that houses people struggling with addiction. Peter Cook, 58, described her as "Dawnie," a motherly figure who drank several bottles of wine a day, but typically stayed away from hard drugs. Mr. Rowley, according to The Salisbury Journal, was jailed for possession of heroin in 2015. Mr. Harris, a mechanic who also lives in the John Baker House, has watched for days as the police pored through Ms. Sturgess's possessions. A trash bin had been sealed off. So had Mr. Rowley's apartment. So had a beloved riverside park, known here as "Lizzy Gardens."

"They're looking for something, I don't know what," Mr. Harris said.

One of the other residents, Kyesha Guest, 29, thought the same thing. "If Charlie had been skip diving, and touched it, rummaging through the rubbish, and then touched Dawn, maybe that's what happened," she ventured. "I don't think they would have picked up something if they didn't know what it was."

The unexpected poisonings have revived tension between Britain and Russia, which the British have blamed for the attack. Russia on Thursday denied any involvement in the poisoning of the couple, as it did in the case of the Skripals, and suggested alternative theories, including one that says the British could have planted the nerve agent. Sergei Zheleznyak, deputy speaker of the lower house of Parliament, said that the British authorities might have concocted the case to sully Russia's image while the country was hosting the World Cup soccer tournament. "A huge number of British fans, despite the warnings from their government, came to support their team," Mr. Zheleznyak told state television. "Their impressions are just destroying everything British propaganda built over the past few years. To break up this flow of really positive emotions that the British fans are sharing, they had to put something like this in the mass media."

Investigators have been scrutinizing the actions of Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess during the hours before they collapsed. Ms. Sturgess became sick first, at around 10:15 a.m. on Saturday, going into convulsions in the bathroom and foaming at the mouth. Nearly five hours passed before Mr. Rowley, went into a zombielike state, his pupils shrunk to pinpoints, rocking back and forth and sweating profusely, a witness said.

Chemical weapons experts tried to piece the events together.

"The latest victims, did they come into contact with objects the would-be killer left behind?" asked Andrew C. Weber, a former United States assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical and biological defense programs. "I think that's the most plausible."

Richard Guthrie, the coordinating editor of CBW Events, a website on chemical and biological weapons, said he would "put it in the 90-percent-plus likelihood that this was a discarded item," like a coat with a container of the nerve agent in the pocket.

"You would want to dispose of the coat, of the gloves," he said. "If it was good tradecraft, that would have been disposed of in a place that people wouldn't think of it being disposed." The couple might well have picked it up,

spotting "a nice-looking jacket bundled up."

Dan Kaszeta, a former chemical and biological weapons adviser to the White House and the Secret Service, considered the possibility that the couple had found a container, like an ampul or a syringe, that had been used to transport the nerve agent to Salisbury.

"Were the guys who did this given more than they needed?" Mr. Kaszeta said. If so, "depending on how clean or sloppy they were," the object might be a crucial piece of evidence.

"God knows, the container may even have fingerprints on it, it's a smoking gun," he said. "But killers sometimes leave a smoking gun at the scene of a crime."

Becca Stewart, 20, who lives in a modest apartment beside Mr. Rowley's, said she had been instructed "not to go anywhere near the front door" of his apartment, but had been told little about the risk to her or her unborn baby, due in November. Transport vans could be seen coming and going, possibly carrying evidence from inside the house, and work crews erected high corrugated-steel barricades around the apartment.

"Now it's on my doorstep," Ms. Stewart said of the nerve agent, which she has been hurriedly researching on the internet. "They could have touched anything, like the door handle."

Another area cordoned off was Queen Elizabeth Gardens, a lush park along the Avon riverbank that is, on most summer evenings, crowded with children and adults. Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess had apparently spent time in the park before returning to his home and falling ill. James Weekes, 78, stood in the parking lot, gazing at the playground where his grandchildren usually play.

"I'm nearly 80 years old, I've had a life, but I'd be more worried about the kids," said Mr. Weekes, a retired printer.

"Until they find out what the level of Novichok is, how far it's going to spread, I wouldn't want my kids coming out here."

He surveyed the sprawling park, puzzling over the question of whether a trained assassin would dispose of evidence there.

"I can't understand why that person would aimlessly throw an ampul in the grass," he said "I imagine they'd use professionals. I'm sure they wouldn't use a dimbo. Would they?"

Credit: ELLEN BARRY and RICHARD PÉREZ-PÉÑA; Ellen Barry reported from Salisbury, and Richard Pérez-Peña from London.

Photograph

Barricades went up at the home of Dawn Sturgess, one of the new poisoning victims in England. (A1); A rubbish bin was under guard on Thursday in Amesbury, near Salisbury, England. One of the new victims of a nerve agent, Charlie Rowley, rummaged through bins. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS J RATCLIFFE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A8)

DETAILS

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LINKS

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Two Others Were Exposed to Nerve Agent That Poisoned Ex-Spy, Britain Says

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]05 July 2018:
A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Two British citizens have been critically sickened by the same nerve agent, Novichok, that was used to poison a former Russian spy and his daughter four months ago, the British authorities announced on Wednesday. The two victims, a man and a woman, both in their 40s, fell ill on Saturday in the southern town of Amesbury, England, after having visited nearby Salisbury, including a spot near where the spy and his daughter were stricken in March, the police said.

The emergence of additional Novichok victims, after four months of meticulous decontamination and public reassurances, presents British authorities with a daunting challenge.

If the nerve agent was left behind by attackers in March, then traces of it may remain in places the authorities did not search, presenting an unpredictable threat to the public. If the agent was deposited more recently, then the March poisoning was not an isolated attack.

In either case, a crisis that Britain has struggled to bring under control has now moved into an uncertain new phase.

The victims, identified locally as Charlie Rowley, 45, and Dawn Sturgess, 44, are British citizens, and the police said there was no indication that they would have been targets.

Before they collapsed, the two had spent time in the Queen Elizabeth Gardens in Salisbury, which is a short walk from where the former spy and his daughter lost consciousness. Officials cordoned off the area on Wednesday, along with several other places, including a trash bin outside the John Baker House, an assisted-living center in Salisbury.

A friend who was with Mr. Rowley and Ms. Sturgess on Saturday said that their condition rapidly deteriorated, with symptoms that included pinpoint pupils, seizures, frothing at the mouth and hallucinations.

The police said on Wednesday that they did not know whether there was a link between the new case and the poisoning of the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia. Britain has accused the Russian government of being behind the earlier attack, a claim Moscow denies.

"The Counter Terrorism Policing Network is now leading the investigation into this incident," Neil Basu, an assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police who oversees counterterrorism operations, announced on Wednesday evening. About 100 detectives are working on the case, along with members of the local Wiltshire Police.

The two victims were in critical condition at Salisbury District Hospital, the authorities said.

In Salisbury, which has struggled to revive its commercial district after the March attack, many were shocked at the thought of starting over. Ruby Vitorino, who works in a jewelry shop, said that the sense of risk had subsided -- until Wednesday's news.

"I got a message from a friend saying, 'Salisbury is dead, it was Novichok, Salisbury is dead,'" Ms. Vitorino said. "I don't think we've had time to take in all the implications."

A new set of spaces would now become the focus, she said. "The places they cleaned up were the places the Skripals were -- not the places where the assassins were."

An exhaustive decontamination effort that began in April focused on nine sites related to the Skripals' movements on March 4, the day they were stricken. They included Mr. Skripal's house, the pub and restaurant where the two spent time that day, the grassy area where they collapsed, the ambulance and police stations used by emergency medical workers and officers, a car storage facility and the house of a detective who responded to the crime.

The sites being investigated in connection with new poisoning are different ones.

The police said a response team was first summoned at 10:15 a.m. Saturday to a home in Amesbury, about eight miles north of Salisbury. Emergency workers returned at 3:30 p.m.

Sam Hobson, who saw the victims on the day they fell ill, told reporters that Ms. Sturgess was in the bathroom when she went into a seizure, foaming at the mouth. A few hours later, when Mr. Rowley collapsed, he was

sweating heavily, making noises and rocking back and forth.

"There was no response for me -- he didn't even know I was there," Mr. Hobson said. "He was in another world, he was hallucinating."

Investigators initially speculated that the two had suffered from a drug overdose, but after further testing by multiple agencies, including Porton Down, the country's main laboratory for chemical and biological weapons, they concluded that the cause was Novichok, a Soviet-developed strain of nerve agent.

Commissioner Basu acknowledged "a great deal of speculation" over a possible connection to the March poisonings of the Skripals.

"However, I must say that we are not in a position to say whether the nerve agent was from the same batch that the Skripals were exposed to," he said. "The possibility that these two investigations might be linked is clearly a line of inquiry for us. It is important, however, that the investigation is led by the evidence available and the facts alone and we don't make any assumptions."

One theory on Wednesday night was that the victims might have touched contaminated items left behind by the Skripals' assailant in March. The police have said the attacker most likely applied the Novichok to the handle of Mr. Skripal's front door.

"Assume it was the doorknob -- the person who put it there would have a coat and gloves they wouldn't have wanted to leave the country with, and they may have wanted to hide it somewhere," said Richard Guthrie, an independent chemical weapons expert and the editor of CBW Events.

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Poisons
Location:	England United Kingdom--UK
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Kremlin's Links To Brexit Push Get a New Look

Kirkpatrick, David D; Rosenberg, Matthew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]30 June 2018: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

EDITORS' NOTE APPENDED LONDON -- Arron Banks, a British financier who bankrolled the campaign for Britain to leave the European Union, has long bragged about his "boozy six-hour lunch" with the Russian ambassador eight months before the vote.

Some also wondered about Mr. Banks's Russian-born wife and their custom license plate, X MI5 SPY, after the British intelligence agency, MI5. But Mr. Banks always laughed off questions about his ties to the Kremlin.

Now, a leaked record of some of Mr. Banks's emails suggest that he and his closest adviser had a more engaged relationship with Russian diplomats than he has disclosed.

While Mr. Banks was spending more than eight million British pounds to promote a break with the European Union -- an outcome the Russians eagerly hoped for -- his contacts at the Russian Embassy in London were opening the door to at least three potentially lucrative investment opportunities in Russian-owned gold or diamond mines.

One of Mr. Banks's business partners, and a fellow backer of Britain's exit from the European Union, or Brexit, took the Russians up on at least one of the deals.

The extent of these business discussions, which have not been previously reported, raise new questions about

whether the Kremlin sought to reward critical figures in the Brexit campaign. Much as in Washington, where investigations are underway into the possibility that Donald J. Trump's campaign may have cooperated with the Russians, Britain is now grappling with whether Moscow tried to use its close ties with any British citizens to promote Brexit.

In Washington, the investigators for the special prosecutor, Robert S. Mueller III, and Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee have also obtained records of Mr. Banks's communications, including some with Russian diplomats and about Russian business deals.

And they have taken a special interest in close ties Mr. Banks and other Brexit leaders built to the Trump campaign.

On Nov. 12, 2016, Mr. Banks met President-elect Trump in Trump Tower. Upon his return to London, Mr. Banks had another lunch with the Russian ambassador where they discussed the Trump visit.

"From what we've seen, the parallels between the Russian intervention in Brexit and the Russian intervention in the Trump campaign appear to be extraordinary," said Representative Adam B. Schiff of California, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee.

"The Russians were apparently dangling gold mines and diamond mines and financial incentives behind one of the largest backers of Brexit," he added.

Earlier this month, Mr. Banks testified before a committee of Parliament in part to answer questions about his Russian ties. He acknowledged having had three meetings -- "two lunches and a cup of tea," as he later said in interviews -- with the Russian ambassador, Alexander V. Yakovenko, rather than just the famous boozy lunch. He also acknowledged reports that the ambassador had invited him to invest in the consolidation of six Russian gold mines, an offer he said he ultimately declined.

But in his testimony, Mr. Banks did not mention the two other potentially lucrative opportunities detailed in the broader record of his electronic communications.

One involved a state-controlled Russian diamond mining giant, Alrosa. The other involved a Russian businessman -- described in an email to Mr. Banks as "a mini oligarch" -- and a gold mine in Conakry, Guinea.

In an interview on Friday, Mr. Banks acknowledged that these other business deals were proposed to him, but he said that he never acted on them. He denied any wrongdoing, noting that his opposition to the European Union long predicated his meeting with the Russian ambassador.

He argued that any business discussions that emerged from those meetings were insignificant because he had never "done any Russian deals," so "after the wholesale theft of my emails, there is still no smoking gun there." But Damian Collins, who is chairman of the parliamentary committee investigating the potential Russian use of disinformation to influence the Brexit vote, said he had seen a record of the messages about the potential Russian mining investments and questioned Russian intentions toward Mr. Banks.

"The question is, Why would the Russians do this for Banks?" Mr. Collins asked in an interview. "What it looks like is that Russia decided he was someone they wanted to do business with and they wanted to see prosper and succeed -- and Banks, alongside that, wanted to hide the extent of his contacts with the Russians."

With no college degree, Mr. Banks first became wealthy by starting insurance companies that sold policies to motorcycle riders and van drivers. He now owns a complicated network of insurance and finance enterprises as well as a few diamond mines in South Africa, where his father operated sugar plantations.

He first rose in prominence in Britain through his role in the campaign to leave the European Union, and he has published a campaign memoir, "The Bad Boys of Brexit."

Some of his emails were first leaked earlier this month to the British press. But the broader record of his messages, described this week to The New York Times by several people who had read them, revealed the new disclosures about Mr. Banks's more extensive Russian business dealings.

In the Friday interview, Mr. Banks eventually admitted to a fourth meeting with the Russian ambassador, though he described the earlier account he gave to Parliament of two lunches and a cup of tea as "relatively accurate."

He said his emails might have created the impression of more extensive contacts because of the many exchanges

that his media adviser, Andrew Wigmore, had conducted with Russian diplomats to set up meetings, or about attending embassy events.

"I have not denied that we had a friendly relationship" with the ambassador, Mr. Banks said.

He added: "It is completely natural that a diplomat would put you in touch with another businessman. That is how trade works."

The first contacts between Mr. Banks and the Russian Embassy came in September 2015, during a conference for the pro-Brexit United Kingdom Independent Party, or UKIP.

He and Mr. Wigmore met a Russian diplomat, Alexander Udod, who was later among a list of 23 suspected spies expelled from Britain after the recent poisoning of a former Russia spy, Sergei V. Skripal, on British soil.

In the interview, Mr. Banks said he and Mr. Wigmore had asked Mr. Udod if they could meet the ambassador, "because we thought it would be interesting."

At the first meeting with the ambassador, over lunch, Mr. Banks recalled in his memoir, the ambassador served him a special bottle of vodka that he claimed was made for Stalin.

In the interview, Mr. Banks said that at the lunch, he had volunteered that he owned diamond mines in South Africa. The ambassador then invited him for another meeting later that month to introduce him to a Russian businessman who was offering a chance to invest in a proposed consolidation of six Russian gold mines.

"I am very bullish on gold so keen to have a look," Mr. Banks wrote afterward in an email to the Russian businessman, Siman Povarenkin.

Mr. Banks was interested enough that he sought the advice of Nick van den Brul, an investment banker familiar with Russian gold and diamond mines. In January 2016, Mr. Banks wrote Mr. van der Brul an email about "the gold play."

"I intend to pop in and see the ambassador as well," Mr. Banks wrote. He sent a copy of the email to Mr. Udod, the diplomat later expelled for spying.

Mr. Banks said he never participated in that gold deal.

But it appears that Mr. Povarenkin offered him a different Russian opportunity – with the diamond company Alrosa.

The Russian government, the largest shareholder in the company, was preparing to sell off a 10 percent stake. On Jan. 16, 2016, an investment adviser working for Mr. Banks wrote Mr. Povarenkin that Mr. Banks's team had "not forgotten about your Alrosa project," according to people who have reviewed records of the emails.

A few days later, Mr. van den Brul, the same investment banker that Mr. Banks had consulted to discuss the gold deal, emailed him separately about the diamond opportunity.

In interviews earlier this week, Mr. Banks initially said he knew nothing about the Alrosa project. Then he later said he remembered hearing about it from the investment banker but did not pursue it.

An investment fund associated with his friend, business partner and fellow Brexit backer, James Mellon, did participate.

Mr. Mellon, a prominent investor based in the Isle of Man, is a partner with Mr. Banks in a financial institution on the island. Mr. Mellon has made hundreds of millions of dollars investing in Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union, often alongside businessmen close to President Vladimir V. Putin.

Mr. Mellon had introduced Mr. Banks to Nigel Farage, a strident crusader against the European Union who became the chief beneficiary of Mr. Banks's contributions during the Brexit campaign.

Three weeks after the 2016 Brexit vote, the Russian government sold the Alrosa stake in a private offering to a restricted group of investors. The shares were sold at a discount to the market price at a time when the value of both the stock and diamonds were rising.

Mr. Mellon's fund management company, Charlemagne Capital, was among a restricted number of investors who were allowed to participate.

Denham Eke, a representative for Mr. Mellon, said that Mr. Mellon had stepped out of day-to-day management of

Charlemagne, and that any investment decisions were made by a formal committee. He added that Mr. Mellon's business investments in Russia were unrelated to his opposition to the European Union or to Mr. Banks.

The third Russian investment opportunity surfaced in April 2016, as the Brexit campaign was heating up. Another investment banker with connections in Russia wrote to Mr. Banks about the possible sale of a gold mine in Conakry, Guinea. The owner was a Russian "mini-oligarch" who "shares your passion for the yellow metal," the banker wrote, according to people who have reviewed a record of the email.

In the Friday interview, Mr. Banks initially said that he had no memory of such a discussion but later called back to acknowledge a meeting on May 10, 2016, that appears to have included a discussion of the Guinean mine.

Mr. Banks said he did not invest in that mine either.

The Brexit vote took place a little more than a month later, on June 23, 2016.

In August, Mr. Banks had lunch with the Russian ambassador and discussed the Trump campaign. At their lunch after Mr. Trump's victory in November, the two men discussed what role Jeff Sessions, then a senator, might play in the cabinet, according to people who have reviewed the records of his emails.

Mr. Banks, though, said he doubted that the Russians had cultivated him for reasons other than routine trade promotion.

"The idea that things were dangled as some sort of carrots for me to be involved with the Russians is very far-fetched," he said. "I wonder what the Russians wanted from me?"

Editors' Note: July 23, 2018, Monday

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction: An article on June 29 about Russian business proposals to a major donor backing a British exit from the European Union referred incompletely to an investment fund's participation in the Russian diamond giant Alrosa. Since publication of the article, representatives of the British financier Jim Mellon have said that a fund managed by a company he founded, Charlemagne Capital, had invested in an initial public offering of shares in Alrosa by the Russian government in 2013. The article reported only a later investment by a Charlemagne fund in a secondary private placement of shares in Alrosa by the Russian government in 2016, shortly after the referendum to leave the European Union.

Credit: DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK and MATTHEW ROSENBERG; David D. Kirkpatrick reported from London, and Matthew Rosenberg from Washington.

Photograph

Arron Banks, center, denied or failed to mention conversations with the Russian ambassador and Russian businessmen in 2016. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES) (A9)

DETAILS

Subject:	Investment bankers; Mines; Diamonds; Investigations; Private placement; Investments; Diplomatic & consular services; Electronic mail systems; Meetings; Oligarchy; International relations-UK; Gold mines & mining; Committees; Criminal investigations; EU membership; Influence
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Russia Snarls Meeting On Chemical Weapons

Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]27 June 2018: A.11.

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Russia demonstrated on Tuesday that one response to fielding an unwelcome question is to ask a different question. And another, and another, and many more after that.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is meeting in The Hague to decide whether to start determining who was to blame for chemical weapons attacks, rather than just saying whether they occurred.

The change, proposed by Britain, is clearly aimed at Russia and its ally, Syria, two countries recently accused of using chemical weapons, which they deny. Both oppose the measure.

But before it could take up the merits of the proposal, the organization spent hours batting down questions and objections from the Russian delegation -- and, to a lesser extent, from representatives of Syria and its other main ally, Iran -- about how a vote would be conducted. That vote is expected to take place on Wednesday.

In proceedings broadcast on the organization's website, they asked questions whose answers were clear, questions that the organization said it had answered before the meeting, and questions that were answered (often twice, or three or four times) during the meeting. Even as some Western representatives expressed impatience, the Russians repeatedly challenged the organization's interpretation of its own rules.

It took almost three hours for member countries of the organization, which monitors compliance with a chemical weapons ban treaty, just to vote to adopt a meeting agenda.

"The picture is not very understandable and clear," said Alexander V. Shulgin, the Russian ambassador. "When there is such confusion, we can't move forward."

The Canadian ambassador, Sabine Nölke, retorted: "Canada is not confused. The rules are clear."

The Russians "have made it quite clear they intend to dispute everything," said Ambassador Kenneth D. Ward of the United States.

For two years, there was an international system for assigning blame for chemical attacks, but Russia killed it. In response to Syria's long civil war, and repeated allegations that the government had used poison gas, the United Nations created a body, the Joint Investigative Mechanism, to work with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and determine culpability.

Last year, it reported that the government of Bashar al-Assad had used poison gas in Syria. Russia rejected that assertion, accusing the group of being a tool of Western propaganda, though Western countries and independent watchdog groups contend that Syria has used chemical weapons dozens of times, and rebel groups a smaller number of times.

In November, Russia used its veto in the United Nations Security Council to block renewal of the group's mandate. Britain has accused the Kremlin of carrying out a chemical attack in March on Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy living in England, and his daughter, Yulia, who both survived. Russia has denied the claim, floating a variety of competing theories, but Britain's closest allies, including the United States, have accepted its conclusions.

For years, critics of President Vladimir V. Putin's government have accused it of using obfuscation and obstruction to thwart international bodies, particularly on topics like Russia's aggression in Ukraine, or the war in Syria.

Tuesday's session could be seen as a master class in delay. Mr. Shulgin himself said, "I am very sorry that we are walking in place and walking in circles."

How many of the organization's 193 member countries had not paid their dues, Russia demanded to know. Which ones were they? Why not read out their names? Could they vote if they were behind on dues? Did they know whether they were allowed to vote?

Was there a quorum present? Did the countries in arrears count toward a quorum? What about countries that were provisional members, not yet accepted fully into the organization? Could they vote? Were they part of a quorum? When the rules say that a vote on Britain's motion must occur within 24 hours, does that period begin only after

every country has had its say? Does it start after all proposed amendments have been considered? (These questions in particular seemed to exasperate Ms. Nölke, who insisted that the rules do not allow "for delegations to filibuster and run out the clock.")

The organization's officials said repeatedly that the answers were obvious (97 nations were needed for a quorum and 143 were present, for example), had been answered or were clearly laid out in the rules, which had been followed the same way in previous meetings.

"We have never had a problem with these issues in past sessions of the conference," said Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco, the chairman of the group.

Finally, after most of the day had passed, member countries got around to addressing the substance of Britain's proposal, which is backed by the European Union and the United States.

"No international body is working to attribute responsibility for chemical weapons attacks," said Boris Johnson, Britain's foreign secretary. "If we are serious about upholding the ban on chemical weapons, that gap must be filled."

DETAILS

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Location:	Russia United States–US Canada United Kingdom–UK Iran England Syria Ukraine Morocco
People:	Johnson, Boris Skripal, Sergei V Assad, Bashar Al Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: United Nations–UN; NAICS: 928120; Name: United Nations Security Council; NAICS: 928120; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120
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In Britain, Doubts Rise Over Case of Poisoning

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]17 June 2018:
A.8.

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FULL TEXT

SALISBURY, ENGLAND -- After Sergei V. Skripal, her Russian neighbor, was poisoned by a military-grade nerve agent, Lissa Carey pricked her ears for any information about this bizarre series of events. Three and a half months later, Ms. Carey, 45, a resident of Salisbury, England, where the attack on the former Russian spy occurred, has come to a firm conclusion: Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, whom Britain holds responsible for the poisoning, would never have ordered an assassination on the eve of a national election or the World Cup.

Mr. Putin is "not a silly man," she says. If he wants someone dead, she added, they end up dead. "Someone stitched him up," she wrote recently. "Whoever did this made it look like Putin did it."

Though Ms. Carey's opinion is not a common one in Salisbury, she's not alone, either.

"We are force-fed the answer that it was the Russians, no two ways about it," read a letter to the editor in a recent edition of The Salisbury Journal. Many more express a shrugging sense of resignation, that the facts of the case may never be clear.

During the days after Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were found unconscious, the British government seemed to be winning the public relations war, mobilizing its allies in a united front against Russia.

Prime Minister Theresa May's government presented its case for Russia's guilt, and by the end of March 25, countries had lined up in support, expelling more than 100 Russian diplomats. In a YouGov poll released on April 3, three-quarters of Britons were relatively confident that Russia was responsible.

In the weeks that followed, though, Britain's control over the narrative slipped away. As the British authorities went silent on the progress of their investigation, English-language Russian outlets flooded social media with more than a dozen alternative theories: The United States had poisoned Mr. Skripal to deflect attention from Russia's geopolitical successes; Britain did it to deflect attention from Brexit; the nerve agent had been accidentally released from a chemical weapons laboratory nearby; a drone did it; Yulia Skripal's future mother-in-law did it.

This blitz of skepticism came to dominate social media conversations. In early April, the Atlantic Council found that four of the six most-shared English-language articles on the case came from Kremlin media outlets. The theories are seeding doubt, even in Salisbury.

"It's really peculiar the Russian government is going out and saying all this stuff, and, generally speaking, there is no response from the British government," said Matthew Dean, the leader of Salisbury's City Council and the owner of the Duke of York, a local pub.

Though the vast majority of people in Salisbury say they are satisfied with Britain's explanation, Mr. Dean said, there are also "huge numbers of people who say, 'My goodness, there are a lot of unanswered questions.'"

Salisbury, known affectionately by some residents as "Smallsbury," is a conservative English town, sprinkled with 500-year-old pubs and bisected by the Avon River. Its 45,000 residents – older and whiter than the national average – include a large number of former military officers.

They are, as a community, accustomed to living in proximity to secrets. Seven miles away is Porton Down, a laboratory that carries out classified experiments with chemical and biological weapons. Its employees abide by strict confidentiality agreements, but like Area 51, the mysterious Air Force base in Nevada, Porton Down breeds folklore: A government web page written to debunk them contains the sentence "No aliens, either alive or dead, have ever been taken to Porton Down."

After the jarring news that a nerve agent had been brought to Salisbury, its community leaders hewed to that most English of strategies: Keep calm and carry on. Ceri Hurford-Jones, the managing director of Spire FM, a local radio station, said he had been keen to wind down daily coverage of the Skripal investigation, in part because the reporting was hurting Salisbury's tourist business.

"Here on the ground there is no motivation for us to go out and ask questions because we want to get on with our lives," he said, adding that most everyone he knew accepted the government's explanation.

"We are quite a parochial town," he said. "There is an innately trusting side of us. I think that is a good thing about us, that we trust our government. We don't look for conspiracies around the corner; it's just not our way."

But along Salisbury's shopping streets, residents and businesspeople compare notes on the questions that remain unanswered.

Many express bafflement about the condition and whereabouts of Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey, who was exposed to the nerve agent while trying to help the Skripals. Mr. Bailey has remained out of sight since he was released from a two-and-a-half-week hospitalization in late March.

Others fret about the ducks that used to gather on the Avon River near where the Skripals collapsed, saying they must have been quietly culled. (Mr. Dean, the City Council head, says they simply migrated downstream.) Others wonder why some places the Skripals went on the day of the poisoning, but not others, were cordoned off for safety reasons.

"It's almost like this part that's missing between what we're being told and what happened," said Richard Coleman, 45, the owner of Greengages Cafe. He added that he remains confident that Russia "or some disreputable organization" was behind the attack. In its approach to transparency, he added, Salisbury is "a very typical English town."

"They will only open up when they're really forced to do it by a superior power," he said. "It's kind of the British reserve. We never ask questions. We just accept what we're told."

Sharon Weeks, who works in a leather goods shop, shrugged when asked about the case.

"The truth will out, normally," she said. "But sometimes, of course, it doesn't."

Analysts say it is nearly impossible to measure the effect of Russia's campaign to discredit the British explanation in the case. Britons' trust in their institutions is already declining, in some cases as a result of other events such as Britain's support of flawed intelligence ahead of the war in Iraq or last year's devastating fire in Grenfell Towers. Russia's campaign in the Skripal case aims to further undermine trust in the authorities, said Ben Nimmo, a fellow in the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab.

Just as it did after the shooting down of a Malaysian airliner in eastern Ukraine in 2014, the Kremlin targeted aggrieved social groups – not difficult to find in the years since the 2008 financial crisis – and capitalized on the disciplined silence of the Western investigators, filling the vacuum with alternative theories.

"It doesn't have to follow the dictates of the news cycle; it follows the dictates of the Kremlin," Mr. Nimmo said. "If nobody else is talking about it and the Kremlin is, there will be this drip-feed effect; it will gradually erode public confidence in whatever the target is."

Ms. Carey says that she is a "little person," suspicious of the government on many issues, and that she has never once looked at a Kremlin-produced news outlet.

Her skepticism is shared by many of Salisbury's cabdrivers, many of whom are immigrants from Eastern Europe and South Asia. Boris Kanev, a Bulgarian, said he had become convinced of the Russian case during a visit home in April, when he watched Russian-language television coverage.

When he returned home, he said, he found many in Salisbury who shared his doubts

"The English people believe it's the Russians," he said, but "all those other British people, the Scottish, the Irish, the Welsh," were more skeptical. "To be honest with you, they don't trust England," he said.

Another driver, Steve Odendaal, who is native to Zimbabwe, said the attack could not have been a Russian government operation because it was "too clumsy and too careless."

Even among those with full confidence in the government case, the episode has left a residue of confusion and mistrust.

Back in March, Mr. Dean, the City Council head, angrily confronted Mr. Hurford-Jones, the director of the radio station, over his decision to follow up on a tip by a Russian journalist questioning whether Salisbury's CCTV system had been fully operational at the time of the attack. Mr. Dean called the allegation "totally untrue."

"That would be an example of sources from the Russian administration sowing disinformation in the U.K.," Mr. Dean said.

Mr. Hurford-Jones bristled at the accusation, saying his journalists had documented problems with CCTV in the past and were justified in following up on the question suggested by Russian colleagues. "We live here, too, you know," he said. "It doesn't stop us asking questions."

Photograph

Salisbury was jarred at the news that Russia had brought into the town a nerve agent to poison a spy. Below, military personnel working on the case. Kremlin media outlets have sought to spread other theories.

(PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES; CHRIS J RATCLIFFE/GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Laboratories; Poisoning; Councils; Social networks; Radio stations; Trust; Biological &chemical weapons; Poisons; Cities
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People:	May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Skripal, Yulia

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Putin's Big Bet

Smith, Rory . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 June 2018: F.3.

FULL TEXT

Vladimir V. Putin is not a soccer fan -- ice hockey has always been his passion -- but eight years ago, in the hours after FIFA declared Russia would host the 2018 World Cup, he told a story designed to illustrate that he grasped just what the event, and the sport, could do for his country, and for the world.

Mr. Putin had landed in Zurich only a few hours earlier, after Russia had been awarded the tournament. As the country's prime minister at the time, he wished to bask in the glow of an unexpected victory, not associate himself with even the possibility of defeat.

He was rushed immediately to a celebratory news conference. The tone, for the most part, was exultant, almost crowing, as Mr. Putin explained how Russia's oligarchs and corporations would be leaned on to finance the billion-dollar jamboree. The Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich, in the audience, beamed at the idea.

As he told the story, though, Mr. Putin grew almost wistful, romantic. He was born in Leningrad just after World War II, he said. As a child, he had been told how the city had suffered during the conflict: The siege of what is now St. Petersburg lasted almost 900 days. There had been "no electricity, no running water, no heat in a Russian winter." German shells landed every day.

But he spoke of how -- at the height of the siege -- "football matches were held, even at that tragic time." They had "helped people stand tall and survive."

"Football brings a spark into the lives of people, young and old," he said.

That was what Mr. Putin dreamed the World Cup could do for Russia, went the metaphor: to illuminate a nation, to inspire a people, to help a vibrant, rapidly modernizing nation stand tall. He wanted the World Cup to showcase that Russia was not what it used to be, but had become something new, something different. He wanted to prove that "we are an open and transparent country to the world."

The hundreds of thousands of fans who would descend on Russia in eight years' time, he said, would find facilities of "the highest standard," delivered "on time and to perfection." They would discover a country that was nothing like the one they remembered from school or had heard about on the news.

"A lot of stereotypes from previous times, from the Cold War era, fly all over Europe, and they frighten people," Mr. Putin said then. "The more contact we have, the more these stereotypes will be destroyed." Russia -- his Russia -- was different now. The World Cup would prove it.

Eight years later, that seems a distant prospect. Relations between the West and Russia are as strained as they have been since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Since Mr. Putin reassumed the Russian presidency in 2012, Russia has invaded Ukraine, annexed Crimea, been implicated in the shooting down of a commercial airliner and stymied all attempts to find a resolution to the war in Syria.

It has been accused of overseeing a vast state-sponsored doping program that affected results at the Sochi Olympics and of interfering not only in the United States presidential election, but also in the vote on whether Britain should leave the European Union. Britain's intelligence services believe the Russian state was behind the poisoning of Sergei Skripal, a former double agent, and his daughter, Yulia, in Britain earlier this year.

At home, too, few believe Mr. Putin's Russia is the open or transparent nation he boasted about in 2010. Human Rights Watch has reported the country is more repressive now than at any point since the Cold War. Domestic opposition is harassed and crushed; elections are a simulacrum of democracy.

There are those who suggested for years that the World Cup should be taken away from Russia: a country that won it in what many believe was a tainted bidding process -- Russia refused to cooperate with the investigation into the votes for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups, claiming the bid team's computers had all been unfortunately and accidentally destroyed -- and still struggles with racism in its stadiums and homophobia on its streets.

And yet -- extraordinary though it is to say it, given all that has happened between the vote to award the hosting

rights and the tournament's opening game in a few days' time -- there was a grain of truth in Mr. Putin's logic in 2010. That story about war-torn Leningrad was more than just empty rhetoric.

It is not necessarily admirable, or praiseworthy, or right, but once the tournament starts, once the largest sporting event in the world is in full flight, a transformation will take place. In Brazil four years ago, huge strikes were timed to coincide with the World Cup to highlight social injustice and endemic corruption in the country. The world noted it, and then tuned in to the matches, anyway. The World Cup is a circus, and what is a circus if not illusion, and distraction, and sleight of hand?

It will not necessarily be the quality of the soccer: The game in its highest form is now played in the Champions League, not on the international stage. If you want slick, dizzying style, watch Barcelona or Manchester City. If you want breathless, breakneck chaos, go for Liverpool or Borussia Dortmund. If you want star power and soap opera, nothing touches Real Madrid and Paris St.-Germain.

For tension, though, for meaning, still nothing quite beats the World Cup. Will this be the year that Lionel Messi finally delivers the trophy to Argentina? Can Brazil, driven on by Neymar, avenge the national humiliation of 2014? Will Germany become the first country in more than half a century to retain the World Cup, or is this the moment for Spain or France to reclaim the crown?

For romance, too: Egypt is back, 28 years since it last appeared, inspired by the beaming Mohamed Salah; Panama and Peru declared national holidays simply for qualifying; Iceland, with its thunderclapping fans and its dentist-turned-manager, will be the smallest nation ever to take part in the jamboree.

The world will watch, as it always does. It will find heroes to love and villains to loathe. It will rise in joy and sink in despair. The World Cup is a thing all of itself; to many, to most, in the heat of it all, what matters is the field, and the goals -- not where they are.

Most important, Russia will watch, too, and that is what always mattered to Mr. Putin: not how the world sees Russia, but how Russia sees itself.

Its team -- the lowest-ranked host in history -- seems likely to offer little: Expectations in Russia run no higher than simply not exiting at the earliest available opportunity. Even Mr. Putin has not tried to associate himself with the national side: As the timing of his visit to Zurich in 2010 proved, he is not prepared to countenance even the slightest stain of defeat.

What matters more is how Russia responds off the field: Can it prove to itself that it is the nation Mr. Putin preaches that it is? Can it deliver a spectacle -- even in the face of reinforced sanctions, introduced after the Skripal poisonings -- worthy of the superpower of its president's vision?

That is what Mr. Putin wanted from this tournament, why he supported the bid in the first place: a chance to stage a vision of his Russia to Russia. That comes with a considerable risk, however, one that will provide the most fascinating -- and possibly most important -- subplot to the tournament.

They still talk, in Russia, about the children of the 1980 Olympics: the generation that had the chance to welcome athletes and fans from around the globe at the height of the Cold War and that was inspired not by how different they were, but how alike. Eager to put on a show, the Soviet authorities stocked shops with Pepsi and Marlboro cigarettes for visitors to the Games. Five years later, the era of glasnost and perestroika began.

Nearly four decades on, what impact could the influx of thousands of fans, from Colombia and Tunisia and Iceland and all points in between, have on a country that its president has worked so hard to imbue in the myth of its own difference?

This may not be a World Cup that changes how the world sees Russia, not given the political context in which it takes place. But it could be a World Cup that changes how Russia sees not only itself, but the world as a whole. As Mr. Putin himself said, though, soccer can bring a spark into the lives of people, young and old. This is a World Cup designed to show his strength. That does not mean he can control its power.

AuthorAffiliation

Follow Rory Smith on Twitter: @RorySmith.

Photograph

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MLADEN ANTONOV/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES); Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, top right, wanted the World Cup to be a showcase for Russia. But the decision could have political consequences for FIFA's Gianni Infantino, top left, who has his own presidential prospects to think about. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXEI NIKOLSKY; MATTHIAS SCHRADER/ASSOCIATED PRESS) CHART: The Opening Weekend

DETAILS

Subject:	Drugs &sports; Cold War; Local elections; Awards &honors; Stereotypes; Tournaments &championships; Election results; Soccer
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Russia Aims to Mend Fences in Vienna

Erlanger, Steven; Macfarquhar, Neil . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]06 June 2018: A.4.

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FULL TEXT

BRUSSELS -- President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia arrived in Austria on Tuesday sensing an opportunity almost unimaginable just months ago: to overhaul frosty relations with a European Union infuriated by President Trump on a host of issues, from climate and Iran to, most recently, tariffs and trade.

Never mind that Mr. Putin was until recently virtually a pariah in Europe after his military interventions in Ukraine, Crimea and Syria; after meddling in European elections and working hard to foment right-wing populist uprisings throughout the Continent; after polluting the political environment with fake news; and after allegedly poisoning a former Russian spy and his daughter in Britain, charges Russia denies.

Mr. Putin was now gaining considerable traction by casting himself as a reliable friend and trading partner to Europe even as the Trump administration was treating its closest allies there as strategic and economic competitors.

"It is not our aim to divide anything or anybody in Europe," Mr. Putin said in a television interview before he went to Vienna. "On the contrary, we want to see a united and prosperous European Union because the European Union is our biggest trade and economic partner. The more problems there are within the European Union, the greater the risks and uncertainties for us."

Though careful not to gloat, Mr. Putin had to take great satisfaction in the recent turn of events. Often dismissed as a tactician and opportunist, he was looking more like a grand strategist as Mr. Trump bluntly rejected European demands for an exemption from what Brussels considers illegal and unilateral tariffs on steel and aluminum.

Populist, Russophile parties are in power in Greece, Hungary, Italy and Austria. The prospect of attaining Mr. Putin's immediate goal of throwing off economic sanctions imposed by the European Union over the last several years suddenly seemed within reach, even without compromise in Ukraine.

Indeed, in recent days, with the G-7 meeting of the world's largest advanced economies looming, Mr. Trump has had unusually bad-tempered telephone calls on the tariff issue with both the French president, Emmanuel Macron, and the British prime minister, Theresa May.

The Germans and Canadians are furious about the tariffs, too. Washington justifies them even to its NATO allies on what they dismiss as the specious grounds of "national security."

These tensions will be on display this weekend at the G-7 meeting in Canada. That normally American-dominated meeting is likely to see Mr. Trump isolated on the issue of trade, six against one.

Such internal divisions probably amuse Mr. Putin, who saw Russia "suspended" from what was the G-8 after the annexation of Crimea, but who now sees a far more welcoming landscape in Europe.

Austria, officially neutral, has always had close ties to Moscow and takes over the revolving European Union presidency next month. Austria's young chancellor, Sebastian Kurz, refused to expel any Russian diplomats following the poisoning of the ex-spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter Yulia.

In contrast, most other European allies and the United States readily lined up behind Britain and were quick to isolate Russia diplomatically. More than two dozen countries ejected more than 150 Russians, including people listed by their embassies and consulates as diplomats, and military and cultural attachés.

Mr. Kurz is in a coalition with the far-right Freedom Party, which in 2016 signed a partnership agreement with Mr. Putin's own United Russia Party and has called for economic sanctions to be lifted.

Italy's far-right populist League party -- now also in government -- last year signed a similar deal with United Russia. Its leader, Matteo Salvini, now deputy prime minister and interior minister, has spoken about his admiration for Mr. Putin and his desire to end sanctions against Russia. He famously wore a T-shirt with Mr. Putin's face in Red Square.

The new Italian prime minister, Giuseppe Conte, told the Italian Senate on Tuesday that it was time for "an opening toward Russia," which he said had "strengthened its position" in various international crises. He called for lifting sanctions against Russia that he said harm "Russian civil society."

The admiration of Mr. Putin is real from France's far-right National Front, too, as well as from the leftist populist government in Greece and the far-right opposition party in Germany, Alternative for Germany. And there are strong suspicions that all these parties benefit from Russian funding, according to Western intelligence agencies.

In the interview with the Austrian state channel ORF, Mr. Putin said that Russia's ties to such parties were merely fraternal, with no strategic motive. Russia, he said, wants to cooperate with those who want to cooperate with Moscow.

"This alone is the reason why our political parties, groups and movements have contacts at the political and party level with certain European ones, and not the wish to 'rock' or impede something within the European Union," he said.

But Austria is clearly a friendly gateway for Moscow. Mr. Putin said that the two countries had maintained "very good and close relations," adding that Austria had traditionally been Russia's "trusted partner in Europe."

Mr. Kurz harks back to Austria's self-styled Cold War role as a mediator.

"We want to be a bridge between East and West, and keep the lines of communication with Russia open," he has said. That has traditionally translated into a belief that dialogue is the answer to every confrontation, from the Georgian war and the annexation of Crimea to the poisoning in Britain and Russia's support for the Syrian regime. Stefan Lehne, a former Austrian diplomat, said that the Austrian sympathy for Russia is decades-long, based on the history of neutrality, economic interests, pragmatism and an "element of anti-Americanism," the view that "all big powers behave similarly." He noted that Mr. Putin had been invited to Austria within months of the annexation of Crimea. But so far, he said, Austria has gone along with the European consensus on sanctions.

But with Italy and Greece pushing to end them, that may not continue.

Mr. Putin would clearly like to end his isolation. In his current term as president, Mr. Putin has two clear goals, said Dmitri Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, a research institution.

"First, to keep Russia together, and that's a helluva job, and second, to make Russia a great power again and seen to be one," Mr. Trenin said last weekend at a conference in Estonia.

To accomplish those goals, however, "you need economic success." And for that, Mr. Putin needs European financing, energy markets and technology, Mr. Trenin said. Mr. Putin also wants good relations with Europe, he said, to concentrate on his real priority, which is China, a rising neighboring power with resource needs and ambitions.

But it is not only Europe's populists who are looking for warmer ties with Russia. Last week, Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, called for an end to the demonization of Russia.

"I do think we have to reconnect with Russia," Mr. Juncker said.

Both Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and Mr. Macron visited Russia at the end of May to discuss salvaging the Iran deal. And Mr. Macron complained at a conference in St. Petersburg about the damage being done to world trade – clearly alluding to Mr. Trump.

Mr. Macron, the guest of honor, was particularly effusive in evoking the cultural and historical links that tie Russia to the rest of Europe.

Ms. Merkel, who has few illusions about Mr. Putin and has been vital to maintaining economic sanctions against Russia, also finds herself and her country a particular target of Mr. Trump. In addition to the tariffs on steel and aluminum, which Germany can live with, he is now threatening unilateral tariffs on imported cars, which it cannot. He has also raised the prospect of tariffs on those companies involved with building Nordstream II, an energy pipeline from Russia to Germany that entirely bypasses Ukraine.

Austria was the first country to import Russian energy 50 years ago, another reason for Mr. Putin's visit, and Europe now gets a third of its gas supply from Russia, a figure likely to increase.

At the same time, both Ms. Merkel and Mr. Macron noted the nagging sores that continue to infect relations with Moscow, including the continuing wars in Ukraine and Syria. Ms. Merkel underscored that both were impediments to better ties, and there seems little movement possible from Moscow on either front.

Many European governments remain deeply concerned about Russian meddling in their internal politics, ranging from spreading false information on social media to fostering far-right opposition to trying to widen divisions among European states themselves over Russia.

Still, Russia is cognizant of the fact that Mr. Trump has created a sudden opportunity for them.

"A battle for Russia has begun in international politics!" Vladimir R. Solovyov, the host of a prime-time talk show on Russian state-run television that often reflects the government line, said on Sunday. "Europe is compelled to change its policies on the fly since Trump has declared a trade war."

Vladimir Chizhov, the Russian ambassador to the European Union, said on Tuesday, "I am closely watching how the situation evolves and when the necessary volume of political will is there – and I see this tendency – then the E.U. perhaps will take the necessary decision to change its course."

Credit: STEVEN ERLANGER and NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Steven Erlanger reported from Brussels, and Neil MacFarquhar from Moscow. Melissa Eddy contributed reporting from Berlin, and Milan Schreuer from Brussels.

Photograph

Austria's president, Alexander Van der Bellen, right, and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, at the presidential palace in Vienna on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANS KLAUS TECHT/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES); President Emmanuel Macron of France visited St. Petersburg, Russia, last month as the guest of honor at a conference. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LUDOVIC MARIN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Photographs; Politics; Tariffs; Diplomatic & consular services; Aluminum; Presidents; Sanctions; Populism
Location:	Italy Greece Russia Crimea Germany United Kingdom–UK Iran Syria Austria France Ukraine Europe
People:	Macron, Emmanuel Putin, Vladimir
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LINKS

[Find It @ GT](#)

Document 101 of 176

Back From the Dead

Ioffe, Julia . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]01 June 2018: A.25.

FULL TEXT

There is a word, beloved by the Kremlin and all its representatives, that has yet to cross into an American lexicon that longs for such Russian transplants: provokatsiya. Literally: a provocation. Figuratively: a false-flag operation.

The poisoning of the former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in Britain? Provokatsiya!

The shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 over eastern Ukraine? Provokatsiya!

The Kremlin's interference in the 2016 presidential race? Provokatsiya, obviously.

Before Wednesday, it was easy to deride Kremlin cries of provokatsiya as a cynical way of directing our gaze away from the facts and past them – onto the highly improbable and the flat-out conspiratorial. But after Wednesday, thanks to the machinations of the Russian journalist Arkady Babchenko, dismissing such claims became far more difficult. This time, the Russians turned out to be right.

The story is straight out of a Bond film: On Tuesday, Mr. Babchenko, who had long irked the Kremlin with his critical coverage of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, was shot in the back three times in his apartment while his wife was in the shower. He was living in Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, where he had fled because he feared for his safety in Moscow. But Russian agents found him even there, and he died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. His wife, the police said, was in a state of shock.

Mr. Babchenko's colleagues in Moscow were rocked by the news. Many of them didn't like him personally or agree with his politics – he hated the regime so much that, for instance, he wrote that the dozens of children who burned to death in a fire in a mall in the city of Kemerovo were atonement for Vladimir Putin's crimes.

But on Tuesday, they set their differences aside. They wrote obituaries and took to social media with the speed born of grim familiarity: another Russian journalist gunned down by the Kremlin for having the gall to think independently.

And there was little doubt that it was the Kremlin. Russian-ordered hit men were suspected of having killed two journalists and a former Russian legislator in Kiev in the past two years alone. Who else kills Russian journalists for their work? Who else hunts down its enemies far beyond Russia's borders?

Immediately, Kremlin-proximate sources teed up explanations that this was all a provokatsiya: Why would President Putin kill an anti-Putin journalist when he would be the first person everyone would accuse? Aleksei Pushkov, a hawkish member of Parliament, was sure it was a trick meant to smear Moscow. "Why did the police go to Babchenko's house a few hours before he was killed?" he tweeted. "Why did they look for recordings from the cameras or turn off the cameras? As a rule, there are no coincidences in such cases."

Independent journalists sneered at these obvious attempts to redirect blame. That is, until about 6 p.m. on Wednesday, when Mr. Babchenko was resurrected.

He appeared suddenly – alive, breathing, joking, apologizing to his wife – at a news conference in Kiev with the Ukrainian Security Service, the country's successor to the K.G.B. It turned out that when he died on the way to the hospital, he hadn't died even a little. It had all been a monthlong sting operation by the security service to entrap the contract killer and the Russian who had allegedly put a hit out on Mr. Babchenko.

Apparently, the stunt worked and the killer – who the Ukrainians claimed was set to carry out 30 contract hits – was apprehended. (Mr. Babchenko's apology to his wife was also apparently a hoax: She was in on it.) The least likely scenario, that Kiev staged this to make Moscow look bad, turned out to be true.

Independent Russian journalists were furious. All the ethics and ideals for which they had been marginalized, persecuted and killed by the state – Mr. Babchenko had incinerated them with one cinematic act of collusion with a state security agency. Who would trust them now?

"This is an embarrassing story; it's disgusting," wrote Ilya Krasilshchik, co-founder of the independent Russian news site Meduza, while Andrei Soldatov, who writes about the Russian secret services, said, "I'm glad he is alive,

but he undermined even further the credibility of journalists and the media."

Yevgenia Albats, the grande dame of Moscow opposition journalism, fumed that "the theory of fake news was confirmed and the Kremlin is celebrating."

Others rightly pointed out that Mr. Babchenko's stunt would have repercussions far beyond journalism. "The whole point of the word 'provokatsiya' is to convince people that everything happens for a reason, and that everything that's happening is part of a plot against Russia," said another Russian journalist, Tikhon Dzyadko, who on Tuesday had slammed Russian officials for calling Mr. Babchenko's death a provokatsiya. "After Babchenko's stunt yesterday, it will be much harder to accuse Russian officials of anything. They will flaunt Babchenko as an example."

For years, Russia officialdom has claimed provokatsiya at the highest levels. When Mr. Skripal was poisoned in England, Vasily Nebenzya, the Russian ambassador to the United Nations, railed at the Security Council that it was all provokatsiya. Mr. Skripal had been poisoned near a British test site for chemical weapons! The poison wasn't Russian, it was British! And had anyone checked on Mr. Skripal's cats and guinea pigs? Had they been poisoned too? Sitting in that staid room at the United Nations, Mr. Nebenzya repeated "provokatsiya" so many times it could have been a dubstep remix.

Until Mr. Babchenko's stunt, it had been easy to dismiss this as self-serving smoke and mirrors. But the Kremlin-hating journalist has turned it into a real weapon. Top Ukrainian officials who hadn't been in on the stunt had already raised Mr. Babchenko's murder at the United Nations, laying the blame at Russia's feet. What of their claim now? What of all their future legitimate claims?

After Mr. Babchenko's resurrection, you never know.

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Author/Affiliation

Julia Ioffe (@juliaioffe), a contributing writer at The Atlantic, is at work on a book about Russia.

Illustration

DRAWING (DRAWING BY ADAM MAIDA)

DETAILS

Subject:	Social networks; Journalism; Journalists; Security services; Poisons; Sting operations
Location:	Russia
People:	Babchenko, Arkady Putin, Vladimir
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Document 102 of 176

Putin's Russia, Always the Victim

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

After news came from Kiev on Tuesday that a Russian journalist critical of Vladimir Putin had been shot dead, it did not take long for the Kremlin's denial machinery to shift into high gear. Another case of Russophobia, cried government officials and their media acolytes, anticipating that Russia would be blamed. An attempt to mar the World Cup soccer tournament; a typical example of Ukraine's "bloody crimes and total impunity."

The reality turned out to be a bit more complicated when the journalist, Arkady Babchenko, appeared at a news

conference the next day very much alive, and Ukrainian security services announced that his "murder" had been a sting operation to foil a plot by Russian security services to kill him. Ukrainian authorities certainly must explain why they felt it necessary to compromise journalistic integrity to stage this bizarre episode; they have doubtless supplied fodder to conspiracy theorists and cynical denouncers of "fake news" everywhere. One thing is certain: The Kremlin will seize on this official deceit to show the lengths to which its enemies will go to tarnish Russia. That has been Russia's reaction to all accusations of foul play, whether it's the well-documented charges by the Netherlands, Australia and other nations that it was responsible for downing a Malaysian jetliner over Ukraine in 2014, killing 298; or the British accusation that Russia was most likely behind the poisoning of a double agent and his daughter in England; or the charge by American intelligence agencies that Russia meddled in the presidential campaign.

Each such accusation is met by a barrage of official denials on state television and mockery on social media. In the official version Russia is always the victim of a dastardly and demeaning Western campaign; it was the Ukrainians who shot down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 to make Russia look bad; it was the British who poisoned Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia, and when she gave an interview to Reuters, it was obvious she was coerced. This is not so different from the response of President Trump to the mounting evidence that aides and advisers to his campaign had numerous questionable contacts with Russian representatives seeking to aid his election. He claims it's all a sinister plot by agents of the "deep state" or former President Barack Obama to plant "spies" to undercut his campaign. Such instinctive denials were a fixture of the Soviet Union, where the Communist Party treated any questioning of its infallibility as a crime. Speaking the truth was dangerous. Alexander Solzhenitsyn's impassioned essay "Live Not by Lies" appeared the day before he was exiled in 1974; Mikhail Gorbachev's most radical reform was "glasnost," or openness. In Vladimir Putin's Russia, bluster and lying have been restored to primacy.

There is virtually no chance that Russia will acknowledge any plot against Mr. Babchenko, any attack on Mr. Skripal, or any role in the downing of the jetliner, no matter how clear the evidence. What Russia gains by this is another question. The Kremlin may fool most of its people most of the time, but abroad, its feigned indignation is ever less credible -- though not necessarily with President Trump, who famously declared that he believed Mr. Putin when he said he didn't meddle in American elections.

Mr. Putin, a veteran of the K.G.B., may believe that lying in defense of Russian honor is justified. But every new burst of denial and obfuscation only makes him and his Kremlin look more deceitful and dishonorable.

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Credit: THE EDITORIAL BOARD

DETAILS

Subject:	Aircraft accidents &safety; Editorials; Lying; Professional soccer; Social networks; Murders &murder attempts
Location:	Netherlands Russia New York Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR Australia England Malaysia Ukraine
People:	Trump, Donald J Babchenko, Arkady Gorbachev, Mikhail S Putin, Vladimir Obama, Barack Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr (1918-2008)

Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120; Name: Malaysia Airlines; NAICS: 481111; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130
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LINKS

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Nerve Attack On Ex-Spy Led Doctors To Fear Crisis

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]30 May 2018: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Medical workers in Britain who treated the former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, initially feared that they would be inundated with civilian casualties from a lethal, Soviet-developed nerve agent and that their colleagues had been exposed, they have told the BBC.

The accounts suggest that the British authorities were deeply apprehensive about the possibility of a larger health crisis in the hours after the Skripals were found unconscious on March 4, in what was initially believed to be an opioid overdose.

That evening, after hearing that Mr. Skripal had been a Russian spy, medical workers set aside that theory and began to catalog symptoms of poisoning by an organophosphate, or nerve agent.

"There was a real concern as to how big this could get," Lorna Wilkinson, the nursing director at Salisbury District Hospital, said in an interview with the BBC Two program "Newsnight" that will be broadcast on Tuesday. "Have we just gone from having two index patients having something that could become all-consuming and involve many casualties? Because we really didn't know at that point."

Dr. Stephen Jukes, a physician in the intensive care unit there, said that hospital workers had believed the Skripals would die.

"We were expecting them not to survive," he said. "We would try all our therapies. We would ensure the best clinical care. But all the evidence was there that they would not survive."

He told the BBC that the speed of the Skripals' recovery was a surprise, and that he still found it difficult to explain. Both patients have been released from the hospital.

The interviews help flesh out the background of the Skripal case, which provoked a major diplomatic crisis between Britain and Russia. Within days, the British authorities accused Russia of using a military-grade nerve agent to poison the Skripals, but investigators have been tight-lipped for weeks about their progress, and no suspects have been named.

In the resulting vacuum, the Russian authorities have challenged Britain's account with a raft of theories, among them that British intelligence poisoned the Skripals and that they were not poisoned at all. President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has scoffed publicly at the British accusations, saying that if the Skripals had been exposed to a Russian nerve agent they would have died immediately. A video statement by Ms. Skripal, released last week, seemed intended to defuse that challenge.

In their BBC interviews, the medical workers said that they had taken immediate measures to protect the Skripals from brain damage, sedating them heavily to slow their metabolism. Over time, the sedation was decreased, and respiratory tubes were switched from the mouth to the trachea.

Once the patients regained consciousness, hospital workers tried to avoid telling them too much about what had happened, for fear of compromising the investigation, said the hospital's medical director, Dr. Christine Blanshard. They also had to decide when the Skripals were healthy enough to be questioned by detectives.

"These are very difficult decisions," Dr. Blanshard said. "On one hand, you want to provide reassurance to the patients that they are safe and they are being looked after, and on the other hand, you don't want to give them information that might cause difficulties with subsequent police interviews."

Doctors would have been able to apply lifesaving therapies as soon as it was clear that the Skripals had been exposed to a nerve agent, since the treatment is the same as for sarin or VX, according to a commentary published this month in the scientific journal Clinical Toxicology. The paper, titled "Novichok: A Murderous Nerve Agent Attack in the U.K.," was written by J. Allister Vale, a professor of toxicology at the University of Birmingham, with Timothy C. Marrs and Robert L. Manyard.

Nerve agents, which inhibit the enzyme acetylcholinesterase, can cause fatal respiratory paralysis within minutes if the exposure is severe, the paper said. It added, however, that "mild or moderately exposed individuals usually recover completely." Symptoms can include abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, tremors and convulsions. The most important therapies are atropine, oximes and anticonvulsants. Atropine prevents the nose and lungs from producing too much fluid. Oximes reactivate acetylcholinesterase. Benzodiazepines are anticonvulsants and can reduce anxiety.

The paper says Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey, who was exposed to the nerve agent while "helping the Skripals," was initially discharged from the hospital emergency room, but was readmitted after his condition deteriorated. He remained under treatment for two and a half weeks.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Author/Affiliation

Follow Ellen Barry on Twitter: @EllenBarryNYT .

DETAILS

Subject:	Biological & chemical weapons; Toxicology; Poisons
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: University of Birmingham; NAICS: 611310
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Document 104 of 176

After Visa Issue in Britain, Russian Surfaces in Israel

Halbfinger, David M . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]29 May 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

JERUSALEM -- When Chelsea, the London soccer team, defeated Manchester United to win Britain's FA Cup 10 days ago, the club's billionaire Russian owner, Roman A. Abramovich, was nowhere to be seen among the celebrants, prompting speculation that the government was holding up his application for a visa extension. On Monday, Mr. Abramovich finally surfaced -- in Israel, where he apparently immigrated under the law of return, which guarantees citizenship to any Jew wanting to move here.

The British authorities have not publicly commented on Mr. Abramovich's visa issues, but Prime Minister Theresa May has blamed Moscow for an attack on a former Russian spy and his daughter in England. She threatened to take action against wealthy Russians who benefit from their ties to President Vladimir V. Putin.

Russia has denied any involvement in the March attack on the retired spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal. The two were poisoned in Salisbury, England, with the nerve agent Novichok, a chemical weapon

developed by the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s.

The poisoning set off a diplomatic clash between Russia and the West. The Skripals have since been released from the hospital and are recovering.

Upon his arrival in Israel, Mr. Abramovich instantly became Israel's wealthiest man. The Russian oligarch, with a fortune estimated at more than \$10 billion, would have advantages in retaining that title: The Times of Israel reported that as a new citizen, Mr. Abramovich is exempt from taxes on income earned abroad for 10 years. He also is not required to declare the sources of that income for 10 years.

Those advantages, which may have also encouraged Mr. Abramovich to become an Israeli, come thanks to a controversial 2008 law. Proponents said it was intended to encourage immigration to Israel by Jews, but critics said would entice oligarchs and others to move to Israel with their ill-gotten gains, no questions asked.

A spokesman for Nativ, the Liaison Bureau, which manages immigration to Israel from Russian-speaking countries, told Israel's Channel 10 that Mr. Abramovich had applied for citizenship last week.

"Roman Abramovich arrived at the Israeli Embassy in Moscow like any other person," the spokesman told the station. "He filed a request to receive an immigration permit, his documents were checked according to the law of return and he was indeed found eligible."

His arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport was not so typical: He landed in a private Gulfstream jet, according to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. The Interior Ministry confirmed only that he had entered the country, saying citizenship applications were a private matter.

Mr. Abramovich had already acquired an atypical residence in Israel. In 2015, he paid about \$28 million for a former hotel in the wealthy Neve Tzedek section Tel Aviv. He bought it from two brothers, one of them the husband of the actress Gal Gadot, star of "Wonder Woman."

In Britain, Mr. Abramovich had an investor visa -- valid for three years and four months and normally extended every two years -- which expired at the end of April.

But diplomatic relations between Britain and Russia plummeted after the Skripal poisonings, which Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said had probably been personally ordered by Mr. Putin. The poisonings prompted more than 20 countries to expel more than 100 Russian diplomats and intelligence officers. In return, Russia expelled an equal number of foreign diplomats.

Mr. Johnson suggested last week that the British government might take further action "to crack down on people close to Putin who may have illicit or ill-gotten wealth."

Mr. Abramovich is seen by many as a Putin friend. Mr. Putin, who has ravaged businesses of critical Russian tycoons, has not touched Mr. Abramovich's Russian businesses, which include oil and other interests.

But in Chelsea, he was a celebrity sports hero, hailed for his spending on top soccer players that has made the Chelsea team a soccer powerhouse.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

DETAILS

Subject:	Diplomatic &consular services; Oligarchy; Citizenship; Biological &chemical weapons; Soccer; Immigration
Location:	Russia Israel Union of Soviet Socialist Republics–USSR United Kingdom–UK England Tel Aviv Israel
People:	Gadot, Gal Johnson, Boris May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Skripal, Yulia
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LINKS

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Document 105 of 176

Russian Says Her Recovery From Poisoning Is Very 'Painful'

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Yulia Skripal, whose poisoning with a nerve agent in Britain this year set off a diplomatic clash between Moscow and the West, on Wednesday gave her first videotaped statement since the attack, describing her recovery as "slow and extremely painful" and saying that she hoped someday to return to Russia.

Ms. Skripal spoke to Reuters from an undisclosed location in London, and apart from a scar on her neck, apparently from a tracheotomy, appeared to have no visible aftereffects from the nerve agent, one of a strain of lethal poisons developed during the last years of the Soviet Union. She was shown walking along a leafy path, wearing a flowery dress, her hair newly styled.

Ms. Skripal's appearance seemed intended to quell speculation, promulgated by the Russian government, that Britain had fabricated the March 4 poisoning of Ms. Skripal and her father, Sergei V. Skripal, or was keeping them prisoner. Viktoria Skripal, a cousin living in Russia who has openly questioned British reports, has twice been denied visas to the United Kingdom.

Britain has blamed Moscow for the attack, an accusation that the Kremlin has denied, and the dispute precipitated a series of expulsions of diplomats between the two countries and beyond.

"My life has been turned upside down as I try to come to terms with the devastating changes thrust upon me both physically and emotionally," Yulia Skripal said, speaking in Russian. "I take one day at a time and want to help care for my dad until his full recovery. In the longer term I hope to return to my country."

Mr. Skripal, a former Russian spy, was released from a Russian prison and sent to Britain in a 2010 prisoner exchange. He has lived in Salisbury since then, occasionally traveling to brief foreign governments on Russia's military intelligence service. He and Yulia, 33, were found unconscious on a bench in Salisbury on March 4.

[Sergei Skripal never left the spy game. Is that why he was poisoned?]

Ms. Skripal expressed her deep shock upon waking up after a 20-day induced coma and learning that she had been poisoned with a nerve agent.

She also said that "at the moment" she did not desire any help from Russia's embassy in London, which has issued a drumbeat of statements protesting Russia's lack of access to the Skripals.

"Also, I want to reiterate what I said in my earlier statement, that no one speaks for me or for my father but ourselves," she said.

British officials have made little comment on the Skripal case for weeks, but Russian television continues to feature the case prominently, and broadcast a special on it to coincide with the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle on Saturday.

The special included an interview with Mr. Skripal's 89-year-old mother, who begged the British authorities to grant her access to her son.

Wiping away tears, she said that she had not seen him for 14 years and that she wanted "to clasp my son firmly to myself, to my heart."

"Please, allow me to make just one phone call with my son," she said in a statement broadcast on a Russian talk show, "Let Them Speak." "But why don't they allow him to phone? Why? What is the reason?"

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Biological &chemical weapons; Prisoners of war &missing in action; Diplomatic &consular services
Location:	Russia Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Meghan, Duchess of Sussex Skripal, Yulia Henry, Duke of Sussex
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/23/world/europe/uk-yulia-skripal-poisoning.html
Publication title:	New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y.
Pages:	A.4
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LINKS

[Find It @ GT](#)

British Lawmakers Say Dirty Russian Money Is Still Flowing to London

Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]22 May 2018: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- After the poisoning of a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, on English soil, the British government expelled 23 Russian diplomats. Its foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, compared the upcoming World Cup tournament in Russia to the Nazi Olympics in 1936. And Prime Minister Theresa May promised there would be no place for "serious criminals and corrupt elites."

Yet, despite the heated declarations, business continues as usual for wealthy Russians who hide and launder corrupt assets through London, a parliamentary committee said Monday in a scathing assessment that warned of "inaction or lethargy" over dirty money from Moscow.

The report, from the influential House of Commons foreign affairs committee, said there was no excuse for Britain "to turn a blind eye" while associates and allies of the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, "use money laundered through London to corrupt our friends, weaken our alliances and erode faith in our institutions."

Britain's financial and legal firms have been big beneficiaries of Russian capital flight, and London, less than four hours flying time from Moscow, is a popular destination for the country's oligarchs, some of whom have invested in luxury property, soccer teams and other assets.

With a deep chill in relations between Britain and Russia after the poisoning of Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, the British government has been under pressure to make life harder for allies of Mr. Putin by making sanctions and anti-money laundering rules more effective.

Yet the committee report suggests that Britain's financial center has so far found it impossible to resist the large sums of money that flow from Russia, even if there are troubling questions about the source of some of these assets.

"Despite the strong rhetoric, President Putin and his allies have been able to continue 'business as usual' by hiding and laundering their corrupt assets in London," said the report, which entitled one section of its findings "closing the 'laundromat.'"

Though the proportion of dirty money in London was estimated to be small, relative to the size of the financial sector, the committee said, "the damage that this money can do to U.K. foreign policy interests, by corrupting our friends, weakening our alliances and eroding trust in our institutions is, however, potentially enormous."

The document raised concerns about so-called "tier 1," or investor, visas, which are open to those able to invest \$2.7 million in the country, hinting that it plans to study the issue in more detail. Over the weekend it emerged that Roman Abramovich, the billionaire Russian owner of Chelsea soccer club, is experiencing delays in renewing his investor visa.

Since 2014, the British government has been empowered to refuse applicants for these visas if there are reasonable grounds to believe the money to be invested was obtained unlawfully or if there are concerns about the character of investors. After that change, applications dropped by 84 percent.

Now existing visa holders are being checked against the tighter requirements, the government says.

The committee also had harsh words for Linklaters, a prestigious British law firm, that refused to give evidence to the lawmakers over its work on deals involving Russian companies. In the report the committee asked whether such deals had left Linklaters "so entwined in the corruption of the Kremlin and its supporters that they are no longer able to meet the standards expected of a U.K.-regulated law firm."

In a statement Linklaters said it was "very surprised and concerned" at the criticism, adding that it has the "highest standards of business conduct, ensuring we comply with applicable laws and professional rules, including with respect to anti-bribery and corruption, anti-money laundering and sanctions."

There was also veiled criticism of Mr. Johnson, who was asked by lawmakers what his department could do to stop the flow of corrupt money. "He appeared to suggest, however, that there was no real role for government in the process," the report said.

While noting that Mr. Johnson and other ministers were right to assert that they cannot order law-enforcement agencies to investigate individuals without any evidence, the committee added that observing due process "cannot be an excuse for inaction or lethargy."

Lawmakers noted that Russia itself did not seem overly worried that Britain's aggressive rhetoric would be put into practice. On March 15, after the expulsion of Russian diplomats from Britain, Russia's embassy in London drew attention on Twitter to a bond sale by Gazprom, the Russian energy company, with the words "Business as usual?"

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Legislators; Corruption; Diplomatic & consular services; Money laundering; Committees; Law firms; Soccer
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK
People:	Johnson, Boris May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: OAO Gazprom; NAICS: 211111, 221210
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/21/world/europe/uk-russia-money-laundering-london.html
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Database:	Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

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Document 107 of 176

Russian Billionaire's Trouble With Visa Fuels Speculation of British Crackdown

Higgins, Andrew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]21 May 2018: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – When London's premier soccer team, Chelsea, took the field Saturday in an FA Cup final against its archrival, Manchester United, the team's billionaire Russian owner was mysteriously absent. Even after Chelsea won the game at Wembley Stadium in London 1-0, Roman Abramovich was nowhere to be seen.

A person close to the Russian oligarch said that his investor visa – initially valid for three years and four months and normally extended with ease after that every two years – expired at the end of April and that an application to renew it was taking far longer than usual. The British authorities have given no explanation, the person said.

This has fueled speculation that the British authorities may be pulling the welcome mat for wealthy, Kremlin-connected Russians like Mr. Abramovich who have made London their second home.

The British Home Office, the government department responsible for immigration issues, has not publicly commented on why it was taking so long. The security minister, Ben Wallace, said in an email on Sunday, "We do not routinely comment on individual cases."

Diplomatic relations between London and Moscow sank to their lowest level in decades after a nerve agent attack in March on a retired Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, in the English cathedral town of Salisbury. The two have been released from the hospital and are recovering.

Prime Minister Theresa May blamed Moscow for the brazen attack on British soil, expelled 23 Russian diplomats and rallied Western allies to condemn Russia. Moscow has steadfastly denied any involvement.

Mrs. May also vowed to "freeze Russian state assets wherever we have the evidence that they may be used to threaten the life or property of U.K. nationals or residents." She said, "There is no place for these people -- or their money -- in our country."

But Downing Street had appeared to have stepped back from its threats to take broad action against wealthy Russians' assets and against those oligarchs who benefit from their ties to President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia. To secure an extension, holders of so-called Tier-1 investor visas issued before 2014 normally need only show that they have \$1.35 million under their control in Britain and have invested three-quarters of that amount in British government bonds, shares or in loans to British companies.

With a net worth estimated at more than \$10 billion, hundreds of millions of which have been invested in Britain, Mr. Abramovich should have no trouble clearing that hurdle. He owns a huge house in London that is worth more than \$150 million and is equipped with a subterranean swimming pool.

In April, the United States Treasury announced that it was imposing sanctions on seven Russian oligarchs, including several with extensive ties to Britain like Oleg Deripaska, who in November listed his aluminum and energy conglomerate, EN+, on the London stock exchange. But Mr. Abramovich was not among those targeted by the United States.

If Mr. Abramovich's British visa delay turns out to be more than a bureaucratic hiccup, it could be a sign that the British government, too, is moving against Russian oligarchs and wants to curb what has been called "Londongrad," a large community of Russians, both fans and foes of Mr. Putin, who have sought shelter in the British capital for their money and families.

Perhaps anticipating trouble in Britain, Mr. Abramovich, according to Swiss news media reports in February, applied for residency in Switzerland but withdrew his application last year after a cool response from the federal authorities in Bern.

Mr. Abramovich, in contrast to some other Russian tycoons, has avoided dabbling publicly in British politics. But his ownership of Chelsea has made him a staple of celebrity and sports coverage in tabloid and serious British newspapers, and he is by far the best-known Russian oligarch in Britain. Chelsea fans hail him as a hero because his hefty investment in buying top-class players has turned the team into a soccer powerhouse.

He has also won good will by donating more than \$300 million to a British charity that provides holidays abroad for children with serious illnesses and by hosting lavish, A-list parties on his yacht, the world's second biggest, and at his mansion in the British Virgin Islands.

Russians who have fallen out with the Kremlin, and British analysts who take a dim view of Mr. Putin, view him as a Kremlin lackey. His businesses in Russia, which include oil and other interests, have escaped unscathed under Mr. Putin while those of other tycoons critical of the Kremlin, like Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Boris Berezovsky, have been ransacked by the state.

The delay in renewing his visa comes at a delicate time for Mr. Abramovich, who has been struggling in recent weeks to defend his name in Switzerland over \$46 million that the London-based European Bank for Reconstruction and Development insists is owed by the oligarch's now-defunct, Swiss-based oil trading company, Runicom.

The dispute, which dates to the end of the 1990s, resurfaced recently when a court in Freiburg, Switzerland, began hearing testimony, including from Mr. Abramovich, who first made his money as an oil trader and then gained control of former state oil fields with help from Boris Berezovsky, a onetime Kremlin ally and tycoon who, after falling out with Mr. Putin, fled to Britain and died there in 2013.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Roman Abramovich, left, a businessman with Kremlin ties, has experienced delays in renewing his investor visa to Britain. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BOTT/KEYSTONE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Investments; Diplomatic & consular services; Oligarchy
Location:	Switzerland Russia United States–US United Kingdom–UK British Virgin Islands
People:	Wallace, Ben May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Skripal, Yulia
Company / organization:	Name: Home Office-UK; NAICS: 925120
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/20/world/europe/uk-russia-roman-abramovich-visa.html
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Document 108 of 176

Former Russia Agent, Living in Retirement, Yet Still in Spy Game

Schwartz, Michael; Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]15 May 2018: A.5.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

PRAGUE – The aging Russian spy had been a free man for only a few years when he turned up in Prague for a secret meeting with his former adversaries. He looked ill, but acted jovial, drinking with his Czech hosts and joking that his doctor had prescribed whiskey for high blood pressure.

Then he got down to business, rattling off information about Russian spycraft and the activities of former colleagues that might give the Czechs an edge over their foes.

This was Sergei V. Skripal, the former Russian spy who along with his daughter was nearly poisoned to death with a rare and toxic nerve agent 10 weeks ago, touching off a furious confrontation between Russia and the West that has played out like a Cold War thriller and led to the expulsion of more than 150 Russian diplomats from more than two dozen countries.

The British authorities have accused Russia of trying to assassinate Mr. Skripal, a charge the Russians angrily deny. One of Britain's highest ranking spymasters, the MI5 chief, Andrew Parker, lambasted Russia on Monday in a speech to security chiefs in Berlin, accusing the Kremlin of "barefaced lying" and "criminal thuggery," and warning Russia that it risked becoming a "more isolated pariah."

Britain has suggested that the Kremlin staged its attack to send the message that it would never forget or forgive any traitor. To buttress their case, the British authorities have portrayed Mr. Skripal as a symbolic victim who was living quietly in semiretirement in Salisbury, England, after being swapped in a high-profile spy exchange in 2010. But in the years before the poisoning, Mr. Skripal, a veteran of Russia's military intelligence agency, the G.R.U., apparently traveled widely, offering briefings on Russia to foreign intelligence operatives, according to European officials, who spoke only on the condition of anonymity. The meetings were almost certainly approved and possibly facilitated by the British authorities as a way to both educate their allies and provide Mr. Skripal with income.

He met with Czech intelligence officials on several occasions and visited Estonia in 2016 to meet with local spies. Such visits were neither illegal nor unusual for defectors. But they meant that Mr. Skripal was meeting with intelligence officers working to thwart Russian operations in Europe, opening the possibility that his poisoning was a narrower act of retribution.

There is no way to know for certain whether Mr. Skripal's travels made him a target, or even if the Russian government knew about them. The trips were kept secret, known only to a select few intelligence agents. Not a

single official from the spy services in the Czech Republic or Estonia would discuss the details publicly. Asked whether Mr. Skripal had met in recent years with intelligence agents in Spain, where he had once worked as a double agent, a spokesman for the country's foreign intelligence service, CNI, said the question "is a red line we cannot cross."

Mr. Skripal arrived in Prague in 2012 shortly after his wife, Lyudmila, succumbed to uterine cancer. He was grieving, but nevertheless in good spirits when he met with officers from at least one of the Czech Republic's three intelligence services, according to a Czech official with knowledge of the meetings. Some details of the visit were first reported over the weekend by the Czech weekly *Respekt*, and were confirmed independently by The New York Times.

Foreign Minister Martin Stropnický, asked about the reports in an interview on Monday, said the visit was part of "the normal cooperation of services between the Czech Republic and Great Britain." He added that he believed Mr. Skripal's visit had been useful.

"Great Britain is known as a country with high quality information services," he said in an interview with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. "I would never expect that the British would send some kind of problematic man. There was a reason for it, probably."

During the brief visit, Mr. Skripal drank, he joked, and he provided Czech intelligence with information about G.R.U. officers operating in Europe. His information was dated; he retired from the G.R.U. in 1999. Even so, the Czech officers found his knowledge to be valuable. Many of the G.R.U. agents he worked with in the 1990s were still active, the official said. Though Mr. Skripal's health was poor, the official said, his mind was clear.

Mr. Skripal was so helpful that Czech intelligence officers continued to meet with him, the official said, making several trips to Britain in subsequent years, though the exact dates are unclear.

Officials were more circumspect about Mr. Skripal's visit to Estonia, with one describing it as "very sensitive information." A senior European official with knowledge of the trip confirmed that the former Russian agent met secretly with a select group of intelligence officers in June 2016, though it is not clear what they discussed. The British intelligence services helped facilitate the meeting, the official said.

A spokesman for the British Home Office also declined to comment.

Mr. Skripal and his daughter Yulia were found semiconscious on a park bench in the British town of Salisbury on March 4. Officials later determined that they had been poisoned with novichok, a deadly nerve agent developed in the Soviet Union. The British government has accused Russia of manufacturing and stockpiling the agent, as well as training "special units" to employ it against Russia's enemies.

Russia has aggressively denied any involvement and has lampooned the British investigation. But Mr. Skripal would certainly still have enemies in Russia, not least of all President Vladimir V. Putin, who has said he is incapable of forgiving betrayal. In 2006, a Russian military court convicted Mr. Skripal of selling out fellow Russian spies in exchange for payments from British agents. He was serving a 13-year sentence when he was unexpectedly sent to Britain in the 2010 spy swap.

Russia's relations with Estonia and the Czech Republic, two former Communist Bloc countries, are freighted with the legacy of the Cold War. Estonia in particular moved aggressively to assert its independence after breaking with the Soviet Union in 1991, often provoking Russian ire. Ferreting out Russian spies is a source of national pride.

"Estonia has the best counterintelligence in Europe," said Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who was Estonia's president for a decade and left office in 2016. "We've caught as many spies as Germany."

Nothing about Mr. Skripal's travels appears all that uncommon. John Sipher, who retired from the Central Intelligence Agency in 2014 and once ran covert operations against the Russians, said the United States routinely deployed Russian defectors to lecture the intelligence services of its allies, though their meetings with other agencies would be kept secret to avoid angering Moscow.

"There is a bit of a game where, O.K., the guy spied for us, we got what we wanted, and now that we're out, we're not going to rub your nose in it," he said.

Sharing knowledge and experience is often the only way a former spy can make a living, experts said. Mr. Ilves, the

former Estonian president, called it the "spook version of a lecture tour."

For former double agents, retirement can be dull and anticlimactic. The British government provides a stipend, but in the past defectors have protested that it is too small. In the late 1990s, a former spy named Victor Makarov filed a complaint against the British intelligence services over his miserable living conditions and eventually ended up camping outside Prime Minister Tony Blair's residence in protest.

Others have resorted to creative and illegal means to augment their pensions. Oleg Gordievsky, a senior K.G.B. officer whose defection in 1985 was a serious blow to the Soviet government, hosted a game show for a time. Mikhail Butkov, another K.G.B. defector, was imprisoned for three years for creating a fake business school and defrauding would-be students out of 1.5 million pounds.

"It's psychological -- they've been in the limelight, and they're not important anymore," said Stephen Dorril, the author of numerous books about Britain's intelligence services.

Mr. Skripal appeared to be enjoying a comfortable, though modest, retirement. In Salisbury, the cozy cathedral town where he lived, the former Russian intelligence officer belonged to the Railway Social Club, drove a dark red BMW and owned a tidy red-brick home on Christie Miller Road.

Still, it was clear that he remained under Russian scrutiny. In 2013, the G.R.U. hacked into his daughter's email accounts, according to the British government. And in 2014, his case was profiled in a Russian documentary series about the lives of Russian traitors called "The Price of Military Secrets" that was financed by the Moscow government.

The Kremlin would probably not consider sharing outdated information with foreign intelligence services to be much of a threat, said Mr. Sipher, the retired C.I.A. officer. But it would be a different matter if Mr. Skripal was being used for other purposes, like recruiting new Russian agents.

"If he was pitching other Russians, that would put him higher on the list," Mr. Sipher said. "Or if he got too close to something that was really sensitive to the Russians."

Credit: MICHAEL SCHWIRTZ and ELLEN BARRY; Michael Schwirtz reported from Prague, and Ellen Barry from London and Salisbury, England. Hana de Goeij, Holger Roonemaa and Jose Bautista contributed reporting.

Photograph

Sergei V. Skripal in court in 2006. A former Russian double agent, he had been meeting secretly with European intelligence officers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PRESS OFFICE OF MOSCOW DISTRICT MILITARY COURT, VIA GETTY IMAGES); Army experts removing a bench where Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter were found in Salisbury, England, in March. They had been poisoned by a rare nerve agent developed by the Russians. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WILL OLIVER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

Subject:	Cold War; Poisoning; Defections; Political asylum; Espionage; Retirement; Intelligence services
Location:	Czech Republic Estonia Russia United Kingdom–UK England Europe
People:	Skripal, Sergei V
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/14/world/europe/sergei-skripal-spying-russia-poisoning.html
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LINKS

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Document 109 of 176

Watchdog Corrects Estimate Of Poison Used in U.K. Attack

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]05 May 2018: A.5.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- A chemical weapons watchdog amended statements on Friday that its leader had given to The New York Times, in which he estimated that 50 to 100 grams of liquid nerve agent had been used in the March 4 attack on the former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in Salisbury, England. The Times reported the incorrect information in an article published online on Thursday.

A statement issued by the group, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, said the amount should be measured in milligrams rather than grams.

The group went on to say that it would not be able to estimate how much of the nerve agent was used in Salisbury. In the interview, Ahmet Uzumcu, the director general of the O.P.C.W., described new measures to monitor production of the nerve agent. Mr. Uzumcu said that countries that are signatories to the Chemical Weapons Convention -- like Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom -- would be required to declare production or stockpiling of the agent, one of a strain known as novichok. However, he said that countries producing the chemical for research purposes would produce about one-10th the amount used in the attack.

The O.P.C.W., a global body created to oversee the elimination of stockpiles after the end of the Cold War, may add the chemical to the list of weapons it monitors.

Mr. Skripal, a Russian former double agent, and his daughter collapsed on a bench in Salisbury, a city in southern England, several hours after they were exposed to novichok, a nerve agent that Soviet scientists developed for battlefield use against Western troops.

Investigators have said that the substance was applied to the door of Mr. Skripal's home, and that it most likely seeped through their skin over the course of several hours, rendering them unconscious after they left a restaurant in central Salisbury.

Author/Affiliation

Follow Ellen Barry on Twitter: @EllenBarryNYT .

Photograph

Soldiers last month near the bench where Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were found critically ill in Salisbury, England. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT CARDY/GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Biological &chemical weapons
Location:	England Russia New York United States--US United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Uzumcu, Ahmet
Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/04/world/europe/opcw-skripal-attack.html
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Database:	Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

LINKS

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Document 110 of 176

Labour Party Fails to Dent Prime Minister's Leadership in Local Elections in Britain

Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]05 May 2018: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Despite mounting troubles over Britain's withdrawal from the European Union and a recent cabinet resignation, Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party emerged relatively unscathed from local elections, according to results released on Friday that showed that its opponents had failed to make the breakthrough many

expected.

Mrs. May has been struggling to deal with one crisis after another, many of them related to the negotiations over the withdrawal, but mixed results from across the country meant the opposition Labour Party failed to achieve the big, and symbolic, gains it was hoping for.

Labour was victorious in some key areas, but it fell short in its efforts to take control of two Conservative strongholds in London – Westminster and Wandsworth – that had been thought to be vulnerable, as well as the capital's northern borough of Barnet, a much easier target.

On Friday, Mrs. May visited Wandsworth, where she exulted in the Conservatives' victory there. "They threw everything at it, but they failed," she said.

Labour outperformed expectations in last year's general election under its left-wing leader, Jeremy Corbyn, but the results from the elections on Thursday were unspectacular, and one lawmaker, Chuka Umunna, called for an inquiry into the party's failure to exploit the government's recent problems.

Labour's leader rejected claims that the moment of "peak Corbyn" had passed, however. "No, no, there is much more to come and it's going to get even better," Mr. Corbyn told Sky News.

The results will be a relief for Mrs. May, whose leadership has been in question since she called an unnecessary general election last June in which she lost her parliamentary majority. That has forced her to rely on an uneasy alliance with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party to get legislation through Parliament.

Mrs. May has survived the various threats to her leadership, and her position seemed to have stabilized thanks to her handling of the aftermath of the poisoning of the former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia. But, during the past week, she was hit with two new problems: the resignation of the home secretary, Amber Rudd, after a crisis over handling of immigration policy, and an internal impasse in a cabinet committee over the government's plans for European Union withdrawal, commonly known as Brexit.

Although Labour took the southern English city of Plymouth, the Conservatives picked up seats by exploiting a collapse in support for the right-wing, anti-immigration U.K. Independence Party, which had been influential in the campaign to quit the European Union.

In an interview with the BBC, its general secretary, Paul Oakley, said that his party was dormant, not finished – comparing it to the Black Death, the devastating epidemic of bubonic plague that struck in the mid-1300s.

Labour had allowed expectations for election gains to grow high, particularly in London, where some senior figures talked up prospects of a victory in Wandsworth. A dispute over the handling of anti-Semitism in the party may have also cost support for Labour and Mr. Corbyn, particularly in Barnet, where there is a significant Jewish population. Nevertheless, the voting took place at a difficult time for a divided government facing many problems. In recent weeks, Mrs. May's predicament has been complicated by the House of Lords, the unelected chamber of Parliament, which has inflicted 10 defeats on her Brexit legislation, adding amendments that she will try to overturn in the House of Commons, the main chamber.

Mrs. May's problems over a withdrawal are coming to a head over her promise to leave Europe's customs union, which guarantees tariff-free trade with Continental Europe.

This issue has come to symbolize a deep division: Pro-Europeans want to stick close to the bloc, Britain's biggest trade partner, in order to protect the economy, while hard-line Brexit supporters want to break free and to negotiate other trade deals with non-European nations.

Some supporters of Brexit have hinted they would challenge Mrs. May's leadership if she tried to soften the economic consequences of a withdrawal by sticking close to the bloc's economic rules and forming a close customs arrangement. There is speculation that some Brexit cabinet cheerleaders -- Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and the international trade secretary, Liam Fox -- might quit.

But if she pleases the hard-line Brexit faction, Mrs. May will struggle to get approval for her plan from Parliament. "It is as remarkable as it is depressing that, with less than a year to go until Britain formally leaves, the Brexit inner cabinet is still debating what kind of customs arrangements the U.K. should be seeking," wrote James Forsyth, political editor of the right-wing, Brexit-supporting magazine The Spectator.

Indirectly, at least, Brexit appeared to have played a role in shaping the local election results. Mrs. May's party generally polled well in parts of England that voted to leave the European Union, while Labour performed well in areas that wanted to remain, as did the smaller, more pro-European, Liberal Democrats, who made gains.

Author/Affiliation

Follow Stephen Castle on Twitter: @_StephenCastle.

DETAILS

Subject:	Resignations; Conservatism; Local elections; EU membership; Leadership; Prime ministers; Immigration
Location:	United Kingdom--UK England Northern Ireland Europe
People:	Johnson, Boris May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Rudd, Amber
Company / organization:	Name: Sky News; NAICS: 515120; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120
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LINKS

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Document 111 of 176

Large Amount of Poison Used at Home of Ex-Spy

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]04 May 2018:
A.5.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- About 50 to 100 grams of liquid nerve agent was used in the March 4 attack on the former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, according to the director general of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

That quantity -- a range from slightly less than a quarter-cup to a half-cup of liquid -- is significantly larger than the amount that would be created in a laboratory for research purposes, meaning that it was almost certainly created for use as a weapon, the director general, Ahmet Uzumcu, said in an interview. He added that he did not know the precise amount.

He said he had taken steps to add the nerve agent, one of a series of chemicals created under the code name Novichok, to the list of chemical weapons monitored by the O.P.C.W., a global body created to oversee the elimination of stockpiles after the end of the Cold War.

After that, countries that are signatories to the Chemical Weapons Convention -- like Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom -- will be required to declare production or stockpiling of Novichok beyond the 5 to 10 grams needed for research purposes, or to develop an antidote, he said.

It would be the first chemical added to the list since 1993, when the treaty was signed.

Russia has denied stockpiling the nerve agent, but British officials say they have evidence that it has.

Mr. Skripal, a former Russian double agent, and his daughter collapsed on a bench in Salisbury, a city in southern England, several hours after they were exposed to Novichok, a nerve agent that Soviet scientists developed for battlefield use against Western troops.

Investigators have said that the substance was applied to the door of Mr. Skripal's home, and that it likely seeped through their skin over the course of several hours, rendering them unconscious after they left a restaurant in central Salisbury.

Russian officials, who deny any involvement in the attack, have suggested that Western laboratories may have

synthesized the poison used. Mr. Uzumcu said that, if Western laboratories had produced Novichok for research purposes, or to develop an antidote, they would have created a smaller quantity than what was used in the March 4 attack.

"For research activities or protection you would need, for instance, five to 10 grams or so, but even in Salisbury it looks like they may have used more than that, without knowing the exact quantity, I am told it may be 50, 100 grams or so, which goes beyond research activities for protection," he said.

He said the Novichok used in Salisbury was in liquid form, and that O.P.C.W. experts had collected samples from the door handle of the Skripal home, the park where the two collapsed and "a few other places where the Skripals were present."

"One thing, perhaps, which is important to note is that the nerve agent seems to be very persistent," he said. "It's not affected by weather conditions. That explains, actually, that they were able to identify it after a considerable time lapse. We understand it was also of high purity."

He said the agent could be applied with an aerosol spray or, "if you take the necessary measures, you could use it as a liquid."

Health officials have begun a meticulous decontamination process, warning citizens of Salisbury that there might still be toxic "hot spots" in some areas, and that a thorough cleanup may take months.

Though citizens have been reassured that there is little threat to their health, the decontamination promises to be a vast undertaking, requiring backup from 190 army and air force specialists as well as input from the Defense Science and Technology Laboratory, the Home Office and the Ministry of Defense, the authorities said.

"The chemical does not degrade quickly," Ian Boyd, the chief scientific adviser at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, told a town meeting. "You can assume it is not much different now from the day it was distributed."

The Novichok strain, developed in the Soviet Union with the goal of evading NATO chemical weapons detection, was not included in the list of banned chemicals compiled in 1987, so Russia was under no obligation to regularly report on its stockpiles or their destruction.

That may change in the coming months, said Mr. Uzumcu, who said he has already solicited a report from the group's scientific advisory board. He said the organization's executive council will make a decision about adding Novichok to the schedule at one of its next meetings, in July or October.

"This nerve agent should clearly be part of our scheduled chemicals, and it should be included in the database which is being used for our laboratories," he said.

DETAILS

Subject:	Laboratories; Biological &chemical weapons
Location:	England Russia United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Uzumcu, Ahmet
Company / organization:	Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO; NAICS: 928120
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Document 112 of 176

As Local Elections Loom, U.K.'s Labour Party Courts Conservative Bastions

Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]02 May 2018: A.10.

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FULL TEXT

LONDON -- From her doorstep in the exclusive Knightsbridge district of London, Christine Cotter dismissed the idea of voting for Britain's opposition Labour Party in elections on Thursday, describing its left-wing leader, Jeremy Corbyn, as a "dreamer" whose policies would bankrupt the country.

But in the rare spring sunshine, Ms. Cotter added that, even in her area of multimillion-dollar properties, not everyone shared her views about Labour.

"There is fear that they could win in Westminster," said Ms. Cotter, referring to her affluent borough, which will be among those to hold local council elections on Thursday. She noted Mr. Corbyn's following among younger voters: "He's selling a dream," said Ms. Cotter, 71, a semiretired psychotherapist.

In theory, the voting on Thursday is about local, not national, issues, but with Britain's electorate in a volatile mood, the results will be watched closely. Were the Conservative Party of Prime Minister Theresa May to lose control of bastions like Westminster or the borough of Wandsworth, it could embolden those opposed to leaving the European Union and renew speculation about a challenge to Mrs. May, whose leadership has been questioned since she lost her parliamentary majority in June.

Since its creation in 1965, the Westminster municipality has served some of London's most moneyed neighborhoods, never once falling into the hands of the Labour Party.

But Mrs. May's government is mired in tortuous negotiations on Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, the process known as Brexit, and it was hit on Sunday by the resignation of the home secretary, Amber Rudd. That fragility has put even the most redoubtable of the party's strongholds under siege in municipal elections.

"Westminster and Wandsworth have an iconic resonance for Conservative activists which is well beyond their importance," said John Curtice, a professor of politics at the University of Strathclyde in Scotland. "If both of these were to be lost, there probably would be a bit of a wobble."

Mrs. May had steadied matters through what many saw as her sound handling of the reaction to the poisoning of the Russian former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, but her government is now embroiled in a scandal over the treatment of immigrants from the Caribbean who have lived in Britain for decades. Then there are the Brexit negotiations, which have proved messy and painful, forcing Mrs. May into a series of awkward concessions, with more likely to come. Under Britain's system, local elections take place only in some parts of the country every year -- this time only in England, and mostly in urban areas.

Mrs. May's Conservatives are braced for losses in London, which voted in the 2016 referendum to remain in the European Union, and in other metropolitan centers where voters are generally more at ease with the impact of globalization. European citizens living in Britain can vote in these elections, unlike in the Brexit referendum.

But there are also opportunities for the Conservatives, who hope to make gains in smaller urban centers that largely supported the exit from the European Union that Mrs. May promises to deliver.

"Brexit has certainly disrupted our politics," Mr. Curtice said, noting that there was "substantial divergence between Remain and Leave voting areas in England."

By contrast, if there is a risk for Labour in London, it is that expectations are so high that a moderately good result would be seen as a disappointment.

In recent memory, the party has not even bothered to campaign in affluent districts like Knightsbridge, but now in London there are "no no-go areas for Labour," according to Steven Saxby, 47, the party's parliamentary candidate for the area at the next general election.

Mr. Saxby is a clergyman in east London who signs his emails with the word "peace" and who says he is a committed supporter of Mr. Corbyn. He is also a member of Momentum, an influential group formed to support Mr. Corbyn's leadership. Victory in Westminster "would be historic" and "the polls are telling us we might do it," said Mr. Saxby, who comes across as an energetic and approachable campaigner.

While Westminster is home to the superrich, it also contains areas of deprivation. "We have some of the wealthiest

people in the world, and we have some people living in quite desperate poverty," Mr. Saxby said, listing housing, cuts to public services and poor air quality as central issues.

Without describing it as a Christian duty to vote Labour, he hints that it might be. "There are people who manage to reconcile harsh inequality in this country, hostile treatment to migrants and being members of the Conservative Party with their faith," noted Mr. Saxby, wryly, as he waited at a street corner for fellow activists.

When they arrived, they make up a motley group, including students, trade union activists and a former British ambassador to Brazil, Peter Heap, who is running in the municipal elections.

For Labour, campaigning in Westminster is not easy; a gold-color Bentley was parked outside one mansion block, access to which was prevented by the doorman.

Leaflets were distributed, but few people were home in midafternoon, and a high number of properties were unoccupied (many in this area are owned as investments, often by foreign buyers). But Mr. Saxby said that he would be back, adding, "We believe it's possible, in every place, to find Labour voters."

Nickie Aiken, the current leader of the Westminster Council and a Conservative, says she is confident of keeping control of a municipality that prides itself on setting a low council tax, the levy paid every year by those who own or rent property. (Westminster has even collected voluntary contributions from some richer residents who feel they can pay more.)

She points out that Labour also has problems in London, including persistent claims of anti-Semitism within its ranks.

"Many of those that vote Labour in national elections tend to vote for us in the local ones, and I am hearing from a lot of traditional Labour voters that they are very concerned about Corbyn, and particularly anti-Semitism," Ms. Aiken said.

Though she accepts that things have gone badly for the Conservatives recently, Ms. Aiken says, "there is light at the end of the Brexit tunnel."

"Obviously it comes up," she said, citing the withdrawal process, "but most voters appreciate that this is about bins, not Brexit," she added, referring to the garbage cans that local councils are responsible for handling.

Turnout on Thursday is likely to be low, and it will probably be a struggle to motivate many of those whose votes last year helped Mr. Corbyn's Labour Party outperform expectations in the general election.

Labour's policy on Brexit is fuzzy, which may help it pick up working-class votes in some parts of the country from the U.K Independence Party, which was once a force but is now in a state of near collapse.

But the pro-European centrist party, the Liberal Democrats, who actively oppose Brexit (unlike Labour, which wants to soften its edges), are hoping to pick up votes among Remainers.

In Pimlico, another part of the Westminster area, Clarisa Butler, 59, said she had voted for a previous Labour leader, Tony Blair, but did not favor Mr. Corbyn, who, for her, "is not a national leader."

She said that she has yet to decide how to vote but that she will be influenced mainly by local issues. She would be surprised, she said, to see this most Conservative of strongholds fall to Labour.

"If they were to get this," she said, "that would mean that practically the whole country would be voting Labour."

AuthorAffiliation

Follow Stephen Castle on Twitter: @_StephenCastle .

Photograph

From left: Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, center, posing with supporters in South London; Steven Saxby, a clergyman running for Parliament in the borough of Westchester; Prime Minister Theresa May. A poor showing for Mrs. May's Conservative party in council votes on Thursday could further weaken her influence. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS; STEPHEN CASTLE/THE NEW YORK TIMES; OLI SCARFF)

DETAILS

Subject:	Conservatism; Local elections; Opposition parties; Activists; Councils; Referendums; Political leadership; Anti-Semitism; Political parties; Election results; Activism; Labor unions; EU membership; Prime ministers; Voter behavior
Location:	United Kingdom--UK
People:	Corbyn, Jeremy May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Cotter, Christine Blair, Tony Rudd, Amber
Company / organization:	Name: Conservative Party-UK; NAICS: 813940; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120; Name: Labour Party-UK; NAICS: 813940
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LINKS

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Document 113 of 176

British Home Secretary Quits Over Deportation Targets

Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]30 Apr 2018: A.7.

[!\[\]\(3e1a16cada0ffdffd6c0ee8c4548edfa_img.jpg\) ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Britain's home secretary, Amber Rudd, resigned on Sunday over her handling of an immigration crisis that has damaged the government of Prime Minister Theresa May -- herself a leading architect of tough migration policies.

Ms. Rudd announced her resignation after admitting that she had "inadvertently misled" lawmakers about deportation targets for illegal immigrants, the existence of which she had previously denied.

She had been under pressure for days in a mounting scandal over the treatment of some people from former British colonies who came to help rebuild postwar Britain but were in recent years declared illegal immigrants after living in the country for decades.

Mostly from the Caribbean, some members of this "Windrush generation" -- a reference to a ship that brought migrants to Britain -- have been threatened with deportation, lost their jobs and been refused access to medical treatment.

Ms. Rudd's resignation -- the fourth from the cabinet in six months -- is a significant setback for Mrs. May and threatens to leave the prime minister more exposed to criticism over immigration policy, which she oversaw as home secretary from 2010 to 2016.

It could also upset the balance within Mrs. May's top team, which has been constructed to include enthusiasts for Britain's departure from the European Union, or Brexit, and those, like Ms. Rudd, who opposed withdrawal during a referendum in 2016.

For days Ms. Rudd had resisted pressure to quit, but the onslaught intensified last week after she told a parliamentary committee that there were no targets for deporting illegal immigrants.

That statement proved to be incorrect and, though Ms. Rudd later insisted that she did not know about the targets, this defense crumbled, too. On Friday she admitted in a Twitter post that she had been copied on an email that mentioned migrant deportation targets, but she insisted that she had not read it.

Another document leaked on Sunday appeared to show that she had discussed deportation targets in a letter sent to Mrs. May.

Having misled lawmakers, Ms. Rudd found her position increasingly untenable and ultimately opted to quit rather than suffer another ordeal on Monday, when she was scheduled to appear again before Parliament.

In her resignation letter, Ms. Rudd acknowledged that she had "inadvertently misled" lawmakers over deportation targets.

"I should have been aware of this and I take full responsibility for the fact that I was not," she wrote.

Mrs. May said that Ms. Rudd had answered questions from the parliamentary committee "in good faith" and that

she was "very sorry" to see her leave.

Some had predicted that Ms. Rudd would survive the scandal because she was acting as a political shield for Mrs. May, the previous home secretary. During her lengthy tenure in the job, Mrs. May tried, and failed, to bring net migration into the country below 100,000 people a year.

Though members of the Windrush generation had a right to be in the country, many struggled to prove it, becoming ensnared in a system that sought to make life hard for those in Britain illegally.

The scandal has also raised concerns about whether European Union citizens, currently living in Britain, might face similar bureaucratic problems after Brexit.

Unless the crisis can be calmed quickly, Ms. Rudd's departure leaves Mrs. May more exposed to criticism from the opposition Labour Party and others.

"After this scandal and its botched cover-up, Amber Rudd's resignation was inevitable. It should have come sooner," Diane Abbott, the shadow home secretary for Labour, said in a prepared statement.

"The architect of this crisis, Theresa May, must now step forward to give an immediate, full and honest account of how this inexcusable situation happened on her watch," Ms. Abbott added.

Ed Davey, who speaks for the centrist Liberal Democrats on home affairs, said that it was "clear that Amber Rudd has ended up, at least partly, being the fall guy to protect the prime minister."

"Theresa May must face questions now given these dreadful failures largely took place under her watch as home secretary," Mr. Davey added in a statement.

Ms. Rudd's departure also removes from the cabinet one of its strongest pro-European voices. But she will remain a lawmaker and might strengthen the number of Conservative Party backbench lawmakers prepared to defy the government if it pursues a "hard" Brexit, or clean break with the bloc.

In recent weeks Mrs. May's grip on power had been strengthened by her steady handling of the poisoning for the former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in Salisbury.

Since Mrs. May lost her parliamentary majority in elections last June, her leadership has often been under question, and she has already suffered three prior cabinet resignations.

In December, Damian Green, who was effectively Mrs. May's deputy, quit after an investigation found that he misled the public about pornography found on his parliamentary computer.

Priti Patel, the international development secretary, also resigned from the cabinet last year after breaching ministerial rules by holding a dozen unauthorized meetings with Israeli officials during a summer vacation, and a scandal over sexual harassment in Parliament prompted the departure of Mrs. May's defense secretary, Michael Fallon.

DETAILS

Subject:	Resignations; Deportation; Legislators; Parliamentary committees; EU membership; Aliens; Prime ministers; Immigration
Location:	United Kingdom--UK
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Document 114 of 176

Who Will Win the New Great Game?

Bittner, Jochen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]27 Apr 2018: A.27.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

HAMBURG, Germany -- To claim we are living through a new Cold War is both an understatement and a category mistake. The 20th-century face-off between the Communist East and the Capitalist West was, ideology aside, about two superpowers trying to contain each other. The global conflict of today is far less static.

What we are witnessing instead is a new Great Game, a collision of great powers that are trying to roll back one another's spheres of influence. Unlike the Great Game of the 19th century between the British and the Russian Empire that culminated in the fight for dominance over Afghanistan, today's Great Game is global, more complex and much more dangerous.

Call it the Game of Threes. It involves three prime players, Russia, China and the West, which are competing in three ways: geographically, intellectually and economically. And there are three places where the different claims to power clash: Syria, Ukraine and the Pacific. Many of the defining conflicts of our time can be defined through some combination of those three sets.

To differing degrees, governments and citizens from Cairo to Copenhagen have grown skeptical about whether liberal democracy and postwar internationalism have been, or will be, the right choice for them. To all those doubters, China and Russia stand ready as alternative models and protective powers, offering new arrangements for bilateral and multilateral alignments. You don't want to follow international law, European integration or anti-corruption schemes? Follow us!

What will prove more attractive to the Egyptian government, for instance, in the likely case of another mass uprising in the country: an alignment with Europe, which is annoyingly nervous about the respect for human rights, or an alignment with Russia, which has proved that it will look the other way in the face of domestic oppression -- even if an ally uses chemical weapons against its own people?

While Russia offers military ruthlessness, China offers a mercantile variant. Unlike the West, China doesn't let human rights and the rule of law get in the way of investments. In late 2017, Beijing increased its investment in Ukraine, announcing it as an important building block in its new Silk Road to Europe. The government in corruption-ridden Kiev has already gladly declared 2019 to be "the Year of China" in Ukraine.

Or consider the Balkans. You could, as prime minister of a Balkan state, wait endlessly for the European Union to let you enter the club by adhering to strict compliance standards and implement its 80,000 pages of required laws. Or you could turn to Chinese investors, who won't ask for any such fuss. In 2016, the president of China, Xi Jinping, spent three days on a state visit in Serbia. The year before, Germany's chancellor, Angela Merkel, only stopped there for a few hours.

State-controlled Chinese companies have since bought Serbia's biggest steel mill, the Tirana International Airport in Albania and a major coal power plant in Romania, and leased part of the harbor of Piraeus in Greece, to name but a few of its strategic acquisitions in Europe.

While China does not seem as driven by aggressive anti-Western sentiments as Russia does, Beijing and Moscow share the strategic goal: to reduce Western influence worldwide. China delivers the money to bolster new alliances, while Russia delivers the political poison to weaken the old ones. It's a perfect match.

Just as during the 19th-century Great Game, the Kremlin has the advantage of not needing to worry about public criticism at home as it pushes an illiberal agenda abroad. On the contrary: While applying military force abroad tends to destabilize Western governments, it seems only to bolster the regime of Russia's president, Vladimir Putin.

If anything, the Russian population glories in the atrocities of its former leaders as well as those of the current one. According to a 2017 poll by the Levada Center, 38 percent of Russians regard the mass murderer Joseph Stalin as the "most outstanding person" in world history, followed by Mr. Putin at 34 percent.

Here's where the intellectual dimension of the Great Game comes in: Societal self-criticism, alien to a large part of Russian society, is a defining feature of many Western countries. Publicly expressed and debated tensions between the state and the people, and among various factions of the public, are what make a liberal society tick. But the strength of this skepticism can prove to be a weakness if exploited by a force that seeks the destruction of

the very concept of truth. As an intellectual force, Russia is to Europe what Mephisto is to Faust: "I am the Spirit that denies!" To paraphrase Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who wrote the most famous version of their story: For all the West has built, should rightly to destruction run.

This is why the Russian disinformation and its grotesque twisting of facts is so effective. Mr. Putin knows that Europeans deeply distrust their governments on questions of war and peace, especially after several of them relied on twisted intelligence to justify the Iraq war. The poison used on the former Russian agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter in England, and the chemical weapons dropped with impunity on the children of Syria kill people as well as trust in elected representatives in London, Paris and Berlin.

There is no doubt that the international community has violated its own standards at times, conducting legally questionable or outright illegal actions in Kosovo, Iraq and Syria. Russia and China are doing the opposite: using their power as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to block justice and to undermine the West.

Who will win in the long run? It is too soon to know whether the West is willing to stand up collectively to the challenge. The good news, though, is that Russia and China may yet lose at the new Great Game. It's expensive to play, and global power grabs untethered to a broader vision of global order tend to falter, as resources and lives expended abroad fail to bring peace and progress at home.

The German poet Theodor Fontane famously described the catastrophe that ended the British Army's attempt to secure hegemony against Russia in the Hindu Kush in 1842: "With 13,000 the trek began -- one came home from Afghanistan." In one way or another, Russia and China may soon reap similar results.

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Jochen Bittner is a political editor for the weekly newspaper Die Zeit and a contributing opinion writer.

DRAWING (DRAWING BY EDMON DE HARO)

DETAILS

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Is Russia Sponsoring Terrorism?

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Despite the imposition of unprecedented sanctions against Russia by the Trump administration and Congress over the past year, President Vladimir Putin only seems more intent on causing grievous harm to international peace and stability.

Alongside increased financial sanctions against Mr. Putin and his cronies, there is another arrow in the American

quiver that would add diplomatic pressure against Russia: The State Department should consider adding the country to its list of state sponsors of terrorism, alongside its close allies Iran and Syria.

The moral case for such a designation is sound. Russia has invaded its neighbors Georgia and Ukraine, it supports the murderous regime of Bashar al-Assad and our enemies in Afghanistan, and it is engaged in active information warfare against Western democracies, including meddling in the 2016 United States elections.

This week, the Organization for Prevention of Chemical Weapons announced that the Kremlin had crossed yet another previously unimaginable line, when it confirmed findings by the British government that a Russian military-grade nerve agent, which British authorities identified as Novichok, was used to poison a former Russian intelligence agent, Sergei Skripal, and his daughter in the English city of Salisbury. The attack also resulted in the hospitalization of British law enforcement officials who responded to the scene, as well as bystanders.

Russia has denied the charges, but the evidence is overwhelming. So is the attack's significance: Russia is now officially responsible for a chemical weapons attack against a NATO member state on its own soil – a brazen violation of sovereignty of our closest ally. It requires a serious American response.

This startling confirmation comes on the heels of horrendous chemical weapons attacks by Mr. Assad against his own people in Syria. He is in power only because the Kremlin provides him with extensive diplomatic, military and economic support. The use of chemical weapons against civilians is illegal under international law, particularly the Chemical Weapons Convention. In fact, Syria's illicit chemical program is part of the reason the United States continues to designate Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism.

There is also evidence that Russia is playing both sides of the conflict in Syria – defending the murderous Assad regime, but also fueling the radical insurgency against it. Reporting by Ukrainian news outlets has shown that Russia has provided material support to the Islamic State, including assistance in recruitment. According to these reports, the Islamic State now counts thousands of Russian-speaking jihadis among its forces.

We also know that Russia is ramping up its support for anti-American insurgents in Afghanistan. On Feb. 9, 2017, Gen. John Nicholson, the American commander in Afghanistan, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Russia has "begun to publicly legitimize the Taliban" as a means "to undermine the United States and NATO."

Moreover, Russia's illegal and immoral war against Ukraine shows no signs of ending. Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and subsequent support for Russian-controlled proxies in the Donbas region, the international community has failed to adequately respond to continued Russian aggression – and there has been a devastating price to pay. More than 10,000 Ukrainians have died in the war and more than 1.7 million have been displaced. On July 17, 2014, Russian proxies shot down a civilian airliner, killing all 298 onboard – including an American.

This is why I plan to introduce legislation that would require the State Department to determine within 90 days whether the Russian Federation meets the criteria to be designated as a state sponsor of terrorism. If the answer is yes, Russia would face restrictions on American foreign assistance, a ban on American defense exports and sales, limits on American sales of certain items that have both civilian and military uses, and other financial and other restrictions. Many of these penalties are already required under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, and the Trump administration is contemplating others.

Some will argue that applying such a toxic label to a major global power, one with a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council, will not get it to back down, and might even further damage American-Russia ties, already at an all-time low. Those are important policy questions, which is why my legislation leaves a final determination to the professionals at the State Department.

However, it is clear that the blame for today's distrust and tensions between Moscow and Washington lies entirely with the Kremlin and its atrocious behavior. We must take every diplomatic step necessary to protect our allies and our democracy, and to deter a revanchist Russia that is intent on rewriting history and threatening our way of life. Follow The New York Times Opinion section on Facebook and Twitter (@NYTopinion), and sign up for the Opinion Today newsletter.

AuthorAffiliation

Cory Gardner, a Republican from Colorado, is a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

DETAILS

Subject:	Terrorism; Federal legislation; Sanctions; Foreign policy; Information warfare; Biological &chemical weapons; International relations-US; Congressional committees
Location:	Russia Crimea Afghanistan Colorado Iran Syria Ukraine New York United States--US Georgia (country)
People:	Assad, Bashar Al Gardner, Cory Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Senate-Armed Services, Committee on; NAICS: 921120; Name: Senate-Foreign Relations, Committee on; NAICS: 921120; Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Islamic State of Iraq &the Levant-ISIS; NAICS: 813940; Name: United Nations Security Council; NAICS: 928120; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO; NAICS: 928120
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7 Takeaways: A Message Sent Without Provoking a Military Response

Wolgelenter, Michael . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]15 Apr 2018: A.12.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The United States, in coordination with France and Britain, carried out a series of predawn airstrikes on Saturday in Syria in response to what it said was a chemical weapons attack this month in the rebel-held Damascus suburb of Douma.

The strikes were the latest development in a long-running and complex conflict with consequences far beyond Syria itself -- including in the United States, Iran, Russia and other parts of Europe.

[Read statements by France and Britain, and a declassified French document on the airstrikes.]

Here are seven takeaways from the airstrikes and their aftermath:

The strikes were intense and limited.

The United States and its allies tried to walk a fine line with the airstrikes, sending a strong message to President Bashar al-Assad of Syria without provoking a military response from Russia and Iran, Mr. Assad's two strongest allies.

The operation on Saturday was more powerful than an airstrike ordered by President Trump last year; this time there were three targets, rather than one, requiring twice as many weapons. But it was limited to one night, at least for the moment, was specifically aimed at chemical weapons facilities and steered clear of Russian soldiers and bases.

"Right now this is a one-time shot, and I believe it has sent a very strong message to dissuade him, to deter him from doing it again," Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said of Mr. Assad, although Mr. Trump suggested there might be more to come. "We are prepared to sustain this response," he said, until Syria abandons its use of chemical weapons.

The U.S. chose not to wait.

The United States and its allies went ahead with the airstrikes in the face of several developments that suggested

they could be delayed.

Inspectors from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons arrived in Damascus, Syria, on Saturday to investigate the attack in Douma, the group said in a post on Twitter.

Mr. Mattis was working to slow the move toward a military response, concerned that a missile strike could spark a wider conflict between Russia, Iran and the West.

And Mr. Trump sent mixed signals about timing. On Wednesday, he warned Russia on Twitter that missiles "will be coming, nice and new and 'smart!'" But the next day, he added: "Never said when an attack on Syria would take place. Could be very soon or not so soon at all!"

At a news conference on Saturday morning, Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain said that the strikes had been "the right thing to do," in part for the "operational security" of those carrying them out.

Assad absorbed another blow.

The airstrikes sent an unambiguous message to Mr. Assad, and it was not clear that it would change his thinking.

He remained firmly in power thanks to the support of Russia and Iran.

Mr. Assad has essentially been under siege since the Syrian civil war began more than seven years ago. In that time, he has dealt with the war, airstrikes, sanctions, Islamic State militants, a variety of rebel groups and a crumbling economy.

As Syrian state news media reported that many of the missiles had been intercepted, the Syrian presidency's Twitter account posted a video that appeared to show Mr. Assad showing up for just another day at the office. The events depicted could not be independently verified.

Capitol Hill remained divided.

The reaction in Washington was divided along party lines, with the strikes bringing praise from Republicans and criticism from Democrats like Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader.

"The Butcher of Damascus learned two lessons tonight the hard way," Senator Tom Cotton, Republican of Arkansas, said in a statement. "Weapons of mass destruction won't create a military advantage once the United States is done with you and Russia cannot protect its clients from the United States."

Senator Tim Kaine, Democrat of Virginia, complained that Mr. Trump had not sought permission from Congress. Proceeding with the strikes, he said, was "illegal and -- absent a broader strategy -- it's reckless."

Russia deploys angry rhetoric.

Russia called for an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council and offered some harsh warnings before the attack. (At the meeting, the Security Council later rejected a Russian resolution condemning the missile strikes.) But the speed and the tone of the Russian reaction on Saturday, stressing that the attack had not resulted in a direct confrontation and was rather limited, suggested almost relief on the part of the Kremlin.

According to Russian state news media, President Vladimir V. Putin condemned the missile strikes as an "act of aggression against a sovereign state" and against the United Nations Charter.

Gen. Valery V. Gerasimov, the chief of staff for the armed forces, had warned that Russia would "take retaliatory measures," but he included an important caveat: Russia would attack missiles and the platforms from which they were launched only in the event that Russian military personnel were placed in danger.

The Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian Parliament, stated that it would discuss the airstrikes "next week."

May avoided a conflict at home.

Mrs. May has said she believed there was a need to send a strong message about the use of chemical weapons, but she also had compelling diplomatic and political reasons to support the United States -- and to carry out the strikes as soon as possible.

One imperative was the desire to reciprocate the support London has received from the United States in the dispute with Russia over the poisoning of a former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, on British soil.

Mrs. May, who made an explicit connection between the airstrikes in Syria and the poisoning of the Skripals,

benefited from the timing of the airstrikes, two days before lawmakers were to return from vacation. While not obligated to consult Parliament, she may have felt constrained to do so and could easily have lost a vote on a strike, as her predecessor David Cameron did in 2013.

Britain also wants to prove its use as an ally to Mr. Trump at a time when its international influence is under question because of its withdrawal from the European Union, and when it hopes to strengthen trade ties with the United States.

For France, a red line was crossed.

President Emmanuel Macron had prepared his nation for this moment: He had discussed the possibility of airstrikes and made clear early in his presidency that the use of chemical weapons was a red line.

While pressing for a military response to the use of chemical weapons, Mr. Macron has also said he wants to work on a peace deal for the region, creating a dual-pronged strategy that has support in France. Mr. Macron has cultivated a closer relationship with Mr. Trump than other Western leaders, but he has also reached out to Mr. Putin.

He will visit both presidents in the coming weeks: Mr. Trump at the end of April and Mr. Putin in May.

Credit: MICHAEL WOLGELENTER; Stephen Castle contributed reporting from London, Neil MacFarquhar from Moscow and Alissa J. Rubin from Paris.

Photograph

The view, above, in Damascus, the Syrian capital, during the U.S.-led airstrikes on Saturday, which were meant to send a message to President Bashar al-Assad. Left, Col. Gen. Sergei Rudskoi at the Russian Defense Ministry in Moscow. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HASSAN AMMAR/ASSOCIATED PRESS; PAVEL GOLOVKIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	News media; Presidents; Missiles; Military air strikes; Poisoning; Councils; Social networks; Biological &chemical weapons
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK Arkansas Iran Syria Virginia France Europe United States--US
People:	Trump, Donald J Mattis, James Skripal, Sergei V Cameron, David Rubin, Alissa J Cotton, Tom Pelosi, Nancy May, Theresa Macron, Emmanuel Assad, Bashar Al Kaine, Tim Putin, Vladimir
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Document 117 of 176

For France and Britain, Distinct Political Reasons To Back Trump on Strikes

Rubin, Alissa J; Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]15 Apr 2018: A.21.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

PARIS -- For President Emmanuel Macron of France, it was a chance to make good on an explicit promise to punish Syria for its suspected use of chemical weapons. For Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain, it was a rare and welcome opportunity to support the United States on an issue that President Trump has not made radioactive

with the British public.

The two European leaders may have had their own distinct political reasons to back Mr. Trump's decision to order a cruise-missile attack on Syria early on Saturday. But the decision was made much easier by the accumulating evidence of banned chemical weapons and the circumscribed nature of the attack – a one-time onslaught on three major sites linked to chemical weapons manufacture.

Mr. Macron said in a statement that the suspected chemical weapons attack on April 7 that killed dozens of men, women and children in Douma, Syria, was a "total violation of international law and United Nations Security Council resolutions."

"The facts and the responsibility of the Syrian regime are not in any doubt," he said. "The red line set by France in May 2017 has been crossed."

[Read statements by France and Britain, and a declassified French document on the airstrikes.]

For Mr. Macron, the move also had the salutary effect of shoring up his position as a broker between Russia and the United States and the European Union. Just hours before launching the strike, Mr. Macron was on the telephone with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia to discuss Syria. And both Mr. Macron and his aides have said that he still plans to go ahead with a state visit Moscow at the end of May.

At the same time, Mr. Macron is trying to reinforce France's position as an enforcer of international treaties, which includes the Chemical Weapons Convention that 192 countries have signed.

Mrs. May is in a more precarious position, with a tense standoff developing with Russia over the poisoning of a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, with a weapons-grade nerve agent. Mrs. May has been under pressure to respond forcefully to Moscow for the attack, which exposed hundreds of citizens in southwest England to the deadly substance.

On Saturday, the British leader described the airstrikes in Syria as "right and legal," drawing an explicit distinction between those and the poisoning of the Skripals – the first use of chemical weapons in Europe since World War II. Mrs. May also benefited from the timing of the airstrikes, two days before lawmakers were to return from vacation. While not obligated to consult Parliament, she may have felt constrained to do so and could easily have lost a vote on a strike. Another imperative for Britain was to reciprocate the support that London has received from the United States in the dispute with Russia over the poisoning.

"I don't think she had much choice," said Justin Bronk, a research fellow for air power at the Royal United Services Institute, a defense and security focused research institute in London. "By announcing the strikes through Twitter, President Trump made this a personal call to action with his own image and credibility at stake, and he's an openly transactional president."

Britain also wants to prove its use as an ally to Mr. Trump at a time when its international influence is under question because of its withdrawal from the European Union, and as it hopes to strengthen trade ties with the United States.

On Saturday, as reaction to the strikes rolled in from around the world, Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter: "A perfectly executed strike last night. Thank you to France and the United Kingdom for their wisdom and the power of their fine Military. Could not have had a better result. Mission Accomplished!"

Opinion polls suggested that the British public's support for strikes was lukewarm. So in backing Mr. Trump's airstrikes without seeking prior approval from lawmakers, Mrs. May took a political risk, albeit one that should be manageable unless the conflict escalates.

The prime minister did come in for criticism. The leader of the opposition Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, criticized Mrs. May, arguing that "bombs won't save lives or bring about peace."

Scotland's first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, faulted Mrs. May for failing to follow recent precedent and seek parliamentary approval. But Mrs. May brushed aside the protests, presenting her decision to order "limited, targeted and effective" strikes against Syria as vital in deterring future use of chemical weapons.

London has looked on with concern as Mr. Macron has cultivated close ties with Mr. Trump, while Mrs. May's relationship with the White House has been more complicated and tense.

Mr. Macron, for his part, faced criticism on the far left and the far right for his decision to join the attack on Syrian targets. The leader of the far left France Insoumise party, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, accused Mr. Macron on Twitter of attacking Syria without proof of chemical weapons use and without a United Nations mandate, a European Union agreement or a vote of the French Parliament.

"This is a North American adventure of revenge, an irresponsible escalation," Mr. Mélenchon said.

On the extreme right, Marine Le Pen, the leader of the National Front, said France had lost a chance to "appear on the international scene as an independent power." The party's deputy leader, Nicolas Bay, called Mr. Macron "a vassal" of the United States.

For both Mrs. May and Mr. Macron, the strikes made good on their respective predecessors' pledges to retaliate over Syria's use of chemical weapons. In 2013, when the government of President Bashar al-Assad was suspected of using chemical weapons on his own people, both François Hollande, then president of France, and David Cameron, then Britain's prime minister, said he had crossed their red lines.

But when it came down to launching the missiles, Mr. Cameron failed to secure Parliament's approval, and Mr. Hollande backed down when it became clear that President Barack Obama had second thoughts because he was afraid of being drawn into a larger fight with Mr. Assad.

It was easier for the leaders to sign on to this missile attack, as there was no discussion about a far-reaching military campaign or about regime change. And there was an explicit effort to avoid hitting bases where troops from Russia and Iran, allies of Mr. Assad, might be amassed.

The United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting on Saturday but rejected a Russian resolution condemning the missile strikes in Syria. European Union foreign ministers, meanwhile, planned to meet on Monday to tackle the tense situation in Syria.

A draft statement, written before the strikes, proposed looking at fresh sanctions on Syria, including blacklisting more people over the development and use of chemical arms.

The NATO secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, later expressed support for the strikes by its three member states, saying that they "will reduce the regime's ability to further attack the people of Syria with chemical weapons." Mr. Stoltenberg said in a statement that Syria's use of chemical weapons was "a clear breach of international norms and agreements."

He added, "NATO considers the use of chemical weapons as a threat to international peace and security, and believes that it is essential to protect the Chemical Weapons Convention," which Syria signed in 2013, leading to a ban in the country on the manufacture or use of such weapons.

Credit: ALISSA J. RUBIN and STEPHEN CASTLE; Alissa J. Rubin reported from Paris and Stephen Castle from London. Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Brussels.

Photograph

Left, President Emmanuel Macron of France, center, tracked strikes on Syria in a photo from his Twitter account. Right, Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain drew a distinction between the missile strikes and the poisoning of a former Russian spy on British soil. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC BARADAT/FRENCH PRESIDENCY, VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES; WILL OLIVER)

DETAILS

Subject:	Presidents; Military air strikes; Prime ministers; Poisoning; Social networks; Biological & chemical weapons; Political leadership
Location:	Russia Scotland United Kingdom--UK Iran England Syria France Europe United States--US

People:	Trump, Donald J Skripal, Sergei V Sturgeon, Nicola Cameron, David Obama, Barack Rubin, Alissa J Stoltzenberg, Jens Le Pen, Marine May, Theresa Macron, Emmanuel Assad, Bashar Al Putin, Vladimir Skripal, Yulia
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Britain Gives Theory on How Russia Executed Nerve Attack

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]14 Apr 2018: A.5.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Russia has been researching the application of chemical agents to door handles as a way to assassinate its enemies, and has been training personnel "from special units" to carry out such attacks, said Mark Sedwill, Britain's national security adviser, on Friday in a letter to the secretary general of NATO.

Mr. Sedwill's letter, the most detailed account of British intelligence on the subject to be shared with the public to date, also reported that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia was "closely involved in the chemical weapons program" beginning in the mid-2000s.

During that period, the letter claims, Russia was secretly developing the nerve agents known as Novichok that British officials say were used in the March 4 attack on Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in the quiet cathedral city of Salisbury, England.

Russian officials have strenuously denied producing Novichok or carrying out the attack, which has brought relations between Britain and Russia to a post-Cold War low.

In a news conference Friday afternoon, the Russian ambassador to Britain, Aleksandr V. Yakovenko, dismissed the letter and "all these allegations" surrounding the nerve agent attack as having "nothing to do with reality."

Russia, he said, repeating a claim the Kremlin has asserted throughout the Skripal affair, eliminated all of its stockpiles of chemical weapons in 2017, and as for Novichok, "We did not produce it and didn't store it."

Mr. Skripal remains hospitalized nearly five weeks after he was poisoned, but his daughter has recovered and was moved to a secure location this week.

Mr. Sedwill's letter also said that Britain has evidence that Russian security services have been monitoring the Skripal family. Cyberspecialists from Russia's Foreign Intelligence Services hacked Ms. Skripal's email in 2013, the letter said. Asked about that at his news conference, Mr. Yakovenko responded sarcastically, "Big surprise."

The letter added that Russian intelligence services "view at least some of its defectors as legitimate targets for assassination."

"We therefore continue to judge that only Russia has the technical means, operational experience and motive for the attack on the Skripals, and that it is highly likely that the Russian state was responsible," the letter said. "There is no plausible alternative explanation."

The letter comes as British officials try to consolidate European support for united actions against Russia. The central element of Britain's case against Russia is the unusual nerve agent used in the attack, which was developed in Soviet laboratories during the last years of the Soviet Union.

Last week, the chief executive of the Defense Science and Technology Laboratory in Porton Down, Britain's premier chemical weapons laboratory, said its scientists could not identify "the precise source" of the chemical, though its purity indicated that it was almost certainly created by a "state actor."

Mr. Sedwill's letter lays out further British intelligence on Russia's chemical weapons programs, reporting that the Novichok agents, a strain referred to in Russia as Foliant, were developed at the State Institute for Organic Chemistry and Technology at Shikhany, a small town on the Volga River, in southern Russia. It said that Russia

continued to produce the agents after the breakup of the Soviet Union, but did not declare the work to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

It goes on to say that "during the 2000s," Russia created a special unit to develop chemical weapons for use as tools in state-sponsored attacks and to "train personnel from special units in the use of these weapons."

"This program subsequently included investigation of ways of delivering nerve agents, including by application to door handles," it said. "Within the last decade, Russia has produced and stockpiled small quantities of Novichoks under the same program."

Author/Affiliation

Follow Ellen Barry on Twitter: @EllenBarryNYT .

Photograph

The house in Salisbury, England, where Sergei V. Skripal was living. British agents said that the nerve agent with which he was poisoned was most likely applied to the home's door handle. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NEIL HALL/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

Subject:	Laboratories; Security services; Press conferences; Biological & chemical weapons; Espionage
Location:	Russia Volga River Union of Soviet Socialist Republics–USSR United Kingdom–UK England
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO; NAICS: 928120
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Attack on Skripals Shows Russia Is Reckless, British Official Says

Castle, Stephen; Wolgelenter, Michael; Pérez-Peña, Richard; Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]13 Apr 2018: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The nerve agent attack on two people in England "demonstrates how reckless Russia is prepared to be, how little the Kremlin cares for the international rules-based order," one of Britain's intelligence chiefs said on Thursday, in an unusually public and scathing commentary on a foreign power.

In his first speech after a year as director of the Government Communications Headquarters, the British equivalent of the National Security Agency, Jeremy Fleming said the threat from Russia had "never gone away," but had become impossible to ignore after the poisoning of a former Russian spy and his daughter, cyberattacks on Ukrainian infrastructure and other actions.

"They're not playing to the same rules," he said at a cybersecurity conference in Manchester, England. "They're blurring the boundaries between criminal and state activity."

Russia has strenuously denied Britain's claims that Moscow was responsible for the March 4 attack on a former Russian double agent, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia, which has escalated into a bitter clash between the Kremlin and the West.

On Thursday, the international body that monitors compliance with chemical weapons treaties confirmed Britain's assessment that the toxin used in Salisbury, England, against the Skripals was a powerful, military-grade agent

known as novichok, which experts say was developed in the Soviet Union.

The group, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, released a report saying that its laboratory analysis of "environmental and biomedical samples" that its experts had collected "confirm the findings of the U.K. relating to the identity of the toxic chemical."

The team "notes that the toxic chemical was of high purity," it added, lending support to Britain's claim that the nerve agent was manufactured with a degree of expertise and sophistication strongly indicating that a national government was responsible. But the agency did not try to say where the chemical was made, or by whom.

Russia, which had demanded that the organization take over the investigation from Britain, was quick to dismiss the findings. Maria Zakharova, the spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry, told reporters that the report was part of a continuing British plot against Russia.

"We are all simply drowning in a torrent of misinformation that is in one way or another supported by official London," she said. "There are no grounds to believe that all of this is not the continuation of a crude provocation against the Russian Federation on the part of the British special services."

Boris Johnson, the British foreign secretary, released a statement on the organization's report, saying, "There can be no doubt what was used and there remains no alternative explanation about who was responsible -- only Russia has the means, motive and record."

Mr. Skripal, 66, is a former Russian military intelligence officer who has lived for several years in Salisbury; his daughter, 33, lives in Russia and was visiting him at the time of the poisoning.

"The attack on Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury was the first time a nerve agent had been deployed in Europe since the Second World War," Mr. Fleming said.

On Wednesday night, the Metropolitan Police released a statement attributed to Ms. Skripal, turning down a Russian offer of consular assistance, adding another irritant to worsening relations with Moscow. Russia has repeatedly requested access to Ms. Skripal, accusing Britain of improperly denying it contact with one of its citizens.

"I have been made aware of my specific contacts at the Russian Embassy, who have kindly offered me their assistance in any way they can," Ms. Skripal was quoted as saying in the statement. "At the moment, I do not wish to avail myself of their services, but if I change my mind, I know how to contact them."

Russian officials have ridiculed British accusations, while floating an array of theories, some of them contradictory, about what happened in Salisbury. They claim that neither the Soviet Union nor Russia ever had a novichok program, that other former Soviet bloc countries could have supplied the novichok, that the toxin involved was not novichok, and that the British might have poisoned the Skripals.

The statement attributed to Ms. Skripal, 33, met with derision from the Russian authorities, who described it as "an interesting read," pointedly noting that there was no way to verify it, and suggesting that the remarks contained more questions than answers.

"We would like to make sure that the statement really belongs to Yulia," the Russian Embassy in Britain said in a statement on Wednesday. "So far, we doubt it much. The text has been composed in a special way so as to support official statements made by British authorities, and at the same time to exclude every possibility of Yulia's contacts with the outer world -- consuls, journalists and even relatives."

Ms. Skripal was released from a hospital in Salisbury this week after more than a month of treatment for the poisoning, but said she was still enduring the effects of the attack. She noted that her father, who lives in Salisbury, while no longer in critical condition, remained in a perilous state.

"I have left my father in their care, and he is still seriously ill. I, too, am still suffering with the effects of the nerve agent used against us," her statement said. "I find myself in a totally different life than the ordinary one I left just over a month ago, and I am seeking to come to terms with my prospects, whilst also recovering from this attack on me."

A police officer who was exposed to the chemical early in the investigation, Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey, was treated at the hospital and released last month.

The poisoning has seriously worsened ties between Britain and Moscow, setting off a chain events that led to the expulsions of hundreds of diplomats around the world, including from Britain, Russia and the United States.

The British police said last week that Ms. Skripal had been made aware of Russian offers of assistance and had turned them down, prompting Russian officials to insist on getting proof that she was acting of her own free will. The statement released on Wednesday "only strengthens suspicions that we are dealing with a forcible isolation of the Russian citizen," the Russian Embassy said. "If British authorities are interested in assuring the public that this is not the case, they must urgently provide tangible evidence that Yulia is all right and not deprived of her freedom."

The case, filled with high-level intrigue and unexpected twists and turns, was marked by another unexpected development last week when Viktoria Skripal, a 45-year-old Russian accountant and a relative of the two poisoned Russians, said the British authorities were untrustworthy and cast doubt on their accounts.

In an interview, Viktoria Skripal said she was "scared" for her relatives. Her comments came after she recorded what she said was a phone call with Yulia Skripal, a copy of which she gave to Russian state television, which broadcast it.

Yulia Skripal's statement distanced her from her cousin, emphasizing that "no one speaks for me, or for my father, but ourselves."

"I thank my cousin Viktoria for her concern for us," she added, "but ask that she does not visit me or try to contact me for the time being. Her opinions and assertions are not mine and they are not my father's."

Credit: STEPHEN CASTLE, MICHAEL WOLGELENTER, RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA and ELLEN BARRY; Neil MacFarquhar contributed reporting from Moscow.

Photograph

Russian officials questioned the provenance of a statement declining their help, attributed by the British police to Yulia Skripal. (PHOTOGRAPH BY FACEBOOK/YULIA SKRIPAL, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Diplomatic & consular services; Biological & chemical weapons; Criminal investigations
Location:	Russia United States–US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics–USSR United Kingdom–UK England Europe
People:	Johnson, Boris Skripal, Sergei V Skripal, Yulia
Company / organization:	Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130; Name: National Security Agency; NAICS: 928110
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/world/europe/yulia-skripal-russia.html
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LINKS

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Document 120 of 176

Putin, or the World? Sanctions May Force Russian Oligarchs to Choose

Macfarquhar, Neil . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]12 Apr 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – Compared to the sunny, palm-lined offshore tax havens where Russians typically stash their fortunes – think the British Virgin Islands or Cyprus – two chilly, windswept Russian islands would seem to offer little. Yet October Island, a glorified swamp in Russia's European enclave of Kaliningrad, and Russian Island, a former cow pasture facing the far eastern port of Vladivostok, were highlighted by Moscow this week as potential alternatives.

Washington's imposition of unexpectedly tough sanctions against several leading oligarchs is in many respects a game changer for Russia, with repercussions that are only slowly coming into view. Establishing tax havens within the country was just one reaction by the Kremlin, seemingly caught off guard as aftershocks rippled through currency and financial markets.

"Russia has no strategy on how to react to this situation, to these new economic circumstances," Evgeny Gontmakher, a prominent opposition economist, said.

The most immediate effect is being felt by Oleg V. Deripaska and his aluminum giant, Rusal, which has lost about one-third of its value on the Moscow stock exchange. "This is a new stage," Mr. Gontmakher said. "This is targeting for isolation a very big, export-oriented company. That is very painful."

The ramifications could also be felt by wealthy Russians in London, as Washington warned British banks on Tuesday that they could face severe penalties if they continued dealings with any of 24 Russians named in the sanctions, including seven oligarchs.

Paradoxically, the sanctions could help President Vladimir V. Putin to accomplish a long-held goal of putting more of the economy under state control and pressuring billionaires to bring their money home.

Yet the sanctions might also work against Mr. Putin's interests, forcing some of the wealthiest Russians to decide just how closely they want to be identified with the Kremlin by financing militias, political organizations or other adventures abroad. "Anyone who wants to help the Kremlin outside will think twice," said Konstantin Gaaze, an analyst and frequent contributor to the Moscow Carnegie Center website.

In a larger sense, the sanctions are expected to have a limited overall effect after the initial shock wears off, because they ultimately targeted just a handful of companies. But the virtual sequestering of a critical Russian commodity producer has introduced a strong element of uncertainty into dealings with all Russian raw materials, the taproot of the country's income, which is likely to further isolate Russia from the world.

The initial government response was muted, with Dmitri S. Peskov, the spokesman for Mr. Putin, telling reporters that "it would be wrong to make hasty decisions" and predicting that the value of the ruble and the Russian stock market would bounce back once emotions settled down.

Given the tiny size of the Russian economy – around 2 percent of global G.D.P. – and its limited trade with the United States, there was little expectation of economic retaliation. Any Russian response was likely to come in places like Syria or Ukraine, analysts said, where the Kremlin might ratchet up tensions in order to leverage any solution on ending the sanctions.

With an American strike in Syria possible at any moment, in response to what was suspected to be a chemical weapons attack by the forces of President Bashar al-Assad, an occasion for that scenario might materialize quickly.

Russia had been lulled into thinking no significant sanctions were coming. In January, in response to a new United States law last summer demanding tougher action against Moscow, the Trump administration did nothing more than publish a list culled from the pages of Forbes Magazine of every billionaire in the country along with the Kremlin's internal telephone directory.

"People thought this was a joke, but now it is clear that the situation is serious," said Vladislav S. Zhukovsky, an economist and investment consultant. "This is more serious than the previous sanctions."

The two most prominent industrialists targeted were Mr. Deripaska, whose Rusal company employs an estimated 60,000 in Russia, and Viktor F. Vekselberg, one of the richest men in Russia, whose projects include trying to develop the country's tech sector.

Overall, the sanctions were imposed on seven Russian oligarchs, 12 companies they control and 17 senior government officials who the United States Treasury said profited from the Russian state's "malign activities" around the world.

"It is not clear what are the key sins that got people transferred from the big list to the small list," said Kirill Rogov, an independent political and economic analyst. "The logic is not clear, which increases the risk for all others."

More possible sanctions are already in the pipeline, following the poisoning in Britain last month of a Russian

former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia. A draft law in Congress would ban Americans from any dealings with new Russian sovereign debt.

In the end, the most important ramifications of this round of sanctions is the uncertainty they introduce to all of Russia's dealings with the West. "There is a big possibility that this is only the beginning of the campaign," Mr. Gontmakher said.

The government said it would address that uncertainty by providing whatever support was needed to keep the targeted companies functioning and their employees in jobs. "The main thing now is to minimize uncertainty while securing the stable functioning of the companies, where hundreds of thousands of people work," Arkady V. Dvorkovich, a Russian deputy prime minister, told an economic conference on Tuesday.

Most analysts suggested that the Kremlin was likely to buy Rusal, for example, and try to rebrand it to avoid it being stigmatized on the world market and to sell the aluminum at rock-bottom prices just to keep Russians employed. This might well provide a multibillion-dollar payday for Mr. Deripaska.

To the dismay of liberal economists, Mr. Putin has pushed state ownership of the economy from about 35 percent to between 50 and 70 percent, and taking over Rusal would further expand government control.

Russia weathered a round of sanctions over the annexation of Crimea in 2014, which limited its access to Western capital markets, cut off arms sales and limited technology transfer. The latest are narrower, but more intense, analysts said, since they effectively shut out a giant commodity producer from Western markets.

The Kremlin has been trying to force rich Russians to bring their money home and the sanctions might help. "As one of our clients said, when sanctions were introduced it was the wrong way to destroy Russia," said Oleg Kouzmin, chief economist at Renaissance Capital, a Moscow investment bank. To really wreak economic havoc in Russia, he joked, the West should roll out the red carpet for assets from the oligarchs, effectively stalling the Russian economy.

Habitually, tycoons have feared falling afoul of the Kremlin and having their assets in Russia seized, but any oligarch cut off completely from international financial markets might be more amenable to shifting funds home. Still, it would be only a short-term fix, noted several analysts, because Russia is not a big enough or attractive enough market for significant, sustained investment.

"We have to understand that we are entering a new reality – Russia is being turned into a toxic asset," said Mr. Zhukovsky, the economist.

Credit: NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Ivan Nechepurenko and Andrew Kramer contributed reporting

AuthorAffiliation

Follow Neil MacFarquhar on Twitter: @NeilMacFarquhar.

Photograph

Rusal, which has an aluminum smelter in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, has felt the sting of sanctions. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREY RUDAKOV/BLOOMBERG)

DETAILS

Subject:	Economists; Sovereign debt; Islands; Investments; Oligarchy; Aluminum; Sanctions; Stock exchanges; Tax havens
Location:	Russia United States–US Crimea United Kingdom–UK British Virgin Islands Syria Cyprus Ukraine
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Assad, Bashar Al Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Russian Island; NAICS: 453220; Name: Forbes Magazine; NAICS: 511120

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U.S. Pressures British Banks to Cut Russian Ties

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]11 Apr 2018: A.4.

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The United States on Tuesday ratcheted up its efforts to block Kremlin-linked industrialists from doing business in the West, warning that British banks will have to sever their relationships with the tycoons if they want continued access to American financial institutions.

Sigal P. Mandelker, a top American Treasury official in London to meet with her counterparts, said British banks could face "consequences" if they continued to carry out significant transactions on behalf of the 24 influential Russians sanctioned by Washington on Friday. The list includes the industrialists Oleg Deripaska and Viktor Vekselberg, along with Kirill Shamalov, who American officials have identified as President Vladimir V. Putin's son-in-law.

"These are blocking sanctions," Ms. Mandelker, under secretary of the Treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, said at a briefing with reporters. "There of course would be consequences for U.K. financial institutions" that continued to do business with the Russians.

The warning has resonated in London, which for decades has served as a haven for Russia's wealthiest families. Russian investors own iconic British assets like the Chelsea Football Club and swaths of high-end London real estate, and they support thriving networks of lawyers, financial advisers and estate agents.

The United States has long prodded its European partners to match its economic sanctions against high-ranking Russians, but it has encountered resistance because Russia's business ties to Europe are so much deeper than to the United States.

Ms. Mandelker said there has been great unity on Russia among European nations since March 4, when Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian double agent, was found poisoned in southwestern England. She said the United States was consulting intensively with British financial institutions and oversight agencies as it prepared to impose the latest round of sanctions.

"We have very strong and close allies and partners in the U.K." she said. "They understand clearly what the risks are. We continue to communicate those risks to them."

The ruble slid sharply in value for a second day on Tuesday. The mining giant, Glencore, which is based in Switzerland, began loosening its ties with Mr. Deripaska's company, Rusal, which is one of the world's largest aluminum producers. Glencore announced it had canceled a planned swap of its stake in Rusal for shares in another Deripaska company, and Glencore's chief executive, Ivan Glasenberg, who has served on Rusal's board since 2007, said that he would step down.

The new American sanctions expose financial institutions outside the United States to penalties if they "knowingly facilitate significant financial transactions" on behalf of the listed Russian oligarchs.

The wording is similar to secondary sanctions imposed against Iran. These "essentially prohibit the individuals involved from taking part in the dollar economy," said Daragh McDowell, an analyst for Europe and Central Asia at Verisk Maplecroft, a consulting firm based in Bath.

It is likely to compel risk-averse British banks to cancel the Russians' accounts altogether, said Brian O'Toole, a former senior official at the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, which administers and enforces American sanctions.

London's real estate market might also be affected, having benefited from waves of investment from Russians with ties to the Kremlin, some of it routed through shell companies registered in overseas territories like the British Virgin Islands. Banks and estate agents might take steps to increase financial transparency, including trying harder to identify the source of funds used by foreign buyers of real estate.

"The amount of Russian real estate in Mayfair is well known, it's kind of a running gag in the financial industry," said Mr. O'Toole, now a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council. "This is something London should have done a while

ago, to clean this up. I think London knows that, and 10 Downing Street knows it as well. I think that's the next thing to come."

He added that the United States has similar vulnerabilities, having allowed many foreigners to purchase valuable properties without having to identify themselves as the owners.

British officials have not always been enthusiastic about the American sanctions, but British businesses have tended to comply, largely out of fear of being penalized by the United States, said Ian Bond, director of foreign policy at the Center for European Reform.

"The reality is that, for most companies dealing with the United States, the U.S. is much more important than dealing with Russia or Cuba or Iran or Libya," he said.

Bill Browder, an investor based in the United Kingdom who has led international campaigns to impose sanctions on Mr. Putin and his associates, described the sanctions imposed by Washington last week as the most forceful "by orders of magnitude" to hit Russia in years.

If Mr. Deripaska, for example, wanted to buy a house in Europe now, he would be hard-pressed to find a seller willing to accept money from him, Mr. Browder said.

"There is no safe haven when this type of stuff happens," he said. "They can buy houses in China if they want. They can buy houses in Dubai, if they want to transfer rubles and convert it into local currency. What this does is end their ability to operate anywhere in the West."

Photograph

London has long served as a haven for Russia's wealthiest families. The Russian businessmen Oleg Deripaska, near left, and Viktor Vekselberg, far left, received blocking sanctions from the United States last week, along with 22 other oligarchs. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; OLGA MALTSEVA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES; MAXIM SHIPENKOV/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY)

DETAILS

Subject:	Oligarchy; Financial institutions; Sanctions
Location:	Switzerland Russia New York United States--US Libya Central Asia Dubai United Arab Emirates United Kingdom--UK Iran England British Virgin Islands China Cuba France Europe
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Glasenberg, Ivan Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120; Name: Chelsea Football Club; NAICS: 711211; Name: Office of Foreign Assets Control; NAICS: 928110
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Daughter of Ex-Spy Is Out of Hospital

Wolgelerter, Michael; Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]11 Apr 2018: A.7.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Yulia S. Skripal has been released from a hospital in southern England, officials said on Tuesday, five weeks after she and her father, a former Russian spy, were poisoned with a nerve agent that left them fighting for their lives and raised tensions between Russia and the West.

The poisoning of Ms. Skripal and her father, Sergei V. Skripal, has had ramifications far beyond the cathedral city

of Salisbury, England, where it took place, prompting a confrontation between Russia and the West that escalated. Britain has blamed Moscow for the poisonings, an accusation that the Kremlin has continually mocked and rejected, and the dispute precipitated a series of expulsions of diplomats between the two countries and beyond, as Britain's allies rallied to its side.

Britain says the poisoning on March 4 involved a rare class of the military-grade nerve agent novichok, which is widely believed to have been developed in Soviet laboratories, leaving the Skripals in critical condition.

Ms. Skripal came out of critical condition almost two weeks ago, and her father's condition was raised to stable from critical on Friday.

"Yulia has asked for privacy from the media and I want to reiterate that request," Dr. Christine Blanshard, medical director of Salisbury District Hospital, told reporters on Tuesday. "This is not the end of her treatment, but marks a significant milestone."

Though Mr. Skripal, 66, "is recovering more slowly than Yulia," Dr. Blanshard said, "we hope that he, too, will be able to leave hospital in due course."

She did not comment on reports in the British news media that Ms. Skripal, 33, had been released on Monday. It was not immediately clear where Ms. Skripal might go; investigators have sealed off Mr. Skripal's house in Salisbury, and investigators say the nerve agent was most likely applied to its front door.

One other person is known to have been sickened by the toxin, Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey, who went to the house at the start of the investigation. He was released from the hospital on March 22.

Ms. Skripal, who lives in Russia, was visiting her father when they were poisoned, and it is not clear whether she will return.

Russian officials say they have been improperly denied access to her, but the British police said last week that Ms. Skripal was aware of the Russian offer to visit and help, and that she had turned it down.

On Tuesday, the Russian Embassy in London wrote on Twitter: "We congratulate Yulia Skripal on her recovery. Yet we need urgent proof that what is being done to her is done on her own free will."

The Sunday Times of London, citing anonymous sources, has reported that senior intelligence officials in Britain were talking to their counterparts at the C.I.A. about sending the Skripals to the United States. The two Russians would be provided with new identities, part of a broader effort to keep them safe in case there should be another attempt on their life.

The Russian Embassy seemed to acknowledge that possibility with another post on Twitter later on Tuesday, again demanding proof that Ms. Skripal was acting of her own accord. "Secret resettlement of Mr and Ms Skripal, barred from any contact with their family will be seen as an abduction or at least as their forced isolation," the post read.

The case has mixed high-stakes international diplomacy with elements of farce. Hundreds of diplomats around the world have been expelled, Britain has moved to crack down on the financial dealings of Russians in the country, and President Vladimir V. Putin's government has offered a variety of alternative explanations for what happened and complained that the Skripals' pets -- two guinea pigs and a cat -- were killed by the British and then cremated to destroy evidence.

The investigation took another bizarre twist last week when Viktoria Skripal, a 45-year-old Russian accountant and relative of the two Russians, questioned the accounts of the British authorities and said that she was "scared" for the pair.

She made her comments in an interview conducted after she recorded what she said was a phone call with Yulia Skripal. She had given the recording to Russian state television, which broadcast it.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, an international body, is examining evidence in the case and is expected to announce the results of its tests this week. The findings of its investigation are expected to be limited, however, to identifying the poison but not its source.

Weeks ago, British government officials speculated that the Skripals might never fully recover.

On Tuesday, Dr. Blanshard offered her most detailed public account of the danger and treatment they had faced.

"Nerve agents work by attaching themselves to a particular enzyme in the body, which then stops the nerves from working properly," she said. "This results in symptoms such as sickness, hallucinations and confusion."

"Our job in treating the patients has been to stabilize them, ensuring that the patients could breathe and that blood could continue to circulate," she added. "We then needed to use a variety of different drugs to support the patients until they could create more enzymes to replace those affected by the poisoning. We also used specialized decontamination techniques to remove any residual toxins."

Mr. Skripal, an officer in Russian military intelligence, was convicted in 2006 of selling secrets to the British, and was imprisoned. In 2010, he was sent to Britain as part of a spy swap, and he has lived in England since.

It was not clear why Russian officials -- or anyone else -- would have targeted him, but experts say the poisoning has sent a powerful message to Russians living in the West that they are never out of the Kremlin's reach.

In 2006, another former Russian spy, Alexander V. Litvinenko, was fatally poisoned in London with a radioactive element, polonium 210, an assassination that Britain contends was directed by Moscow, which Russia denies. Since then, several Putin critics and their associates have died under suspicious circumstances in Britain, and British officials have vowed to re-examine those cases.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Author/Affiliation

Follow Michael Wolgelenter and Richard Pérez-Peña on Twitter: @mwolgelerter and @perezpenna.

Photograph

Yulia Skripal

DETAILS

Subject:	Fatalities; Poisoning; Investigations; Diplomatic & consular services; Social networks; Biological & chemical weapons; Assassinations & assassination attempts; Poisons
Location:	Russia United States–US United Kingdom–UK England
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Skripal, Yulia
Company / organization:	Name: Sunday Times; NAICS: 511110; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130
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Document 123 of 176

U.S. Puts New Sanctions On Putin's Inner Circle

Gardiner, Harris . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]07 Apr 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- The Trump administration imposed new sanctions on seven of Russia's richest men and 17 top government officials on Friday in the latest effort to punish President Vladimir V. Putin's inner circle for interference in the 2016 election and other Russian aggressions.

The sanctions are designed to penalize some of Russia's richest industrialists, who are seen in the West as enriching themselves from Mr. Putin's increasingly authoritarian administration.

Effectively, the action prevents the oligarchs from traveling to the United States or doing business or even opening a bank account with any major company or bank in the West. It also restricts foreign individuals from facilitating transactions on their behalf.

Elizabeth Rosenberg, a former sanctions official in the Obama administration, described the penalties as "fairly muscular" and predicted that more sanctions are probably coming.

They grow out of Washington's oddly disjointed policy toward Russia: While President Trump has called for good relations with Mr. Putin, Congress and much of the rest of the administration are pushing through increasingly punitive efforts that are sinking relations with Moscow to lows not seen in years.

"Nobody has been tougher on Russia, but getting along with Russia would be a good thing, not a bad thing," Mr. Trump said this week. By Friday, according to a White House statement, he had dropped any qualification. "We cannot allow those seeking to sow confusion, discord and rancor to be successful," Mr. Trump said.

Friday's list targets Mr. Putin's inner circle. It imposes sanctions on a family member, his son-in-law, Kirill Shamalov, who has had close business ties to one of Mr. Putin's longtime friends from St. Petersburg, Gennady Timchenko. It also penalizes people like Vladimir Bogdanov, the director general of Surgutneftegas, a large privately owned oil company that has long been rumored, without solid evidence, to have given an ownership stake to Mr. Putin.

The list is an assault on one of the oligarchs' favored tools for avoiding sanctions, which is to pass assets to their children.

It targeted the oil executive Igor Rotenberg, the son of Arkady Rotenberg, who is a former judo partner of Mr. Putin and whose companies have won a host of state contracts, including one for the construction of a bridge from the Russian mainland to Crimea, the Ukrainian Black Sea peninsula seized by Moscow in 2014.

Also on the list is Oleg V. Deripaska, who once had close ties to Mr. Trump's former campaign manager, Paul Manafort. Altogether, the Trump administration targeted seven oligarchs, 12 companies they own or control, 17 Russian government officials and a state-owned arms export company.

"This list sends a very clear signal to Putin himself that we're not afraid to go after your friends and their children," said Alina Polyakova, a Russia expert at the Brookings Institution. "There is some real thinking in this."

Russia's Foreign Ministry promised a "harsh response" and described Washington's increasing use of sanctions as economically anti-competitive.

The sanctions have been under consideration for some time. A senior administration official who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity said that they responded to Moscow's continuing and increasingly "brazen pattern of malign activity" worldwide -- especially against Western democracies.

"The Russian government operates for the disproportionate benefit of oligarchs and government elites," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said. "Russian oligarchs and elites who profit from this corrupt system will no longer be insulated from the consequences of their government's destabilizing activities."

The sanctions come just as investigators working for Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel looking into the possibility of collusion between the Trump campaign and Moscow, have begun to question Russian oligarchs about possible financial links between those in Mr. Putin's orbit and people close to Mr. Trump.

Friday's penalties could be particularly painful for Mr. Putin's regime.

While Russia's oligarchs make nearly all of their money in Russia, many stash their families, their lovers and much of their wealth in places like London, New York and Miami, where they are believed to own hundreds of millions of dollars in property. However, the economic strain is likely to be delayed, given that most on the list have already shielded their assets.

Targeted sanctions against the oligarchs are seen as a particularly good way to punish Moscow's aggressive moves while sparing wider Russian society, which is already suffering under Mr. Putin's thumb.

The sanctions come just three days after Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, in his final speech as Mr. Trump's national security adviser, warned darkly about the growing Russian menace.

"For too long some nations have looked the other way in the face of these threats," he said, adding, "And we have failed to impose sufficient costs."

The new sanctions stem from legislation passed by Congress overwhelmingly last year and designed to limit Mr. Trump's ability to lift sanctions already imposed on Russia. Lawmakers in both parties feared that the president would suspend sanctions imposed by President Barack Obama as he pursued warmer relations with Moscow as promised during his campaign and first year in office.

The Trump administration opposed that legislation but quietly acceded to it after it passed with a veto-proof majority. Within that law was a measure requiring the administration to create a list of Russian oligarchs. Lobbying around the creation of the list became intense as Russia's wealthiest citizens feared punishing sanctions to come. That is exactly what happened on Friday.

The sanctions list will only hasten the slide of Washington-Moscow relations. This week, 60 American diplomats left Russia as part of a tit-for-tat series of expulsions that followed last month's nerve-gas poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian double agent, and his daughter.

Mr. Skripal's poisoning on British soil prompted more than 20 countries to expel more than 100 Russian diplomats and intelligence officers, the largest such coordinated action ever. British officials believe that Mr. Skripal's poisoning, which occurred after an assassin smeared a nerve agent on the door handle of his home, was such a risky operation that it was unlikely to have been undertaken without approval from the Kremlin.

Russia has denied involvement in the poisoning.

But the attack is seen as part of a pattern of increasingly aggressive moves by Mr. Putin, including the seizure of Crimea; military interventions in Georgia, Ukraine and Syria; tacit support for President Bashar al-Assad's chemical attacks on his own populace in Syria; a direct attack by Russian mercenaries on American troops in Syria; and the hacking of elections in the United States and Europe.

The Trump administration's responses to Mr. Putin's needling have been uneven. Although Congress gave the State Department \$120 million in 2016 to counter Russian hacking efforts, the department has so far spent none of it. And Mr. Trump said this week that he wanted American forces to leave Syria soon, an exit that would benefit Iran, Russia and one of its allies, Mr. Assad.

But the administration has also imposed considerable economic penalties on Russia, with Friday's action the latest in a string of similar moves.

NATO allies are now thinking anew about more coordinated responses to track and impose sanctions on Mr. Putin's cronies. Both Congress and the British Parliament are considering legislation that would require that the owners of companies and properties be disclosed.

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Credit: GARDINER HARRIS; Andrew Higgins contributed reporting from Moscow.

Photograph

Sanction targets included President Vladimir V. Putin's son-in-law and an oil executive who is a son of a former Putin judo partner. (POOL PHOTO BY ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO) Other targets of sanctions included, from left, Oleg V. Deripaska, who had ties to Paul Manafort, the former Trump campaign manager; Viktor Vekselberg, considered one of Russia's wealthiest men; and Suleiman Kerimov, a billionaire and Russian legislator.

(PHOTOGRAPHS BY SERGEI SAVOSTYANOV\TASS, VIA GETTY IMAGES; PAVEL GOLOVKIN/ASSOCIATED PRESS; MAKSIM BLINOV\SPUTNIK, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Federal legislation; Oligarchy; Presidents; Sanctions; Poisoning; Public officials
Location:	Russia Crimea Georgia Iran Syria Ukraine Europe New York United States-US Black Sea
People:	Trump, Donald J Kerimov, Suleiman Rotenberg, Arkady Skripal, Sergei V Obama, Barack Mueller, Robert S III Manafort, Paul Timchenko, Gennady Assad, Bashar Al Putin, Vladimir Mnuchin, Steven T

Company / organization:	Name: Parliament-UK; NAICS: 921120; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130; Name: Brookings Institution; NAICS: 541711, 541720; Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization–NATO; NAICS: 928120
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/06/us/politics/trump-sanctions-russia-putin-oligarchs.html
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LINKS

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Relative of Poisoned Russians Says She Doesn't Trust the British on Attack

Luxmoore, Matthew; Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]07 Apr 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

YAROSLAVL, Russia – A 45-year-old Russian accountant and relative of the two Russians poisoned in a nerve agent attack in Britain last month said in an interview late Thursday that she was "scared" for them, calling the British authorities untrustworthy and casting doubt on their version of events.

In the interview in Yaroslavl, Russia, where she lives with her husband and her two children, the accountant, Viktoria Skripal, who has been thrust into an escalating confrontation between Russia and the West, also said that she doubted that Britain would grant her a visa that would allow her to see her relatives.

The relatives, Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter, Yulia, have been hospitalized in Salisbury, England, since the attack on March 4. Ms. Skripal's suspicions, which echo the accusations of Russian officials, have become the country's latest riposte to British assertions that Moscow was responsible for the attack carried out with a rare class of military-grade nerve agents developed by the Soviet Union called Novichoks.

"Wouldn't you be scared?" she said. "While I don't know the whole situation, they ask me to voice my opinion," she said of the British authorities, who she said wanted her to denounce Russia. "If they tell me, 'We'll return Yulia to you if you say 'Russia is filth,' then I'll stand up and say 'Russia is filth' and take Yulia back to that filth."

Mr. Skripal's condition was raised to stable from critical on Friday, and he "is responding well to treatment, improving rapidly," said Dr. Christine Blanshard, medical director of Salisbury District Hospital, in a statement. Officials did not say whether he had regained consciousness, as Yulia Skripal did last week.

Russian officials have accused Britain of denying them access to Yulia Skripal. The British government – which contends that Moscow was most likely behind the attack on Ms. Skripal and her father, a former spy – said that the choice not to meet with Russian officials, at least not yet, was hers.

"We have conveyed to Ms. Skripal the Russian Embassy's offer of consular assistance," the British Foreign Office said in a statement released Thursday night. "Ms. Skripal is now able to choose if and when to take up this offer, but to date she has not done so."

Viktoria Skripal recorded what she said was a brief call this week from her cousin and turned the recording over to Russian state television, which broadcast it repeatedly. The veracity of the recording could not be confirmed, but Ms. Skripal suggested it was British officials, not Russians, who manipulated the conversation.

"You heard her -- the phone she's using is temporary, and at the end the line strangely cuts out," she said. "I think they've asked her to call me and give a specific statement."

Ms. Skripal also raised doubts about why Moscow would stage such an attack. "What's Russia's gain from this?" she said. "Getting the World Cup boycotted? Earning new sanctions? And with elections two weeks away? Russia gains nothing from this politically."

And, citing the case of Yevgeny Chichvarkin, a tycoon who fled to London in 2009, she said she does not take seriously repeated warnings from President Vladimir V. Putin that traitors could never feel safe.

"Look, there's Chichvarkin there with plenty of money," she said. "All those businessmen who have fled to France with huge sums. Why can't he just kill them all and get all the money back to Russia? Why don't they kill anyone in

America? There's even more of them there than in England."

On Thursday, Ms. Skripal appeared as the star guest on "Let Them Talk," a popular talk show on Russia's First Channel, a state-owned outlet that revels in promoting officially sanctioned conspiracy theories. Joining her on the show were the two Russians who Britain accused of the 2006 poisoning in London of Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former Russian spy and bitter critic of Mr. Putin; and Walter Litvinenko, Alexander's father, who blames the C.I.A. for his son's murder.

Turning to Ms. Skripal during the broadcast, Walter Litvinenko delivered a blistering tirade against the British government.

"You have to go to England and demand to see that girl," he said, referring to Yulia. "She will die there. They'll simply poison her, just like they poisoned my son three times in hospital. It's very dangerous to get involved with the British." Ms. Skripal was shown nodding her head as she appeared to stare at the floor.

While not an enthusiastic promoter of various Russian theories, Ms. Skripal has nonetheless added her voice to claims that Britain is involved in a cover-up. That view gained more force earlier this week when the head of the Porton Down military laboratory in Britain acknowledged that his scientists had only identified the nerve agent, not pinpointed Russia as the place where it was made.

Maria Zakharova, the Russian Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman, added further grist to Russia's conspiracy mill on Friday with a post on Facebook that suggested that the Skripals' pets -- two guinea pigs and a cat -- had been killed by the British and then cremated to destroy evidence relating to the nerve agent used against Yulia and Sergei Skripal.

"Our sources indicate that BBC television company was aware that pets remained in the house, but for some reason, it concealed this information," she wrote. "It would be nice to have a clarification. P.S. I'm not drawing any conclusions. This might be just a coincidence. But experiments with nerve agents in Porton Down were conducted specifically on guinea pigs."

Britain's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said Friday that the house had been sealed after the police recognized that the Skripals had been poisoned with a nerve agent. Regrettably, "two guinea pigs had sadly died" by the time someone entered the home to see about the animals, the statement said, and "a cat was also found in a distressed state and a decision was taken by a veterinary surgeon to euthanize the animal to alleviate its suffering."

Viktoria Skripal said she felt like a pawn in a great power standoff, hounded nonstop by Russian and foreign journalists. She said she had been interviewed recently by a Russian television crew that claimed to have been sent by Russia's Foreign Ministry, but the ministry denied any involvement.

"I wake up every day at 7 a.m. to at least have time to cook breakfast and wash by 9 a.m., because from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day, the calls don't stop," she said.

One theory widely shared on Russian social media is that the Skripals were the victims of a vengeance attack by the mother of Yulia's live-in boyfriend, who reportedly has ties to Russia's security apparatus. Viktoria Skripal said that she knew nothing about the boyfriend other than he lived with Yulia and that "he's close to all those structures, you understand."

The couple's apartment in the town of Podolsk, just south of Moscow, seemed to have been vacated. Mail had piled up in the letter box and nobody answered the door. Neighbors said he had moved out to his dacha.

Britain has said that Russia was almost certainly to blame for the attack, and after making its case behind closed doors, London has orchestrated a coordinated international response to the poisoning with its allies on both sides of the Atlantic.

That has led to retaliatory expulsions of hundreds of government representatives, angry denunciations and promises by Britain and its allies to inflict economic pain on Kremlin officials and their associates. The United States on Friday named seven of Russia's richest men and 17 top government officials who will face financial sanctions.

President Vladimir V. Putin's government has insisted that Moscow had nothing to do with the poisoning,

alternately questioning whether the Skripals were really poisoned, whether a nerve agent was involved, whether it was a Novichok, whether another country might have supplied it, and whether Britain itself might have carried out the attack.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, an international body, is examining evidence in the case. Russia has demanded that it be allowed to take part in the investigation -- a suggestion that Britain has called perverse.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Credit: MATTHEW LUXMOORE and RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA; Matthew Luxmoore reported from Yaroslavl, and Richard Pérez-Peña from London. Andrew Higgins contributed reporting from Moscow, and Ivan Nechepurenko from Podolsk.

Photograph

Viktoria Skripal, a Russian accountant, said she received a call from her cousin Yulia, who was poisoned along with her father. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MATTHEW LUXMOORE/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Social networks; Sanctions; Conspiracy; Biological &chemical weapons; Poisons
Location:	Russia New York United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK England France
People:	Litvinenko, Alexander Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Skripal, Yulia
Company / organization:	Name: New York Times Co; NAICS: 511110, 511120, 515112, 515120; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/06/world/europe/yulia-skripal-russia-britain.html
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'When a City of 40,000 People Gets Poisoned, They Don't Care'

Nechepurenko, Ivan . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]06 Apr 2018: A.7.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

VOLOKOLAMSK, Russia -- Five years ago, Aleksei G. Stelmakh thought he had built his little wooden house in one of the best neighborhoods around Moscow. Every day he could walk out onto his porch, breathe fresh air and scan the picturesque pine forest nearby.

Now, all he sees is a giant landfill, a heap of trash about 100 feet tall, so big that trucks on it look like insects. The fresh air is now suffused with methane and hydrogen sulfide gas that, besides stinking like rotten eggs, can lift his heart rate to alarming levels.

"They should take all of their waste back to the Kremlin," Mr. Stelmakh, 43, shouted on a recent Sunday as he joined several hundred people in a protest in the main square of the nearby town of Volokolamsk, 75 miles west of Moscow.

The protesters, some of them wearing surgical masks, complained about a wide range of things they have attributed to the gas fumes: cars that suddenly would not start; cats that keeled over dead; and most enraging of all, children suffering from nausea, dizziness and eczema.

"When Sergei V. Skripal got poisoned, this was very serious for them," Andrei A. Zhdanov, a local businessman, said of the authorities' response to the poisoning of a former Russian spy and his daughter in Britain in March.

"When a city of 40,000 people gets poisoned, they don't care."

On Sunday, Mr. Zhdanov was detained by the police and sentenced to 14 days of administrative arrest for hindering access to transport infrastructure by organizing an illegal rally.

The landfill crisis started in June, when residents of Balashikha, a large satellite town just outside Moscow, complained to President Vladimir V. Putin during his annual call-in show about the "unbearable" situation in their neighborhood, which stands 650 feet away from Kuchino, one of the largest landfill dumps in the region.

Mr. Putin, showing off his trademark Mr. Fix-It role, ordered the landfill closed. The government wanted to do so in 2021, allowing time to find and develop new locations to distribute Moscow's waste, but Mr. Putin was relentless.

"Now listen to me," Mr. Putin told Environment Minister Sergei Donskoy during a televised government meeting.

"Close this landfill within a month."

The landfill was closed, but the 1,000 or so truckloads of waste produced daily in Moscow had to go somewhere. The regional government distributed the extra waste among the few remaining landfills around Moscow, in some cases overwhelming their capacity. The one near Volokolamsk, in Yadrovo, has seen the lines of trucks in front of its gates increase by at least a quarter.

"In the first half of 2017, I received 80,000 tons of waste; in the second half I had twice as much," said Maksim O. Konopko, one of the Yadrovo landfill's owners. "If it weren't for Kuchino, we would stay within our normal limits."

In a landfill dump, the incoming waste -- most of it consisting of rotting food -- is buried with soil. The waste then brews inside, producing biogas, a combination of methane, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide and other components. In the absence of a collection system, the accumulated gas eventually bursts through the soil and vents in large quantities into the surrounding area. The Yadrovo landfill does not have such a system, though the owner plans to install one with the help of a Dutch company.

Mr. Konopko said that he wanted to restrict the volume of waste he was receiving, but that he was getting angry phone calls, pressuring him to take more.

"Do you know what country we live in?" Mr. Konopko said, implying that these were orders he could not refuse.

Mr. Konopko denied accusations that he had a financial interest in handling as much garbage as he could, since he is paid about \$2 per cubic meter, saying that the added revenues would be more than offset by the cost of the new gas reclamation system. Over all, the landfill representatives said they were just as much victims of this situation as anybody else.

That is debatable, given the apparent health effects, particularly for small children. Galina N. Dubrovskaya, a former accountant, said that her granddaughter, Uliana, had been a perfectly healthy child, but that this March the girl began to wake up at night suffering nausea, dizziness and headaches. These episodes seemed to coincide, she said, with the times when the landfill spewed stinking fumes.

At least 77 children were treated at the Volokolamsk hospital after one recent blast of fumes. The regional government denied that their symptoms had anything to do with the gas, and said no traces of it had been found in the children's blood.

Local residents have disagreed vehemently. Shura Y. Antipov, whose daughter Vika was covered with large red spots, was told by doctors that the girl was suffering from some allergy and hinted at "external causes." But they refused to link the spots to the landfill gases.

"At the beginning, doctors were pointing at the dump, but did not write anything down," said Mr. Antipov, 25, who works in the construction industry. "Now they say, 'Anything else but the landfill.'"

Experts say Russia's waste problem is systemic and warrants complicated long-term solutions.

"If you want to fix a leaking faucet, perhaps you shouldn't break the whole pipe with a sledgehammer," Aleksei Kiselyov, the head of Greenpeace Russia's toxics campaign, said of Mr. Putin's decision to close the big landfill.

"The whole waste landfill problem has become subject to populism."

To solve the problem, Mr. Kiselyov said, the Russian government would need to do what it never likes doing: encourage grass-roots movements to propagate recycling among the population.

"We have all these grand ideas about making Russia great, but we cannot do some fundamental things," he said.

So far, the Kremlin has been characteristically reluctant to cover the problem on state-run television channels, enraging people in Volokolamsk.

"The only things you hear are Ukraine and Syria, Ukraine and Syria," said Lidiya L. Ivanova, whose teenage grandson had his hands covered in eczema "as though he were wearing gloves."

"Why they never cover our own, Russian problems?" said Ms. Ivanova, 59.

The regional government has announced that it will close the Yadrovo landfill by the middle of this month and start its reclamation. The problem is that the Moscow waste will then be transferred to other landfills, and people are already protesting against the smell in other cities around the capital.

"You can move the waste from one pocket to another, but this doesn't solve the problem," said Aleksandr Zakondyrin, a member of the political party Green Alliance.

Deni Tsugayev, 10, said he felt nauseated every time his mother opened up the balcony door at night. When they went to the hospital, an official told them he was faking the sickness.

Last week, he went to the main square with his mother to protest. He carried a poster saying: "There are children in Syria, there are children in Ukraine! Who am I? I am only 10 and I want to live."

Author/Affiliation

Follow Ivan Nechepurenko on Twitter: @INechepurenko .

Photograph

The Yadrovo landfill, shown from a drone, recently began accepting truckloads of waste from Moscow after President Vladimir V. Putin abruptly closed another landfill. Residents of nearby Volokolamsk attribute their children's nausea, dizziness and headaches to noxious fumes from the dump. MAPS

DETAILS

Subject:	Nausea; Gases; Regional government; Children & youth; Waste management industry; Landfill
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK Syria Ukraine
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Greenpeace; NAICS: 813312, 813940
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Is Putin a C.I.A. Agent?

Friedman, Thomas L . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]04 Apr 2018: A.27.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

President Trump's steadfast reluctance to say anything negative about Russia is so striking that a former director of national intelligence, James Clapper, once observed that Vladimir Putin manages Trump as if he were a Russian intelligence "asset." He may be. But if I were a Russian citizen, I'd be asking this question: Is Putin a U.S. agent?

Why? Because Putin has undertaken so many actions in recent years that contributed to the weakening of Russia's economy and human capital base that you have to wonder whether he's secretly on the C.I.A.'s payroll. Beginning around 2007 or 2008, Putin appears to have decided that rebuilding Russia by nurturing its tremendous human talent and strengthening the rule of law was just too hard -- it would have required sharing power, holding

real, competitive elections and building a truly diverse, innovation-based economy.

Instead, Putin decided to look for dignity for Russia in all the wrong places: by tapping his oil and gas wells, not his people; by strengthening the Russian military, instead of the rule of law; and by enriching himself and his circle of oligarchs while wrapping himself in a cloak of Russian Orthodoxy and Russian nationalism that appealed to his base.

Les Echos, France's top business daily, recently quoted a Russian techy as pointing out that "Microsoft alone registers more patents than the whole of Russia!" The Russian technology market is not only weak, the story added, but "corruption in the judicial system ... makes it difficult to defend your case in court when a predator takes over a successful startup."

For all his shirtless bravado, and despite all the recent talk about how Putin is proving to be a successful authoritarian, I have one question: Then why is Putin so insecure about his real popularity in Russia that even after nearly 20 years at Russia's helm, he was afraid to allow a single credible independent candidate to run against him in the latest presidential election?

Here's the real truth: Putin consistently acts like a farmer who sells his most valuable beef in return for cubes of sugar. That is, he looks for short-term sugar highs to boost his popularity with his Russian nationalist base because he is insecure, and pays for it by giving up real beef, leaving Russia weaker in the long term.

Beef for sugar – not a good trade.

For instance, in 2014 Putin seized Crimea and invaded Eastern Ukraine with disguised Russian troops – to get a short-term sugar boost with the Russian electorate – and in return, he has had to live with long-term economic banking sanctions imposed by the West that help to slow Russia's growth.

In 2015, to prove that Russia was still a superpower – another short-term sugar high for his base – Putin sent advisers, Russian Air Force jets, special operations teams and surface-to-air missile batteries to Syria to prevent the toppling of Russia's Cold War ally, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Putin's support, along with the help of Iran, has just barely kept Assad upright, but for now Putin is stuck in the middle of Syria and can't get out, lest Assad falls and Putin looks foolish.

Here is how a veteran Russian foreign policy expert, Vladimir Frolov, described Putin's Syria fix in a March 5, 2018, essay in *The Moscow Times*:

In Syria, Russia is discovering that winning the war might be easier than winning the peace. Each time President Putin declares victory or announces a drawdown of Russian forces, like he did in December, the fighting flares up with a new intensity and Moscow is required to fly in reinforcements ... Moscow is now struggling to parlay its military gains into an internationally legitimate political settlement that would help Russia recoup its investments in the conflict. For now, Syria remains ungovernable and splintered into fiefdoms run by regional players with their own interests.

Putin's latest beef-for-sugar trade was his apparent ordering of the use of a military-grade nerve agent, produced only in Russia, to poison the former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in the English city of Salisbury. The Western response has been what British Prime Minister Theresa May described as the biggest collective expulsion of alleged Russian intelligence officers ever – over 100 from more than 20 countries.

Whether timed or coincidental, the poisoning attack and the Western backlash helped Putin run up his vote totals in his latest phony presidential re-election – another sugar high. But the morning after, Putin's Russia is more isolated than ever. Also, Putin's cronies and other Russian oligarchs – whose game is to make tons of dirty money in Russia and then take it to London, where it can be laundered for safekeeping – are now getting more scrutinized than ever by British authorities.

And then there is Putin's long-range strategy – to bet against Mother Nature, human nature and Moore's Law, all at once. He's betting against Mother Nature – that the world will indefinitely remain addicted to his oil and gas in an age of disruptive climate change. He's betting against human nature – that his young people won't want to be free to realize their full potential, not just live off sugar-high memories of historical greatness. And he's betting against Moore's Law – that the steady growth of technology won't empower Russia's youth to connect and collaborate,

and see through his charade.

Putin's troubles are nothing I celebrate. I was against NATO expansion; I wanted Russia integrated into the family of European democracies. A weak, isolated and humiliated Russia is a dangerous animal. But to thrive in the long term, Russia needs a "reset," and it can come only from within, but Putin won't press the button.

"Without reform, there is little reason to be optimistic about Russia's long-run growth trend, given its poor demographic profile, weak institutions and abject failure to diversify its economy, despite having an enormously talented and creative population," Kenneth Rogoff, the Harvard University economist, wrote in The Guardian last year. "If the world continues to move toward a low-carbon future, Russia will confront an inevitable choice: launch economic and political reforms or face continuing marginalization, with or without Western sanctions."

It's sad to see a country that gave us Tchaikovsky, Tolstoy, Spassky, Sakharov, Stravinsky, Shishkin, Dostoyevsky, Solzhenitsyn, Pushkin, Nureyev and the Google co-founder Sergey Brin become better known for giving the world Novichok, the deadly Russian nerve agent used in Britain; "little green men," the disguised Russian soldiers who seized Eastern Ukraine; and Guccifer 2.0, the Russian cyberagent who hacked the Democratic National Committee in 2016.

It's all beef for sugar -- and that's Putin's legacy.

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DETAILS

Subject:	Political leadership; Intelligence gathering; Oligarchy; Gambling; Rule of law; Economic conditions; Presidential elections; International relations-US; Short term; Poisons; Foreign policy
Location:	Russia United States--US Syria
People:	Trump, Donald J May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Assad, Bashar Al Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Central Intelligence Agency--CIA; NAICS: 928110, 928120
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/03/opinion/putin-cia-weakening-russia.html
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Document 127 of 176

Russia Sends Hasty R.S.V.P. to Trump Invitation

Higgins, Andrew; Baker, Peter . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y.]03 Apr 2018: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW -- Russia sought to move beyond last week's diplomatic confrontation with the West on Monday by pressing President Trump for a White House meeting with President Vladimir V. Putin that would undercut the perception that the angry reaction to the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain has left it isolated from the international community.

The Kremlin foreign policy adviser, Yuri Ushakov, said in Moscow that Mr. Trump, in a telephone call with Mr. Putin on March 20, proposed that the two leaders meet at the White House in the near future. Mr. Ushakov made clear that the Russian leader would like to take him up on the suggestion. "This is a rather positive idea," he said. Mr. Trump mentioned to reporters on the day of the phone call that he expected to "be seeing President Putin in the not-too-distant future," and the White House confirmed on Monday that it was among "a number of potential venues" discussed. But the phone call came before last week's tit-for-tat mass diplomatic expulsions sparked by

the nerve agent attack on Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy living in Britain.

It is not clear whether such a meeting is still viable, and both sides issued vague or even conflicting statements on Monday. Within hours of Mr. Ushakov's comment, the Kremlin spokesman, Dmitri S. Peskov, discounted it, saying the president's adviser was not correct.

In her own statement, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House press secretary, confirmed that a White House meeting was discussed but played down the prospect, saying, "We have nothing further to add at this time."

The idea of a personal get-together between the two presidents after each of them expelled 60 diplomats and closed consulates underscored the volatile nature of the Russian-American relationship these days. Mr. Trump has remained on friendly terms with Mr. Putin personally even as ties between their countries spiral toward Cold War depths.

But a meeting between the two leaders at this point would seem to conflict with the attitude of Mr. Trump's incoming foreign policy team, including Mike Pompeo, his nominee for secretary of state, and John R. Bolton, his new national security adviser, both of whom are considered Russia hawks.

"I think the Russians are looking for an off-ramp at the moment," said Angela Stent, a former national intelligence officer on Russia during President George W. Bush's administration and now director of the Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies at Georgetown University. "Perhaps they have followed" news accounts "about divisions over Russia policy and they want to set a possible meeting in motion before Bolton and Pompeo assume their new jobs."

Sarah E. Mendelson, a former State Department official under President Barack Obama now at Carnegie Mellon University, suggested it may be part of "a strategy on the Russians' part to engage Trump as if he were disconnected from his" advisers. Just as Mr. Trump engages Mr. Putin as if there were not tension because of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and the special counsel investigation into contacts with his campaign, Mr. Putin may simply ignore that as well.

"It all seems to be happening in parallel universes," she said, "one in which Russia poisons and interferes, and another in which none of this happened."

Other analysts said the discussion of a possible meeting between Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin may be more for domestic consumption in a Russia that sees itself excoriated by the international community after the poisoning of Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia.

"People are realizing what a major hit they took," said John R. Beyrle, a former American ambassador to Russia. "It's a way to say, 'See, it's not so bad, Putin is still welcome in polite society.' I was in Moscow last month just before the elections and was struck by how fed up some members of the Russian elite are getting at their perpetual pariah status – and this was before Skripal."

A White House visit would be a significant gesture toward the Russian leader. Mr. Putin has not been to the White House since 2005, when Mr. Bush hosted him there. Other than United Nations sessions, Mr. Putin's last visit to the United States for a presidential summit meeting came in 2007 when Mr. Bush and his father hosted him at the family compound in Kennebunkport, Me. Mr. Obama never invited Mr. Putin to the White House during his eight years in office, and the Russian declined an invitation to Camp David in 2012 for a meeting of what was then called the Group of 8. The two did meet in New York in 2015 during a United Nations session.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin have met in Germany and in Vietnam on the sideline of international summit meetings and currently have no plans to get together before November, when both are expected to attend a Group of 20 gathering in Argentina.

Mr. Ushakov said the two sides had not started any preparatory talks for a White House meeting because of the tailspin in relations. He nonetheless voiced a desire that Mr. Trump not drop the idea. "I hope the Americans won't abandon their proposal to discuss the possibility of holding the summit," he said.

Just as Mr. Trump has shown a striking reluctance to criticize Mr. Putin, even when the two countries are ejecting each other's diplomats, the Kremlin and the Russian news outlets it controls have often avoided criticizing Mr. Trump directly.

Soon after news of a possible White House meeting broke on Monday, a discussion on Rossiya 1, a state-controlled television channel, focused on a host of conspiracy theories to explain why the nerve gas attack in Britain had so disrupted relations between Moscow and Washington. Most revolved around the premise that American interest groups opposed to Mr. Trump's desire for rapprochement with Russia had staged the poisoning as a "provocation" to drive a wedge between Europe and Russia.

Particularly popular was the idea that the attack was an attempt to get Europeans to stop importing natural gas from Russia and shift to supplies from the United States. None of the participants in the discussion faulted Mr. Trump for the sharp deterioration in relations.

In a debate on state-controlled television on Sunday evening, a weekly shout-fest often dedicated to screaming about American perfidy, Sergey Mikheev, one of the participants, put forward what seems to be the consensus view of Russia's establishment: Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin are both eager to meet as soon as possible so they can stabilize relations but are prevented from doing so by opposition in the United States.

"It's not because Putin isn't ready, and not because Trump doesn't want to meet Putin," he said. "No such thing at all. Trump said that he is, in fact, even ready to meet Kim Jong-un. It is internal problems that prevent Trump from meeting anyone." America's "internal political crisis," he added, "prevents Trump from solving this problem. Current domestic political situation in the U.S. is such that Trump can't afford meeting Putin."

Credit: ANDREW HIGGINS and PETER BAKER; Andrew Higgins reported from Moscow, and Peter Baker from Washington. Oleg Matsnev contributed reporting from Moscow.

Vladimir V. Putin at the Kremlin on March 20, the date of a call with President Trump. (PHOTOGRAPH BY YURI KADOBNOV/A.F.P. -- GETTY IMAGES) (A5)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Political leadership; Diplomacy; Diplomatic & consular services; Presidents; International relations-US; Espionage; Poisons; State visits; Economic summit conferences; Foreign policy
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People:	Trump, Donald J Pompeo, Mike Kim Jong Un Bolton, John R Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
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Document 128 of 176

Poisoned Door Knob Hints at High-Level Plot to Kill Spy, U.K. Officials Say

Barry, Ellen; Sanger, David E . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]02 Apr 2018: A.5.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- British officials investigating the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian double agent, believe it is likely that an assassin smeared a nerve agent on the door handle at his home. This operation is seen as so risky and sensitive that it is unlikely to have been undertaken without approval from the Kremlin, according to officials who have been briefed on the early findings of the inquiry.

This theory suggests that an assassin, who Britain believes was working on behalf of the Russian government,

walked up to the door of Mr. Skripal's brick home on a quiet street in Salisbury on March 4, the day that he and his daughter, Yulia, were sickened.

Mr. Skripal, who was freed in a spy swap with the United States in 2010, is still in critical condition and unresponsive, but Yulia is conscious and talking, according to a BBC report.

Because the nerve agent is so potent, the officials said, the task could have been carried out only by trained professionals familiar with chemical weapons. British and American officials are skeptical that independent actors could have carried out such a risky operation or obtained the agent without approval at the highest levels of the Russian government -- almost exactly the same phrase that American intelligence agencies used in October 2016, when they first attributed the hacking of emails from the Democratic National Committee to a team of Russian hackers.

Four weeks after the assassination attempt, British and American officials are turning to the question of whether President Vladimir V. Putin himself was aware of, or ordered, the attack.

They say there is no evidence so far of his direct participation, but the Russian president, a former K.G.B. officer, is skilled at hiding his communications.

Russia has denied involvement in the poisoning, and in the election hack.

British and American officials say they are struck by the symbolism of the attack on Mr. Skripal, as well as its effectiveness. There were many ways the former spy could have been killed: He could have been shot, or killed in a staged accident.

But the assassins knew the nerve agent would be identified, and knew it would be linked to Russia, the officials said. That was meant to send a chilling message to others who would think of defecting to, or informing, the West. And by conducting the operation in an historical British town, some distance from London, the attack was meant to indicate that no place was out of reach of Russian assassins, the officials said.

The boldness of the attack on Mr. Skripal, which took British authorities by surprise, has caused them to reassess Mr. Putin's use of what has come to be called "hybrid warfare."

The officials are now viewing those actions as part of a pattern -- one rarely seen in the Cold War -- in which Mr. Putin exerts Russian power in ways that are hard to attribute directly to Russian actors, but leave little doubt in the minds of adversaries about the country's willingness to use a range of new tactics.

NATO allies are now thinking anew about coordinated responses, which is what the simultaneous ouster of the Russian agents was intended to represent. But it is unclear whether those countries can hold together in a continuous series of confrontations with Russia.

Eight days after the Skripals collapsed, Prime Minister Theresa May identified the poison as Novichok, developed in the last years of the Soviet Union.

For an assassin to leave poison on Mr. Skripal's door handle would require considerable knowledge of the underlying chemistry, said Richard Guthrie, an independent chemical weapons expert and editor of CBW Events. The nerve agent would have to be designed so that it would remain on the door handle, and then reliably be transferred to the target's hand, he said.

"It's a huge implication, if it was the door handle, because it means someone had to be in the U.K. with the material," Mr. Guthrie said. "Anything you create that would stick to the door handle, you've got to make it so that it would be removed from the door handle when it was handled, and not dropped off too quickly. That's complicated chemistry."

The assassin, he added, would have had to possess a high confidence that his target would be affected, because, he said, "you don't want to stand in front of the front door."

Alastair Hay, an emeritus professor of toxicology at the University of Leeds, agreed that such an attack would require specialized knowledge, to ensure the poison adhered to the door handle but felt innocuous to the targets. "Once they touched it, they would know that this handle was wet," Professor Hay said. "But they would not have dreamed that someone was trying to poison them. If they had, they would try to wipe it off."

Some experts have expressed caution about assuming that Mr. Putin approved the attack. Its timing was

awkward, coming too late to help him much in last month's election, and casting a diplomatic shadow over Russia's hosting of the 2018 World Cup.

And the Kremlin's embrace of proxy forces in recent years has opened the door to freelancing from other power centers, like security agencies or the country's military intelligence, which may not share their plans in detail. In their consultation with the United States and other allies, British officials shared a three-part case against Russia, the officials said.

The first element was an analysis of the nerve agent provided by mass spectrometry, a technique that sorts ions based on their mass-to-charge ratio. If the sample is strong enough, this technique could provide scientists with a chemical signature identifying its national source or even the specific laboratory that produced it, said Paul F. Walker, a chemical weapons expert at Green Cross International, a disarmament advocacy group.

The second element was evidence that Russia had publicly stated its intent to assassinate defectors living abroad. British officials pointed to 2006 legislation passed by the Russian Parliament, which granted Russia's president expanded powers to use force against opponents living in other countries.

Russia has never acknowledged using the authority under the law, and has denied any role in high-profile deaths, like that of Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former Russian K.G.B. officer who was poisoned with a rare and highly radioactive isotope known as Polonium 210 a few months after it was passed.

A third element of the British case against Russia consisted of intelligence -- either human intelligence, intercepted communications or other information -- that the officials would not share.

The dispute between Russia and Britain deepened last week, after the United States and European allies expelled more than than 150 Russian diplomats suspected of being spies.

Russia's government has said it "insists on the right" to visit Ms. Skripal, a Russian citizen. The British foreign office has said it will consider Russia's request, taking into consideration both international law and Ms. Skripal's wishes.

Russia also protested the search of an Aeroflot passenger jet on Friday after it traveled from Moscow to London's Heathrow Airport, and said that the British Border Force had tried to search the plane in the absence of its crew or captain. Ben Wallace, the British security minister, said there was nothing unusual about the search.

"It is routine for Border Force to search aircraft to protect the U.K. from organized crime and from those who attempt to bring harmful substances like drugs or firearms into the country," Mr. Wallace said.

Russia on Saturday also released a list of questions addressed to Britain, France and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which will hold a meeting on Tuesday to discuss the Skripal poisoning.

The questions scrutinize the British claim that the nerve agent originated in Russia, noting that an antidote was provided to the Skripals within hours of their poisoning, and questioning whether British scientists had produced Novichok nerve agents in their own laboratories.

Credit: ELLEN BARRY and DAVID E. SANGER; Ellen Barry reported from London and David Sanger from Washington.

Photograph

Police officers at the home of Sergei Skripal, a former spy, in Salisbury, Britain. He and his daughter were poisoned last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK TAYLOR/GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

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Location:	Russia United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK France

People:	Wallace, Ben May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Green Cross; NAICS: 813319; Name: University of Leeds; NAICS: 611310; Name: Democratic National Committee; NAICS: 813940; Name: Heathrow International Airport-London England; NAICS: 488119; Name: Aeroflot Russian Airlines; NAICS: 481111; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization–NATO; NAICS: 928120
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Putin Overplayed His Hand

Burns, William J . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]01 Apr 2018: SR.3.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Last week, following the brazen attempt by Russia to assassinate one of its former spies and his daughter in Britain with a chemical weapon, 27 countries expelled more than 150 Russian diplomats. Moscow swiftly and predictably reciprocated, announcing that it would expel 60 American diplomats.

Is this the end of President Trump's illusion about a grand bargain with Vladimir Putin's Russia and the beginning of a sober, long-term strategy?

Mr. Putin has prided himself on playing a strong game with weak cards. He sees plenty of opportunities to hobble his adversaries abroad and further cement his position at home. That requires engaging in an asymmetric game -- relying on dark arts to make inroads in a brutish world, exploiting the vulnerabilities of open societies while highlighting the benefits of his closed one.

Mr. Putin has steadily refined that playbook. He has had the advantage of testing it where he had the greater interest, most prominently in Ukraine. The attack on the former spy, Sergei Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia, is another classic if grotesque play. It's a not-so-subtle message to Mr. Putin's political opponents that dissent has its costs. It also tells his rivals in the West that he has every intention to kick them while they're down -- and get away with it.

By meddling in the internal affairs and democratic fabric of America and its allies over the past couple of years, Mr. Putin has overplayed his hand. He is risk-tolerant to the point of recklessness, and he has picked a fight where the West has far more at stake than he does.

Mr. Putin is likely surprised, but not fazed, by the breadth of the world's collective response to the Skripal incident. He can overcome the inconvenience of losing intelligence operatives. He is also betting that divisions in the West will mean that these actions are the end, not the beginning, of a response.

It's critical that Mr. Putin lose that bet. That is not a call for self-indulgent chest-thumping or blind confrontation.

Mr. Putin's broadly adversarial calculus cannot be reversed, but it can be altered in meaningful ways with coordinated pressure. That's where diplomacy comes in.

Mr. Putin's muscular revanchism can camouflage his weakness, but it cannot erase it. He remains reliant on a one-dimensional economy, constrained by sanctions, mired in the reckless adventures he's pursued in Ukraine and Syria, and increasingly subordinate to China and its growing ambitions. An effective diplomatic response needs to expose Mr. Putin's vulnerabilities as effectively as he has sought to exploit ours.

His biggest vulnerability is his diplomatic loneliness. He has nothing close to the web of alliances and partnerships that have anchored the United States and its partners. While it's almost always slower, harder and less satisfying to work in coalitions, the policy effects are almost always more long-lasting and effective. It's critical to work with our allies and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to establish a clear baseline to forcefully counter Mr. Putin's unserious denials of culpability.

We have demonstrated our ability to work in concert on painful sanctions after Mr. Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Now it's time to tighten those screws further, fully apply the sanctions passed by Congress last summer, and work closely with our partners to follow suit. We all need to reduce our vulnerabilities to Russia's meddling, and deny

impunity to those aiding and abetting those efforts.

The project of making Russia great is part and parcel of making Mr. Putin and his crony capitalist friends rich. That is also a vulnerability. Too many countries for too long have facilitated the enrichment and corruption of Mr. Putin's inner circle. That needs to end.

The logical next step after the diplomatic expulsions is a similarly coordinated campaign to hit the wallets of the Kremlin elite. That won't be easy or pain-free for a number of economies, including our own. A strong signal that business as usual is over will unsettle Moscow and stimulate concerns about what more drastic steps might follow. Mr. Putin knows that the longer he is denied foreign direct investment, the further behind his economy will fall.

There is some risk of a more forceful response to Mr. Putin's aggression. We need to be vigilant not to prompt an unprovoked escalation in Ukraine or legitimate Mr. Putin's shrouded machinations by deploying our own impulsively -- whether in cyberspace or other types of covert action. Sustaining military and diplomatic channels is not a favor or a sign of weakness. It's a way to demonstrate that while we will not give in to Mr. Putin, we will not give up on the longer-term prospect of a healthier relationship with Russia.

It may very well be that last week's countermeasures are nothing more than a passing phase. We already see cracks within the European Union and Britain is divided by the Brexit debates. The Trump administration has signaled policy shifts, like pulling out of the Iranian nuclear agreement, that will make it easier for Mr. Putin to create wedges.

American actions this past week offer a hopeful sign. Agile diplomacy can still land a punch. Now comes the hard part. Diplomacy won't transform the adversarial relationship with Mr. Putin's Russia, but it can manage it. Mr. Putin is right about one thing: We have the stronger cards. We've just played them erratically.

Now we should lead with diplomacy and demonstrate its enduring power and purpose. If we don't, we'll perpetuate illusions about partnerships with Mr. Putin and the irrelevance of diplomacy -- and waste our bigger, better hand.

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Author/Affiliation

William J. Burns, the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a former deputy secretary of state, was the American ambassador to Russia from 2005 to 2008.

Photograph

Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg in March. Last week, Russia announced it would expel 60 American diplomats.
(POOL PHOTO BY ANATOLY MALTSEV/EPA-EFE/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

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Corrections

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FULL TEXT

INTERNATIONAL

An article on Wednesday about Kim Jong-un's train misstated how many people are believed to have died in a 2004 train disaster in Ryongchon, North Korea. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies concluded that 161 people were killed, with 1,300 injured; it is no longer thought that 3,000 people died, though early news reports estimated that there had been 3,000 casualties.

Because of an editing error, an article on Thursday about the poisoning of the Russian ex-spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter incorrectly described Det. Sgt. Nick Bailey, who was exposed to the nerve agent. He is a policeman, not an emergency medical worker.

An article on Friday about the Lithuanian capital city of Vilnius misspelled the name of the Holocaust remembrance center in Israel. It is Yad Vashem, not Yad Vesham. The article also misspelled the name of a human rights organization. It is the Simon Wiesenthal – not Weisenthal -- Center.

NEW YORK

An article on Friday about the lawsuit to preserve the DACA program misspelled the surname of the spokeswoman for the New York attorney general. She is Amy Spitalnick, not Spitalnik.

SPORTS

A column on Friday about Rusty Staub, who died on Thursday, erroneously included a player in a group of those who had reached base at least 4,000 times and become eligible for induction into the Baseball Hall of Fame. While Pete Rose reached base over 4,000 times in his career, he was barred permanently from Major League Baseball in 1989 and has never been eligible for induction into the Hall.

WEEKEND ARTS

An article on Friday about the departure of the music executive Charlie Walk from the Republic Group amid harassment accusations misstated the number of women, in addition to Tristan Coopersmith, who said in a Rolling Stone story that they were sexually harassed by Mr. Walk. It was four, not five.

An article on Friday about film series and special screenings in New York City misstated the title for the series highlighting Lynne Ramsay's films at BAM. It is "Tough Love: Cinema by Lynne Ramsay," not "Tough Love: The Cinema of Lynne Ramsay."

STYLES

An article on Thursday about Boyd's clothing store in Philadelphia misspelled the name of a men's clothing store. It is Morvilles, not Morevilles.

SCIENCE

An article on Thursday about the remains of a baby girl discovered in Chile misstated the distance between La Noria, Chile, and the Atacama Desert. La Noria is within the desert, not 450 miles north of it. The article also misstated the surname of a biologist. She is Cristina Dorador, not Dorado.

REAL ESTATE

A photo caption with an article on the cover this weekend about home renovations misidentifies a woman in Niskayuna, N.Y., who had a problem with her contractor. She is Terri Goldman, not Terry Goldman.

OBITUARIES

An obituary on Friday about the writer Russell Freedman misspelled the name of a children's literature award. It is the Newbery Medal, not Newberry. The obituary also misstated the title of Mr. Freedman's first novel. It is "Teenagers Who Made History," not "Teenagers Who Changed History."

Errors are corrected during the press run whenever possible, so some errors noted here may not have appeared in all editions.

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Trump Is Urged To Get Tougher On Russia Policy

Baker, Peter; Higgins, Andrew; Erlanger, Steven . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]31 Mar 2018: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- Some senior Trump administration officials are pressing for more aggressive action toward Russia, hoping to persuade a reluctant President Trump to change his approach after a week of mass diplomatic expulsions that have driven the relationship with Moscow to its lowest point in decades.

With hundreds of diplomats in Washington, Moscow and European capitals packing their bags as the tensions stemming from the poisoning of a former Russian spy living in Britain have worsened, the Trump team is eyeing additional sanctions and other measures against Russia. But while aides say the president has become increasingly convinced that Russia is dangerous, he has still refused to embrace a tougher public posture himself and remains uncertain how far to authorize his administration to go.

Mr. Trump has emphasized the importance of dialogue with Russia and its president, Vladimir V. Putin, yet the departure of so many diplomats expelled from both Russia and the United States will make it that much harder to maintain a semblance of normal relations between the two countries. Cooperation in areas as varied as agriculture, counterterrorism, military affairs and space exploration could diminish, as could private travel and business dealings.

The perils of the diplomatic breakdown came into sharper relief on Friday. Russia's ambassador in Washington lamented that no one would meet with him, and his embassy complained that Russian diplomats were being harassed by American intelligence agencies eager to recruit them.

The Pentagon, for its part, said that it had no notice of a test of a new intercontinental ballistic missile conducted by Russia and announced on Friday, a lack of communication that experts worry could lead to miscalculation.

"I don't remember such bad shape of our relations," Anatoly Antonov, the Russian ambassador to Washington, told NBC's "Today" show. "There is a great mistrust between the United States and Russia."

Since his arrival last year in Washington, Mr. Antonov said he had invited American officials to his residence only to be repeatedly rebuffed. "If they are scared, I said, 'Come on, we can meet in a restaurant and to discuss all

outstanding issues," he said. "It was four or five months ago. And I got answer: silent."

American officials said a shift in the administration's approach has been building for weeks. Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, whose last official day on the job is Saturday, had come to the conclusion before Mr. Trump fired him this month that a year of attempting to cooperate had not yielded much success, according to people familiar with his thinking. As a result, they said, Mr. Tillerson had begun mapping out a tougher policy toward Russia and found agreement in the White House.

The administration began taking a more robust approach, publicly blaming Russia for a devastating attack on computers in Ukraine and elsewhere, accusing Moscow of trying to break into the United States' power grid and imposing sanctions in retaliation for Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election in the United States. Mr. Tillerson's feelings were hardened further by a conversation with Boris Johnson, the British foreign secretary who described to him the nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter living in Britain. Even in the hours before his dismissal by Mr. Trump, Mr. Tillerson spoke out in stronger terms than the president in condemning the poisoning.

While Mr. Tillerson is on the way out, his designated successor, Mike Pompeo, and the incoming national security adviser, John R. Bolton, are both considered even more hawkish on Russia.

At the same time, some officials at the Pentagon have expressed caution about the escalating conflict with Russia, citing consequences in Syria, where the United States and Russia have both conducted military operations. The Trump administration expelled 60 Russian diplomats and intelligence officers and closed the Russian consulate in Seattle this week as part of a wider international retaliation for the poisoning of Mr. Skripal. Russia responded Thursday by ordering out 60 Americans and closing the consulate in St. Petersburg. The scope of Russia's retaliation grew clearer on Friday as the Kremlin summoned 23 ambassadors from other countries to evict some of their diplomats.

But Mr. Trump has remained publicly silent amid the dramatic rounds of diplomatic retaliation, leaving it to others to condemn Moscow. Frustrated by the investigation of the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, into whether his campaign cooperated with Russia in 2016, a scenario he dismissed as a "hoax," Mr. Trump recently called Mr. Putin to congratulate him on his victory in a re-election widely dismissed as a sham.

Mr. Trump made no mention of the poisoning of Mr. Skripal during the call but instead suggested that he wanted to schedule a summit meeting with the Russian president.

Both countries still have ambassadors in place, so high-level contact on potentially calamitous matters should continue, as it did at the height of the Cuban missile crisis. But the wheels of basic diplomacy, involving visas, consular services, cultural events and simply talking to people, are grinding ever more slowly and, in some cases, coming to a halt.

"The parties lose some of their eyes and ears, so the quality of the reporting goes down," said Charles A. Kupchan, who was the Europe director of the National Security Council under President Barack Obama. "It's not just intelligence but day-to-day political and economic reporting: What's the buzz in the street, what do interlocutors say? And consular services do get hit."

The expulsions left many diplomats wondering how the American Embassy in Moscow could operate. Much of the burden will fall on the ambassador, Jon M. Huntsman Jr., who took over an embassy already struggling to function after an order by the Kremlin last summer that it dispense with 755 employees in response to sweeping American sanctions for Russia's election meddling.

"The embassy is struggling to do basic operations. This latest round will hurt," said Michael A. McFaul, who served as ambassador in Moscow from 2012 to 2014. "Morale, of course, is also very low."

Even before this week's expulsions, the wait in Moscow to obtain a visitor's visa to the United States was among the longest in the world. It now takes 250 days just to get an appointment with the visa section, compared with four in Beijing and 31 in New Delhi.

An American spokesman told Russian news media this week that the embassy had been placed under "significant

constraints" by the Foreign Ministry and "could not accommodate all their many requests at all times, particularly for large groups."

Simon Schuchat, a former diplomat at the embassy in the Moscow, recalled how haphazard and unnerving it is when Russia began the process of ousting alleged spies during a round of expulsions in 2001. Inevitably, Moscow ordered out diplomats unconnected to espionage.

"They tended to go for people with better language skills," Mr. Schuchat said, adding that they "missed many spies and included many non-spies."

This time around, intelligence officers working under "official cover" as diplomats were especially targeted, but some American officials played down the impact, saying the United States still came out ahead in the expulsions.

"That's to our benefit," Dan Coats, the director of national intelligence, said at a seminar on Thursday in Austin, Tex.

"There are a lot more Russians in America than Americans in Russia in the intelligence agencies."

On Friday, Russia's Foreign Ministry accused the agencies overseen by Mr. Coats of exploiting the situation by approaching Russian diplomats leaving the United States to offer "assistance" in exchange for "entering into covert relations" on behalf of the American government.

"The ploy is not working," the ministry said in a statement, "but their behavior is cynical and distasteful, as if Washington has stepped completely beyond the bounds of common decency."

Credit: PETER BAKER, ANDREW HIGGINS and STEVEN ERLANGER; Peter Baker reported from Washington, Andrew Higgins from Moscow, and Steven Erlanger from Brussels. Gardiner Harris contributed reporting from Washington, Matthew Luxmoore from Moscow, and Eric Schmitt from Austin, Tex.

The United States Embassy in Moscow is already struggling to handle some basic operations after a previous staff reduction. Waits for visitor visas are among the longest in the world. Much of the burden will fall on Ambassador Jon M. Huntsman Jr. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXANDER NEMENOV/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES; YEGOR ALEYEV/TASS, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (A9)

DETAILS

Subject:	Diplomatic &consular services; Intelligence gathering; Presidents; Sanctions; Poisoning; National security; Cooperation; Voter fraud; Espionage
Location:	Beijing China Russia United Kingdom--UK Syria France Ukraine Europe United States-US
People:	Trump, Donald J Pompeo, Mike Johnson, Boris Skripal, Sergei V Obama, Barack Bolton, John R Mueller, Robert S III Harris, Gardiner Putin, Vladimir Tillerson, Rex W Coats, Dan
Company / organization:	Name: National Security Council; NAICS: 928110; Name: Department of Defense; NAICS: 928110
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LINKS

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Crisis Deepens As the Kremlin Bucks the West

Higgins, Andrew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]30 Mar 2018: A.1.

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FULL TEXT

MOSCOW -- Russia on Thursday escalated a confrontation with Europe and the United States over the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain, saying it would expel 60 American diplomats and an unspecified number of envoys from other countries to retaliate for a mass expulsion of Russian diplomats working in the West and beyond that was ordered this week.

Furious at what it described as an anti-Russian campaign orchestrated by Washington and London, the Kremlin exceeded an equivalent response to the United States and ordered the closing of the American Consulate in St. Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city. The consulate is bigger and far more important to relations than the Russian Consulate in Seattle, which the Trump administration ordered closed on Monday as part of its expulsion decree.

The crisis over the March 4 poisoning of a former Russian double agent and his daughter has driven tensions between the Kremlin and the West to their highest pitch in decades and forced European countries like Germany that are usually wary of clashing with Moscow to choose sides. Britain contends that the poison used was a signature Russian nerve agent created by Soviet-era scientists.

Voicing alarm that the East-West confrontation was spinning out of control, the secretary general of the United Nations, António Guterres, said that the crisis recalled the Cold War, only without the controls and channels of communication established before the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union "to make sure things would not get out of control when tensions rise."

The intensifying crisis has also put new pressure on President Trump. He has been loath to criticize Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, and, against the advice of his advisers, he avoided any mention of the March 4 nerve agent attack in Salisbury, England, when he telephoned Mr. Putin to congratulate him on his lopsided victory in Russia's March 18 election.

Following his practice of avoiding public criticism of Russia, Mr. Trump made no mention of the expulsions during a speech on Thursday afternoon in Ohio.

Hours later the White House issued a muted response, calling the Kremlin actions "a further deterioration" in United States-Russia relations.

"The expulsion of undeclared Russian intelligence officers by the United States and more than two dozen partner nations and NATO allies earlier this week was an appropriate response to the Russian attack on the soil of the United Kingdom," the White House said in a statement. "Russia's response was not unanticipated, and the United States will deal with it."

In a sign that Russia's political elite still retains hope that President Trump wants to take a softer line on Moscow, Vladimir Dzhabarov, deputy chairman of the international affairs committee in Russia's upper house of Parliament, told the Interfax news agency on Thursday that Mr. Trump had been forced to expel Russian diplomats on Monday under "pressure" from unidentified foes of the Kremlin who were angry that he had congratulated Mr. Putin.

Russian politicians and state-controlled media outlets have long clung to the idea that Mr. Trump is Moscow's friend and would like to improve relations but has been pressured into taking a tough line by what they describe as America's "deep state," a supposed network of hidden powers hostile to Russia and often loyal to former administrations.

This resilient trust in Mr. Trump, however, has been severely undermined by the American decision to rally behind British accusations that Russia was to blame for the nerve agent attack on Sergei V. Skripal, a former military intelligence officer who spied for Britain, and his daughter, Yulia. The Russians also are angry over Washington's role in mobilizing a broad coalition of European and other countries in support of Britain.

In all, 27 countries are ejecting more than 150 Russians, including people listed by their embassies and consulates as diplomats, and military and cultural attachés. Western officials say that many of the Russians are spies and that the expulsions will hinder Russian espionage.

Britain's national security adviser, Mark Sedwill, who was visiting Washington on Thursday as the Russian expulsion order was announced, called it a response to a powerful Western message: That for the first time the United States and two dozen other nations would "act together to respond to a range of aggressive Russian behavior."

Wary of picking a fight with the whole of Europe, however, Russia has focused its fury on London and Washington, accusing them of strong-arming allies to endorse what it insists are unfounded accusations of Russian involvement in the attack on the Skripals.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Thursday that it would make a "mirror" response to expulsions by Germany, France and other countries that expelled a small number of Russian diplomats, suggesting equivalent expulsions of diplomats from European countries, Australia and other nations that ordered out Russian envoys on Monday. But Moscow avoided denouncing those countries and instead accused the American authorities of "encouraging and fomenting a slander campaign against our country." In a statement, the ministry demanded that they "stop their reckless actions aimed at ruining bilateral relations."

In remarks on Russian television on Thursday evening, Mr. Putin's spokesman, Dmitri S. Peskov, scoffed at accusations of a Russian role in the Salisbury attack as "unprecedented impudence" and said Western actions amounted to "gangsterism in international affairs."

Mr. Skripal, a former colonel in Russian military intelligence who was imprisoned in Russia for selling secrets to the British, was sent to Britain in 2010 as part of a spy swap. Why he would be targeted years later is unclear, but political and security analysts have said that the attack was a warning to those who would cross Mr. Putin that, even in exile, they are never beyond the Kremlin's reach.

Relations between Russia and the West were already rocky over Moscow's roles in the wars in Syria and Ukraine, Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, its meddling in elections in the United States and elsewhere, the assassination of Kremlin foes in Russia and abroad, cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns against other countries and what Western officials have described as a broad, largely covert effort to destabilize and discredit liberal democracies.

Mr. Putin last year ordered the United States Embassy in Moscow to reduce its staff by 755 employees, mostly Russians working as guards, drivers and in other support jobs, after Congress ordered sweeping sanctions against Russia to punish it for meddling in the American election.

Russia's decision on Thursday to evict 60 American diplomats will further strain the American Embassy's already reduced operations, making it even more difficult to process visas and watch over economic relations and other matters on which Russia and Washington still sometimes collaborate. The Russian retaliation is also likely to hurt Western espionage capabilities in Russia. The United States and its allies also use diplomatic covers for their spies.

While relations were already strained, the nerve agent attack in Salisbury has frayed tempers so severely that mistrust between Moscow and the West has now spiked to a level not seen since a Soviet warplane shot down a Korean Airlines passenger jet from New York to Seoul in 1983. Soviet officials initially denied any role in downing the plane.

In often angry comments at a press briefing on Thursday, the Foreign Ministry's spokesman, Maria Zakharova, said Britain had no evidence to support its accusations against Russia and compared them to a Nazi campaign to blame the Soviet Union for a 1933 fire at the German Parliament. The fire, exploited by the Nazis to rally support, played a crucial role in Hitler's rise to power.

Ms. Zakharova said Washington and Britain had dragooned unwilling countries into their "anti-Russian campaign" through pressure and favors, which she did not detail.

Her remarks seemed aimed at containing the diplomatic crisis to Russia's relations with London and Washington, the pillars of a trans-Atlantic alliance that Moscow, since the Cold War era, has accused of harboring a particular animus against Russia.

The Kremlin's actions also signaled to the Russian public that their country was not at odds with the whole of Europe, which would be an alarming prospect for millions of Russians who travel each year to countries like France and Germany.

The closing of the consulate in St. Petersburg will please Russians and others who responded to an opinion poll conducted by the Russian Embassy in Washington. The embassy invited people following its Twitter account to vote for which American consulate Moscow should close in response to the closing of Russia's Seattle consulate, and St. Petersburg was by far the favorite choice.

Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain and her government contend that Mr. Skripal and his daughter were

poisoned with one of an extremely powerful class of nerve agents known as Novichok, developed by Soviet scientists in the 1970s and '80s. The British say they have solid evidence that Russia was probably behind the attack, and that Mr. Putin himself probably approved it.

The Skripals were found unconscious in a busy shopping area in Salisbury, where Mr. Skripal lives. He remains hospitalized in critical condition, but his daughter is showing improvement, British officials announced on Thursday. British officials say that hundreds of people could have been exposed to the nerve agent used against the Skripals.

Sergey V. Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, said Thursday that Russia had called for a meeting next Tuesday of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to "establish the truth" with respect to what Russia refers to as "the so-called Skripal case."

Credit: ANDREW HIGGINS; Reporting was contributed by Oleg Matsnev from Moscow, Richard Pérez-Peña from London, Peter Baker and David E. Sanger from Washington, and Rick Gladstone from New York.

Photograph

The American consulate in St. Petersburg, left. The Russian foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, above, said the number of expelled diplomats would "mirror" the number of ousted Russians. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTON VAGANOV/REUTERS; YURI KADOBNOV/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A6)

DETAILS

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A Place to Come In From the Cold

Hamilton, William L. *New York Times*, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y.] 30 Mar 2018: C.11.

[🔗 ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

"Hello Bill Hamilton." The silver kiosk displayed its welcome when I swiped the black wristband that was my admission ticket.

The days of slipping through the back of a tailor's shop are long gone.

I was standing before the first of 12 information-gathering sentinels at Spyscape, a \$50 million, 60,000-square-foot spying and espionage museum, which opened recently in mid-Manhattan.

With leading questions and embarrassing exercises, the kiosks were assessing me -- personality traits, risk tolerance and I.Q. -- to construct a profile of the kind of spy I might best be.

Spyscape is the newest unhidden headquarters of our cultural fascination with the art of deception, two levels inside a nondescript glass-box building on 8th Avenue at 55th Street. Its dark, labyrinthine interior landscape was designed by David Adjaye, the architect of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

The kiosk would like me to agree or disagree with a few statements.

"I'll say anything to get what I want," it declared in a light tone of conspiracy. I gave that idea a dissembling 3 on a scale of 1 to 5, from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

"I'm willing to be unethical if I believe it will help me succeed." I squashed that with a 1. "I keep others at a distance." Well, now that you mention it: 4.

"This is like dating," I said to Aaron Moody, a visitor services associate.

In fact, espionage may be bigger than courtship on social media right now, with Facebook at the center of a growing controversy over the use of personal data during elections, and the park-bench poisoning of former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter drawing international censure. Seismic private-information hacks reveal themselves with regularity, in government and business. We accept drone-patrolled, surveillance-prying public space. Cyber warfare has come of age, and the Cold War is back.

"Scary biscuits," as the English say.

"I thought that spy stories were really a thing of the '70s," Mr. Adjaye said in an interview. "And here we are at this time, that actually spying is back."

Asked how confident he was in the security of his own personal information, on a scale of 1 to 10 – with 10 being most secure – Mr. Adjaye said, "Three."

What is it about the shadows of deception that excites our participation and not our fear? The International Spy Museum in Washington, with its impressive collection of spy artifacts, will be moving to a greatly expanded facility next year. A new National Museum of Intelligence and Special Operations, under development in Ashburn, Va., is expected to open in 2020.

Conceived as an entertainment attraction, Spyscape's \$39 experience (\$32 for children ages 3 to 12 – bring them; you'll need them) is a cultural chimera: part museum, part ride. It was created by Archimedia, a London-based private investment group that has been a developer in resorts, restaurants, and spy-themed film productions like the television adaptation of John le Carré's "The Night Manager."

Spyscape's immersive experience begins in the outsize elevator, which makes a slow three-minute ascent. The Briefing Lift, as it's called, delivers the visitor into Spyscape's realm with a three-walled video created by Territory Studio in London, which worked on "Blade Runner 2049."

The doors open; you have arrived at the 25-foot-high "city within a city," as Mr. Adjaye calls the main floor: seven galleries presenting themes like encryption and special ops. In addition to a curated collection of objects, there are 141 live screens, 317 speakers, 113 live cameras and 32 projectors telling Spyscape's stories. There are also games called "challenges" and the kiosks.

The stories are all real-life – no fictional spies like James Bond. The "Encryption" gallery tells the story of Alan Turing and Joan Clarke, the cryptanalysts of World War II, who cracked the German Enigma code; Virginia Hall in "Special Ops," the woman with one leg who operated in occupied France and was called "the scourge of the Gestapo"; Edward Snowden in "Surveillance." There is an actual Enigma machine, and a replica you can code on. "Encryption" closes with a present-day warning.

"The Enigma story shows no code is 100 percent foolproof." And, "WikiLeaks revealed that the C.I.A. can't break WhatsApp – yet. Every intelligence service is on the case trying to."

Scary biscuits.

I am inside a black booth, facing a black-glass monitor. There is a heartbeat playing. Or are my ears pounding? Nick Ryan, a sound artist whose clients have included Tate Britain in London, designed Spyscape's aural landscape, which is as originally and meticulously rendered as Mr. Adjaye's architecture.

"Hello Bill Hamilton. Welcome to Deception."

I am being tested for how well I lie and how well I detect lies. I stare at a grid on the monitor, which registers my face, and begins a live feed of me at the bottom. I put my fingertip on a red sensor, which takes my pulse.

"Have you ever been to space? What did you like about it?"

"Yes. It wasn't New York," I lie. The screen replays my face. My eyes are blinking like signal lamps.

"People blink more when lying," the booth says empathetically. It knows I know I've failed.

Spyscape's experience is mildly paranoid, but it is never deadly dark. Its affirmative message – on T-shirts and tote bags – is "Question Everything." Be your own information gatherer. Who would argue with that? There are no rendition programs or extraditions here. (Shelby Prichard, Spyscape's chief of staff, who previously worked for the 9/11 Museum, said that the information gathered here was not shared externally or sold.)

In a timely way, Spyscape shows us what we know, but choose to ignore: that espionage and spying are not only

the stuff of extraordinary tales or specialists' tools. They are the "enemies among us" -- the CCTVs, the closed-circuit tracking systems, the browser cookies. There is a double agent in every pocket. "Mobile phones are the most powerful spy devices of all," the Briefing Lift explains.

Hakeen Betts, the retail associate who sold me John le Carré's "The Pigeon Tunnel" in Spyscape's exhaustive bookshop, told me that on a visit, his 10-year-old son was evaluated and told he was a "spymaster," based on his performance with the interactivities.

All 10-year-olds are spymasters now. At the Encryption challenge, large horizontal touch screens, which look like naval charting tables, test your ability to grasp ciphers quickly. (It reminded me of dealing with an iOS update). A girl wearing a sparkling ballet skirt and sequined cat's ears explained ciphers to her befuddled father: "Here's how you do it."

Swipe. "Hello Bill Hamilton."

I am at the door of a laser tunnel. I step through. The tunnel is studded with unlighted buttons. I hit the red start button. "Welcome to Special Ops. Avoid the lasers. Good luck."

The buttons turn bright white. Smoke hisses in. Loud music, with a "There he is -- grab him!" mania to it. The tunnel is now a spider's web of laser beams. I have 90 seconds to punch as many buttons as I can, deactivating them, without hitting a laser beam, which deducts 5 seconds from the running clock. I break into a sweat so hard I can hear it. And that's the last thing I remember.

Two men rolled out laughing from other tunnels. Competing in side-by-side chambers, they scored a 165 and a 140. I am the spy who came in from the cold, really slowly. 95.

Spyscape's last chamber is Debrief. On the black-screened walls, streams of information glow. Visitors are given their analyses and told what spy roles they might play.

My screen says some conciliatory things, a kind of "you were second on the list, really" that I recognize from human resources officers.

"You take risks after careful consideration." Thank you. "You are mathematical." Uh, ok. It's never seen my SATs.

"You are very precise in your work." Nice -- tell my editor.

"Bill Hamilton, you are a cryptologist."

In three tries, over three visits, I am repeatedly a cryptologist, passed over for "intelligence operative," "spycatcher" and other action roles I coveted. No rooftop motorcycle chases, perfect cocktails or brand placement. A desk job. If I couldn't crack my own code, how good could I be?

Michael Amendola, an assistant theater producer I met in the gift shop, told me Spyscape had decided he was a "hacker" -- a risk-taker. He praised the museum's immersive nature.

"I loved the code breaking, I loved the laser exhibition," Mr. Amendola said, adding that he learned a great deal, too. He compared Spyscape to a recent visit to the Museum of Sex on lower Fifth Avenue. "It's an interesting concept," Mr. Amendola said of MoSex, "but I thought it felt a little underwhelming."

If you can beat sex, you're in like Flint.

Spyscape

928 Eighth Avenue

212-549-1941; spyscape.com

Photograph

Spyscape, a new espionage museum in Manhattan, includes challenges like a tunnel filled with laser beams. (C11); Top, Guy Fawkes masks, like those worn by the hacker group Anonymous. Spyscape also touches on Edward Snowden and WikiLeaks. Above left, "The Imitation Game," a movie about Alan Turing and Joan Clarke, featured this copy of the machine those British cryptanalysts used to crack the Enigma code during World War II. Above, a replica of the Enigma machine. Bottom, visitors testing their surveillance skills. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AMY LOMBARD FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C14)

DETAILS

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With an Eye on Russia, Britain Edges Toward Dirty Money Crackdown

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[!\[\]\(83527a86093223ccfa5bf559631acc74_img.jpg\) ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- For years, anticorruption campaigners have railed against Britain's openness to ill-gotten riches from overseas and the foreigners who invest them. After a nerve agent attack on British soil, and the resulting diplomatic showdown between Russia and the West, that may be starting to change.

The British government said this week that it would review the cases of 700 Russians who were granted visas to live in Britain largely because they could invest millions of dollars in the country. And it signaled an openness to cutting off access to British financial markets for President Vladimir V. Putin's government in Russia.

The government's expressed determination to crack down on dirty money came on a day of rare good news in the poisoning attack. Yulia S. Skripal, who with her father, Sergei V. Skripal, was assaulted with a nerve agent, "is improving rapidly and is no longer in a critical condition," Salisbury District Hospital said on Thursday.

Her father, a former Russian spy, remains hospitalized in critical condition.

Downing Street has promised before to punish Russia, particularly after the 2006 assassination of the Kremlin critic Aleksandr V. Litvinenko with a deadly radioactive isotope. But it dropped the matter once the headlines disappeared.

Some critics continued to voice doubts about whether this time would be any different. But the fact that Britain's lax attitude toward corrupt fortunes and the need to change it has become a major topic of debate seems to signal a real change in the political atmosphere.

Lawmakers on the left and the right have demanded a hard line after British officials said Novichok, a military grade chemical weapon, was used against the Skripals in Salisbury, England, where Mr. Skripal lived, and the government blamed the Kremlin.

Officials said the attack left residues around the town, endangering hundreds of people, though none are known to have shown symptoms. A police officer was sickened after coming into contact with the substance, which the authorities say they believe was put on the front door of Mr. Skripal's house, but he is no longer hospitalized.

The primary action so far by Britain and its allies has been the expulsion of more than 150 Russian government officials, many of them suspected spies. On Thursday, the Russian foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, said that Moscow was expelling 60 diplomats from the United States and shutting the American consulate in St.

Petersburg.

The Americans were given until April 5 to leave. Russia had already expelled 23 Britons in retaliation for Britain's expulsion of the same number of Russians.

Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain had also promised measures to punish Mr. Putin and his circle financially. She offered few details, but said that they could include freezing Russian assets in Britain and passing a version of

the Magnitsky Act, the American law that prohibits a list of powerful Russians from entering the United States or using its banking system.

[Read more about Britain's options in retaliating against Russia here.]

Vladimir L. Ashurkov, the executive director of the Anti-Corruption Foundation, a group based in Moscow, said he had heard promises of reform before, but they were always undercut by a lack of urgency and inadequate resources for financial regulators and law enforcement.

"There is no real political will to go after corrupt money flows," said Mr. Ashurkov, a Putin critic who now lives in Britain. "Maybe it will change in the current political situation."

Governments of both British major parties have contributed to the permissive approach to foreign wealth, but Mrs. May and her Conservative government are under particular pressure to act, given the enormous international attention given to the use of a chemical weapon against people in Britain.

The Skripal attack has revived criticism that Conservative governments were not aggressive enough in investigating the Litvinenko murder and other suspicious deaths of Putin foes in Britain. In the wake of the nerve agent poisoning, the government has said it will re-examine those deaths.

Conservative lawmakers have also come under scrutiny for raising campaign money from wealthy Russians living in Britain and their associates.

Britain has some of Europe's loosest rules for allowing foreign money into its banking system and for putting assets into corporations without disclosing corporate ownership -- conditions that anticorruption groups say have attracted hundreds of billions of dollars in questionable money, invested in financial markets and real estate. Britain has also been permissive about granting "investor visas" to people to live in the country if they bring millions of dollars with them, without careful examination of their wealth, though those rules were tightened in 2015.

"We've had a light-touch regulation approach, which means that money has come in -- we have no idea really what money is crossing the border," said Tom Keatinge, director of the center for financial crime at the Royal United Services Institute, a security studies group. Britain needs not just tougher rules, but also better enforcement of existing rules, he said, and "the political will to engage with those ideas."

Yvette Cooper, a Labour member of Parliament, has called on the government to investigate the 700 Russians who obtained investor visas between 2008 and 2015. In a hearing on Wednesday, Amber Rudd, the home secretary in the Conservative government, said her department was reviewing the program, including looking at people who entered under the old rules, "to see if there's any action that needs to be taken."

Tom Tugendhat, a Conservative member of Parliament, has been one of the most insistent advocates of tough economic measures, repeatedly calling on the government to ban the Russian government from raising money on British markets by selling bonds. He said corrupt Russian state-controlled businesses that are already banned by sanctions from British markets had gotten around that by having their government, indirectly, borrow for them. "Surely we can do more to stop sanctions-busting when it's done, effectively, by the Russian state," he said in a hearing this week.

Mrs. May replied, "I understand the point that you're making on this," and promised to respond later in detail.

Last year, Parliament passed a law allowing the government to investigate "unexplained wealth" and to seize it if it appeared to stem from corruption. Experts say that is a powerful tool, but one the government has barely used so far.

Lawmakers have suggested other moves, like banning more Russian companies from British financial markets and revoking the broadcast license of RT, the Russian state-controlled television network.

Photograph

At Russia's embassy in London this month, voters waited to cast ballots in the presidential election.

(PHOTOGRAPH BY TIM IRELAND/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Members of Parliament; Politics; Legislators; Corruption; Diplomatic & consular services; Biological & chemical weapons; Securities markets; Wealth
Location:	Ireland Russia United States-US United Kingdom--UK England Europe
People:	Cooper, Yvette Lavrov, Sergei V May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Rudd, Amber Putin, Vladimir
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Document 136 of 176

Poison Was Left at Russian Ex-Spy's Door, Police Say

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]29 Mar 2018:
A.6.

[!\[\]\(41527c40c8ba62b3ef74034c015960cd_img.jpg\) ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The British authorities said on Wednesday that Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, the poison victims at the epicenter of a diplomatic crisis between Russia and the West, had been sickened with a nerve agent on the front door of Mr. Skripal's house.

The announcement narrows the many possibilities of how the Skripals came into contact with the poison. Detectives will focus their efforts now on Mr. Skripal's house in the cathedral town of Salisbury, England, said Dean Haydon, senior national coordinator for counterterrorism policing, in a news release.

They will also, presumably, search for a person who could have delivered the poison.

Mr. Skripal, a former Russian double agent, and his daughter, who had been visiting him from Russia, were found unresponsive on a bench in a Salisbury park on March 4.

Prime Minister Theresa May announced eight days later that they had been sickened with Novichok, a lethal nerve agent developed by Soviet scientists in the last years of the Soviet Union, and her government accused Russia of responsibility.

Russia angrily denied the accusation as hysterical Western propaganda, but the poisoning has escalated into an international crisis that has isolated the Kremlin. Two dozen countries, including the United States, sided with Britain, ordering scores of Russian diplomats expelled in retaliation.

Until now, investigators had been exploring the different ways the poison could have been delivered: a bouquet of flowers, or granules of the nerve agent in the ventilation system of Mr. Skripal's car.

Trace elements of the nerve agent had been found in several spots, including a table where they had eaten lunch. Detectives pored over 5,000 hours of closed circuit television footage taken in Salisbury, looking for people who might have sprayed it on them, and taken statements from 500 witnesses.

Det. Sgt. Nick Bailey, a policeman who was exposed to the nerve agent, became ill after going to the Skripal house, suggesting that the exposure occurred there.

The police will now remove cordons from a number of spaces the Skripals visited on the day they were sickened, including a mall and the cemetery where their family members, Lyudmila and Aleksandr Skripal, are buried.

The Skripals remain hospitalized, in critical condition. A court order allowing investigators to take blood samples for analysis last week held out little hope that either would fully recover.

"The precise effect of their exposure on their long-term health remains unclear, albeit medical tests indicate that their mental capacity might be compromised to an unknown and so far unascertained degree," the court order read.

DETAILS

Subject:	Biological &chemical weapons; Diplomatic &consular services
Location:	England Russia United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK
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It's No Cold War, but Relations With Russia Turn Volatile

Higgins, Andrew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]27 Mar 2018: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – The expulsion of scores of Russian diplomats from the United States, countries across Europe and beyond has raised, yet again, the question of whether the world is veering back where it was during the Cold War. The alarming answer from some in Russia is: No, but the situation is in some ways even more unpredictable. For all the tension, proxy conflicts and risk of nuclear war that punctuated relations between Moscow and the West for decades, each side knew, particularly toward the end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, roughly what to expect. Each had a modicum of trust that the other would act in a reasonably predictable way.

The volatile state of Russia's relations with the outside world today, exacerbated by a nerve agent attack on a former spy living in Britain, however, makes the diplomatic climate of the Cold War look reassuring, said Ivan I. Kurilla, an expert on Russian-American relations, and recalls a period of paralyzing mistrust that followed the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

"If you look for similarities with what is happening, it is not the Cold War that can explain events but Russia's first revolutionary regime," which regularly assassinated opponents abroad, said Mr. Kurilla, a historian at the European University at St. Petersburg.

He said that Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, had no interest in spreading a new ideology and fomenting world revolution, unlike the early Bolsheviks, but that Russia under Mr. Putin had "become a revolutionary regime in terms of international relations."

From the Kremlin's perspective, it is the United States that first upended previous norms, when President George W. Bush withdrew the United States from the Antiballistic Missile accord, an important Cold War-era treaty, in 2002.

Russia, Mr. Kurilla said, does not like the rules of the American-dominated order that have prevailed since then, "and wants to change them."

One rule that Russia has consistently embraced, however, is the principle of reciprocity, and the Kremlin made clear on Monday that it would, after assessing the scale of the damage to its diplomat corps overseas, respond with expulsions of Western diplomats from Russia.

The Russian Parliament also weighed in, with the deputy head of its foreign affairs committee, Aleksei Chepa, telling the Interfax news agency that Russia would not bow to the West's diplomatic "war." Russia, he said, "will not allow itself to be beaten up, the harder they try to intimidate us, the tougher our response will be."

When Britain expelled 23 Russian diplomats this month in response to the nerve agent attack in Salisbury, England, Moscow not only evicted an equal number of British diplomats, but ordered the closing of the British Council, an organization that promotes British culture and language.

While denying any part in the March 4 poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a former spy, and his daughter, Yulia, both still critically ill in the hospital, Russia in recent years has built up a long record of flouting international norms, notably

with its 2014 annexation of Crimea, the first time since 1945 that European borders have been redrawn by force. The attack on the Skripals was another first, at least according to Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain, who denounced the action as the "first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since the Second World War." Kadri Liik, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, said she was mystified by the nerve agent attack. Ms. Liik said she had expected Mr. Putin, who won a fourth term by a lopsided margin on March 18, to back away from disruption during what, under the Constitution, should be his last six years in power.

Mr. Putin, she said, might not be predictable but usually follows what he considers fairly clear logic. "Putin does not do disruption just for fun, but because he is Putin and he can," she said.

Each time Russia has been accused of having a hand in acts like the seizure of Ukrainian government buildings in Crimea or the 2014 shooting down of a Malaysian passenger plane over eastern Ukraine, in which nearly 300 people were killed, Moscow has responded with a mix of self-pity, fierce denials and florid conspiracy theories that put the blame elsewhere.

In the case of the poisoning in Salisbury, Russia's denials became so baroque that even the state-run news media had a hard time keeping up.

After officials denied any Russian role and insisted that neither Russia nor the Soviet Union had ever developed Novichok, the nerve agent identified by Britain as the substance used against the Skripals, a state-controlled news agency published an interview with a Russian scientist who said he had helped develop a system of chemical weapons called Novichok-5. The agency later amended the article, replacing the scientist's mention of Novichok with an assertion that the "chemical weapons development program of the U.S.S.R. was not called 'Novichok.'" The attempted murder of Mr. Skripal on British soil, however, "was the straw that broke the camel's back," said Vladimir Inozemtsev, a Russian scholar at the Polish Institute of Advanced Studies in Warsaw. "Western leaders finally decided that enough is enough" because Moscow has played the denial game so many times and showed no real interest in establishing the truth, he said.

Unlike Soviet leaders during the Cold War, he added, Mr. Putin follows no fixed ideology or rules but is ready to pursue any "predatory policies," no matter how taboo, that might help "undermine the existing order in Europe," while insisting that Russia is the victim, not the aggressor.

When the United Nations in 2015 proposed an international tribunal to investigate the MH-17 air disaster a year earlier over territory held by Russian-armed rebels in eastern Ukraine, Moscow used its veto in the United Nations Security Council to block the move, the only member of the Council to oppose the investigation.

Ian Bond, a former British diplomat in Moscow who is now director of foreign policy at the Center for European Reform in London, said Russia's often implausible denials had made it "like the boy who cried wolf."

"If you keep putting forward crazy conspiracy theories, eventually people are going to ask whether what you are saying is just another crazy Russian denial," he said.

Mr. Bond said diplomacy during the Cold War, even when it involved hostile actions, tended to follow a relatively a calm and orderly routine. No longer is that the case, he added, noting that the Russian Embassy in London and the Foreign Ministry in Moscow have issued statements and tweets mocking Britain as an impotent has-been power and scoffing at the Salisbury poisoning as the "so-called Sergei Skripal case."

President Putin, Mr. Bond added, "is not trying to foment international revolution, but he is the great disrupter" and revels in wrong-footing foreign governments by flouting established norms.

While Russia may have been surprised by the magnitude of the coordinated expulsions by Britain's allies on Monday, it was clearly anticipating something. Hours before they were announced, it went on the offensive. Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, posted a message on Facebook sneering at the European Union for showing solidarity with Britain at a time when London is negotiating its exit from the bloc. Britain, she wrote, is "exploiting the solidarity factor to impose on those that are remaining a deterioration in relations with Russia."

While President Trump has expressed a curious affinity with Mr. Putin and raised expectations of improved relations, the Russian leader has always been more measured. The underlying mistrust seemed to be reinforced on

Monday by Russia's ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Antonov, who told the Interfax news agency that "what the United States of America is doing today is destroying whatever little is left in Russian-U.S. relations." Despite the unpredictability under Mr. Putin, the possibility of nuclear conflict between the Russians and the West, the most frightening aspect of the Cold War, does not appear to have increased. Arms control agreements reached since the 1970s are still honored – with the exception of the 1972 Antiballistic Missile accord, known as the ABM Treaty, which Mr. Bush abandoned 30 years later.

Mr. Bush's decision, questioned by even some American allies, opened the way, in Moscow's view, to a free-for-all in international relations that has left the United States and Russia struggling to recover the trust developed by President Ronald Reagan and the last Soviet leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, in the 1980s.

In a state of the nation address in February, President Putin unveiled what he described as a new generation of "invincible" long-range nuclear missiles but, speaking later in an interview with NBC, he blamed Washington for pushing Moscow into a new arms race by disregarding a Cold War status quo.

"If you speak about the arms race, it started when the U.S. withdrew from the ABM Treaty," he said.

Confronted with Moscow's disruptive actions in the 1920s, Britain and other European countries "did not know how to respond and took 10 years or more to figure out how to deal with Moscow," said Mr. Kurilla, the St. Petersburg historian.

In the case of Britain, the leading power of the day and the first Western country to recognize the Soviet Union, the process had echoes of the present. It recognized the new Bolshevik government in 1924 but then expelled Soviet diplomats and shuttered their embassy three years later after the police uncovered what they said was a Soviet espionage ring bent on spreading mayhem.

Photograph

President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, above center, at a ceremony for Defender of the Fatherland Day in Moscow last month. At left, employees from the Russian Consulate on Monday in New York. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY YURI KADOBNOV/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE – GETTY IMAGES; PETER FOLEY/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

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Location:	Russia United States–US Crimea Union of Soviet Socialist Republics–USSR United Kingdom–UK Ukraine Europe
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More Action Is Needed on Russia

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FULL TEXT

By expelling scores of Russians from the United States and 21 other countries, President Trump and allied leaders have imposed the most significant punishment yet on Russia and its leader, Vladimir Putin. It's a move that is well overdue for Mr. Trump, whose long refusal to criticize Mr. Putin and hesitancy to act against Russia's malign behavior have raised suspicions that Moscow knows secrets it could use to blackmail the American president. Monday's development offers some hope that Mr. Trump may finally be forced to deal with the threat that Mr. Putin poses to the United States and its Western allies.

Put the emphasis there on "hope." Mr. Trump will have to go even further to push back effectively against Mr. Putin's mischief, which runs the gamut from interference in the elections in America and other Western democracies to propelling the wars in Ukraine and Syria.

The expulsion orders retaliate specifically for the poisoning of a former Russian spy, Sergei Skripal, and his daughter in Britain, for which the Kremlin has been blamed. On the American side, it includes 12 people identified as Russian intelligence officers at the United Nations in New York and 48 at the Russian Embassy in Washington. Also, the American consulate in Seattle will be closed because of concerns that Russians were spying on a nearby submarine base and Boeing manufacturing facilities.

Mr. Putin almost certainly will retaliate, continuing a downward spiral in Russian-American relations unheard-of since the Cold War. That will further disrupt the ability of the two nations to work on serious challenges, like ending the war in Syria and defusing a new nuclear arms race.

It appears to be getting more difficult for Mr. Trump to remain passive in the face of Russian aggression. On March 15, he imposed sanctions on a series of Russian organizations and individuals for interference in the 2016 presidential election and other "malicious cyberattacks."

Yet, the president still panders to Mr. Putin, even as he intensifies criticism of the special counsel, Robert Mueller, and the former F.B.I. director's investigation into Trump associates' web of Russian ties.

The most recent example occurred last week when Mr. Trump, who has infrequent calls with the leaders of America's closest allies, made a point of calling Mr. Putin to congratulate him on his recent fraudulent re-election. Missing from the call was any scolding for the nerve-gas attack on the Russian spy that prompted Monday's expulsions or any demand that Mr. Putin stop meddling in American elections.

Even now, Mr. Trump is distancing himself from the expulsion order issued in his name, underscoring the incoherence in his approach. Rather than being introduced with powerful words from the president, the decision was announced in a White House statement saying the actions "make clear to Russia that its actions have consequences."

The United States and its allies must stay united in condemning Mr. Putin's nefarious activities and holding him to account. The expulsions show Russia will pay a price for using chemical weapons on allied territory.

But Mr. Trump has still not done much to counter Mr. Putin's most dangerous initiative – meddling in the 2016 election and the coming November midterms. No, it will be impossible to see this administration as taking the threat seriously until Mr. Trump orders, at long last, a comprehensive campaign to repair weaknesses in the American electoral system and prevent tampering in future elections.

He should also sanction Russian oligarchs – freezing their assets, barring them from the global banking system, preventing their children from attending Western schools – ensuring that Mr. Putin's cronies feel America's reach and use their influence to stop his aggression.

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Credit: THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Illustration

DRAWING (DRAWING BY RACHEL LEVIT)

DETAILS

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Brexit Aside, Europe Rallies Behind Britain

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FULL TEXT

BRUSSELS -- When leaders of the European Union gathered last Thursday night for a working dinner inside their lavish new headquarters, the conversation turned to Russia. Over scallops and lamb, Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain shared intelligence detailing the high probability that the Russian state had carried out the poisoning of a former Russian spy on British soil.

Usually, Mrs. May is the odd woman out at European Union gatherings, given that she is trying to negotiate Britain's departure from the bloc. But not this time.

By the next morning, European Union leaders agreed that a coordinated response was needed, according to four senior European officials. Then President Emmanuel Macron of France said everyone should go home and consider expelling Russian diplomats.

"Let's do it on Monday at 3 p.m.," the French president said, according to one of the senior officials, all of whom asked for anonymity given the sensitivity of the issue.

The European Union is not usually a model of decisiveness, but the expulsion of Russian diplomats across the Continent on Monday was a dramatic and pointed gesture. It came in concert with a similar, larger move by the United States, which expelled 60 Russians, and signaled a new, tougher effort to punish bad behavior by President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

"I can't think of any previous occasion when so many countries have coordinated on expulsions," said Ian Bond, a former British diplomat in Moscow, adding that for many of the smaller countries, "it's the first time since the Cold War that they've even expelled one Russian diplomat."

Russia is always a tricky issue for the European Union, given its critical role as an energy supplier to the Continent, as well as the divided opinion among leaders on how confrontational, or not, the bloc should be with Mr. Putin.

But the March 4 poisoning in Salisbury, England, of the former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia, crossed a line. British authorities say they were exposed to the nerve agent Novichok, marking the first use of a chemical agent on European soil since before the Second World War.

The brazen nature of the act was too much for European officials to ignore.

"This is an intelligence operation carried out with intelligence capacity with weaponized, weapons-grade chemical agents," one senior European official said. "It has taken matters to an entirely different level."

Alluding to Russia's earlier aggressions in Ukraine, the senior official added: "Russia keeps violating international law in Crimea and Ukraine and unwritten rules on nonintervention, and now there is the use of nerve agents in Britain."

In Britain, Mrs. May had already expelled 23 Russian diplomats earlier this month, while members of her cabinet spoke in increasingly strident tones against Mr. Putin. Her remarks last Thursday night seemed to stiffen the spines of other European leaders.

Mr. Macron and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany were prominent supporters of Mrs. May's call for action, having planned tactics with Britain before the dinner. The French had provided the British with technical assistance on analyzing the poisoning case and come to the same conclusion. And when the Franco-German couple agree, others tend to fall into line, even if grumpily.

The decision was finalized Monday morning, as European Union ambassadors met in Brussels to describe what each country was prepared to do. A statement was prepared for Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council, at a meeting in Bulgaria, and the result was extraordinary – 16 European Union countries had agreed to expel one or more Russian diplomats, and others, like Ireland, were considering joining.

Europeans have gotten used to the fact that between one-third and one-half of all the Russians at Western embassies, the European Union and NATO are working in intelligence, the official said. But Russia has now made that impossible to ignore.

There was satisfaction in Brussels over the outcome, with even Hungary, which has warm relations with Mr. Putin, agreeing to expel a Russian diplomat. Greece and Cyprus, with close ties to Moscow, were unwilling to do so without a smoking gun, and some small countries, like Malta, did not want to lose all representation in Moscow and risk breaking relations entirely.

Austria was disappointing to some, refusing to expel anyone now that the far-right Freedom Party controls the Interior Ministry.

Bulgaria, which is currently holding the bloc's rotating presidency, begged off, citing the need for neutrality, though its ties to Moscow are clear.

"We all back Britain's position," Prime Minister Boiko Borisov of Bulgaria said on Friday. "While there is high likelihood, but no evidence, we cannot decide on the matter."

The Czech Republic, which expelled three Russians, was a particularly interesting case, because the messaging was divided, even as Russian media outlets had suggested that the nerve agent could have come through there. Acting Prime Minister Andrej Babis said on Monday, "If our ally is in a serious situation and asks for help, we should come forward."

"Russia has crossed all limits when it declared that the poisonous substance Novichok might have come from the Czech Republic," he added. "It is a complete lie and we strongly deny it."

But the country's more pro-Russian president, Milos Zeman, opposed the expulsions. In a statement, he called on the country's intelligence services to examine if Novichok was ever made or stored in the country – even though government officials have denied it.

The Italian reaction troubled some, given the negotiations going on for a new government after the strong showing of populist parties in the recent election. Matteo Salvini, the leader of the League party, is an ally of Mr. Putin and criticized the expulsions.

"To boycott Russia, renew the sanctions and expel its diplomats doesn't resolve problems, it aggravates them," he wrote on Monday after Italy announced it would expel two Russian diplomats. "Dialogue is better. I want a government that works for a future of peace, growth and security. Am I asking too much?"

In Brussels, some officials said the coordinated expulsions proved that European solidarity can transcend even Britain's decision to leave the European Union, known as Brexit, or the acrimonious negotiations over that decision. Others disagreed, yet Monday's expulsions were clearly a win for Mrs. May.

In her statement to the House of Commons on Monday, Mrs. May said she had argued to European colleagues "that there should be a reappraisal of how our collective efforts can best tackle the challenge that Russia poses following President Putin's re-election."

She singled out France and Germany, adding: "In my discussions with President Macron and Chancellor Merkel, as well as other leaders, we agreed on the importance of sending a strong European message in response to Russia's actions – not just out of solidarity with the U.K. but recognizing the threat posed to the national security of all E.U. countries."

Credit: STEVEN ERLANGER; Marc Santora contributed reporting from Warsaw; Stephen Castle from London; Jason Horowitz from Rome; Boryana Dzhambazova from Sofia, Bulgaria; Hana de Goeij from Prague; and Milan Schreuer from Brussels.

Photograph

The leaders of France, Britain and Germany last week in Brussels. Left, Russia's Embassy in Prague, where three

employees are being expelled. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANCOIS LENOIR/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES; MICHAL CIZEK/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE – GETTY IMAGES) (A9)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Expulsions &suspensions; Diplomatic &consular services; Intelligence gathering; International relations; International relations-UK; Presidents; Espionage; EU membership
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK Europe
People:	Tusk, Donald Salvini, Matteo May, Theresa Merkel, Angela Skripal, Sergei V Macron, Emmanuel Zeman, Milos Babis, Andrej Borisov, Boiko Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO; NAICS: 928120; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120; Name: European Council; NAICS: 928120
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Document 140 of 176

U.S. Joins Effort In West To Banish Russian Officials

Rogers, Katie; Baker, Peter . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]27 Mar 2018: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- President Trump ordered the expulsion of 60 Russian officials on Monday, joining a coordinated campaign by two dozen countries to retaliate for the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain in a Cold War-style escalation that again highlighted the disparity between the president's words and actions.

The mass expulsion of Russian personnel stationed in the United States was the largest ever, eclipsing even the darkest days of the global showdown with the Soviet Union. But Mr. Trump avoided any public condemnation of Russia's role in the attack just days after phoning President Vladimir V. Putin to congratulate him on a re-election widely considered a sham.

In approving the expulsions and ordering the closure of the Russian consulate in Seattle, Mr. Trump followed the lead of Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain, who rallied a multinational coalition to respond to the poisoning. With London pressing for action, Mr. Trump called foreign counterparts to see if they would join, too. Aides said he encouraged them to take part, but he also knew that failure to go along would have left the United States isolated. In addition to the United States, at least 22 other nations backed Britain by expelling about 57 more Russian diplomats and intelligence officers as of Monday evening, including France, Germany, Italy, Australia, Poland and Canada. Mrs. May originally expelled 23 Russians shortly after British authorities determined that Moscow was likely responsible for the nerve agent that left Sergei V. Skripal, the former Russian spy, and his daughter in a coma.

The joint action intensified the conflict between Russia and the West that has accelerated since Moscow's annexation of Crimea and intervention in eastern Ukraine in 2014 and its clandestine effort to influence the American presidential election in 2016. Based on past practice, Russia will almost certainly retaliate by kicking out western diplomats, echoing the tit-for-tat confrontations of the Cold War.

The expulsions brought into focus the disconnect between aggressive actions taken against the Kremlin by the Trump administration and the president's public eagerness to have a cooperative relationship with Mr. Putin. Mr. Trump has staunchly resisted criticizing the Russian president, even as he imposed sanctions on a series of Russian organizations and individuals for interference in the 2016 presidential election and what the

administration called other "malicious cyberattacks."

Mr. Trump, who energetically comments on almost any other subject on Twitter or in encounters with reporters, stayed conspicuously silent on the showdown with Russia on Monday, leaving it to aides to explain his decision. "The only real conclusion to draw is there is something of a divide," said Thomas Wright, the director of the Brookings Institution's Center on the United States and Europe. "They may have convinced him to sign off, but he doesn't want to be the face of it. He could have resolved this any day with a 10-minute appearance. That's the part that's puzzling to me."

Michael Anton, a spokesman for the White House National Security Council, said Mr. Trump deserved credit for organizing the joint response and expressed frustration at the perception that the president had not been firm enough with Russia.

"No matter what we do, it's like, 'You guys are soft on Russia,'" he said. "What do we have to do to show that we're tough? We just coordinated a 22-nation action and kicked out 60 Russians."

Mr. Anton said the president did not publicly excoriate Russia for its actions because he wanted to maintain a constructive relationship at the level of the countries' leaders. "Happy talk on one phone call is better than belligerent talk on one phone call," he said.

Speaking from the White House lectern on Monday, Raj Shah, a White House spokesman, called the poisoning attack "brazen" and "reckless," and said that it impeded Mr. Trump's continued desire to foster a constructive relationship with the Russians.

"We want to have a cooperative relationship," Mr. Shah said. "The president wants to work with the Russians, but their actions sometimes don't allow that to happen."

Indeed, aides were intent on describing a president who was keenly aware of Russian misbehavior. One official, who was not authorized to publicly describe the president's private conversations, said Mr. Trump sounded aggressive about Moscow during a discussion with advisers in the Oval Office on Friday, calling Russia's actions of late "dangerous."

The American expulsion order was designed to root out Russians actively engaging in intelligence operations against the country, White House officials said. Those expelled included 12 people identified as Russian intelligence officers who have been stationed at the United Nations in New York, and 48 operating under the Russian Embassy in Washington. The Russians and their families have seven days to leave the United States, according to officials. American officials estimate that there are more than 100 Russian intelligence officers in the United States.

The Trump administration also announced that it would close the Russian Consulate in Seattle because of its proximity to Naval Base Kitsap, one of two American naval bases that house a fleet of nuclear-powered, ballistic missile-carrying submarines.

Mr. Shah said the president took a proactive role in speaking with foreign leaders and encouraging others to join the efforts. White House officials who described the expulsion order said it had coordinated with about a dozen American allies. A British official said London's diplomats, military officers and intelligence officials had spoken with their American counterparts on a daily, even hourly, basis since the attack on Mr. Skripal.

The Kremlin has maintained that it had nothing to do with the poisoning. In a statement released by the Russian Foreign Ministry on Monday, officials accused British authorities of "a prejudiced, biased as well as hypocritical stance" in carrying out the expulsions, and castigated European Union and NATO member countries for following suit.

"It goes without saying that this unfriendly move by this group of countries will not go unnoticed, and we will respond to it," the statement read.

Current and former diplomats said the real test of the expulsions would be if they served to deter Russia from further intervention in other countries.

"The key question for me is whether all this -- and whatever else is to follow -- will finally persuade Putin that the cost of killing off enemies and 'traitors' and subverting other people's societies in order to 'make Russia great

again' just isn't worth it," said Peter Westmacott, a former British ambassador to the United States. "That would be a great prize for the free world, and for British diplomacy."

Poland has positioned itself to take a lead role in coordinating a response from the Eastern European nations traditionally most wary of their giant neighbor to the east. Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz called the incident in Britain an "unprecedented attack on civilians with the use of chemical weapon, unseen in Europe since World War II."

The expulsion of Russian diplomats was an unprecedented move by Warsaw, the first time it has taken diplomatic action against its neighbor because of Russian behavior outside of Poland.

Germany's move not only signaled solidarity with London, but also suggested the incoming foreign minister, Heiko Maas, may be more hawkish toward Moscow than his predecessor.

"The attack in Salisbury shook us all in the European Union," Mr. Maas said. "For the first time since the end of World War II, a chemical war agent was used in the middle of Europe."

Mr. Maas said Germany did not take the decision "flippantly."

"But the fact and indications point to Russia. The Russian government has so far not answered any of the open questions and has shown no readiness to play a constructive role in solving this attack," he said.

Mr. Trump's decision to join a united front against Russia came amid a personnel churn in the White House as numerous aides, including his national security adviser, Army Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, have said they will leave the administration. Last month, Mr. McMaster called evidence of Russian interference in the 2016 election "incontrovertible."

His words angered the president, who remains anxious over the continued investigation into his campaign's contact with Russian officials. Mr. Trump publicly rebuked General McMaster on Twitter for forgetting "to say that the results of the 2016 election were not impacted or changed by the Russians and that the only Collusion was between Russia and Crooked H, the DNC and the Dems," referring to his Democratic election opponent, Hillary Clinton.

The harsher stance on Russia will also prove to be an early test of the ideological compatibility of the president's newly revamped national security team. Last week, Mr. Trump announced that he would replace General McMaster with John R. Bolton, long a vocal critic of Mr. Putin who has called Russian interference in the 2016 election "a true act of war." Mike Pompeo, the nominee for secretary of state, has been quieter with his criticisms.

And then there is the president himself, whose public declarations have repeatedly found themselves in conflict with the policy decisions rolled out in his White House. Brian McKeon, who served as a chief of staff of the national security counsel under President Barack Obama, said the staff disruptions were sure to play out if the Trump administration was considering taking further action against Russia.

"Bolton's worldview is that there should be more" measures, including sanctions, Mr. McKeon said. "I don't think that's the president's view."

Credit: KATIE ROGERS and PETER BAKER; Eileen Sullivan and Maggie Haberman contributed reporting.

Photograph

Russia's Washington embassy (PHOTOGRAPH BY AL DRAGO/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES) (A1); The historic Samuel Hyde House, the residence of Russia's consul general in Seattle, was ordered closed. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ELAINE THOMPSON/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A8)

DETAILS

Subject:	Cold War; Poisoning; National security; Expulsions &suspensions; Diplomatic &consular services; Social networks; Intelligence gathering; World War II; Political campaigns; Election results; International relations-US; Espionage; Foreign policy
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Location:	Russia United States--US
People:	Trump, Donald J
Company / organization:	Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120
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E.U. Joins U.K. in Blaming Russia for Poisoning of Spy

Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]24 Mar 2018: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

BRUSSELS -- Britain's prime minister, Theresa May, won greater than expected support from the European Union on Friday over her escalating diplomatic battle with Russia, a significant victory for a leader who has often found herself isolated in Brussels as her country prepares to quit the bloc.

After hours of discussion, European leaders issued a relatively tough statement effectively blaming Moscow for the nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia, on British soil.

The European Union announced the withdrawal of its ambassador to Moscow for consultations, while President Emmanuel Macron said that France and other countries, including Germany, would also take measures, prompting speculation that they would expel some Russian diplomats, as Britain did in response to the attack. Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Denmark are among nations expected to take action as soon as Monday.

"We consider this attack as a serious challenge to our security and European sovereignty, so it calls for a coordinated and determined response from the European Union and its member states," Mr. Macron said at a joint news conference with the German chancellor, Angela Merkel.

In a declaration of "unqualified solidarity" with Britain, issued early Friday, the European Union said it agrees with the British assessment that "it is highly likely that the Russian Federation is responsible and that there is no plausible alternative explanation."

The statement followed long talks in which Mrs. May described the reasoning behind Britain's conclusions that the Kremlin was behind the attack in the quiet cathedral city of Salisbury, including its identification of the chemical used -- a strain of the nerve agent Novichok -- and its belief that Russia has produced this substance in the last decade.

Welcoming the E.U. response, Mrs. May said it was right that European nations were "standing together" because the hostile challenge Russia poses "respects no borders, and it is a threat to our values."

In response, Dmitri S. Peskov, the spokesman for the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, said that he "did not know what the heads of the E.U. states agreed with" when they offered their support to Britain, as Russia was not given any information.

"We don't agree with this and repeat that Russia had absolutely nothing to do with the Skripal case," he said.

Sergei Zheleznyak, a lawmaker from the United Russia party, said that the European Union, under pressure from London and Washington, "was forced to concoct a statement that is vague in content and politicized in essence." The declaration was a somewhat surprising success for Mrs. May, who has often found herself at odds with her European counterparts as she negotiates Britain's exit from the bloc, a process known as Brexit. The text was tougher than one agreed to earlier this week by European Union foreign ministers after talks attended by Britain's foreign secretary, Boris Johnson.

The issue of relations with Russia divides European Union nations sharply, and there has been pressure from some to lift economic sanctions against Moscow, so Britain has not pressed for additional steps of that kind. However

the Irish Prime Minister, Leo Varadkar, said there was talk of the existing measures being renewed for a 12-month period; currently they have to be rolled over every six months. In any event, the Skripal case has reduced prospects of them being relaxed anytime soon.

Before the summit meeting, Mr. Putin spoke by phone with three European Union leaders, the Kremlin announced, a reminder that Moscow has allies within the bloc.

Several countries, including Cyprus and Greece, have close ties to the Kremlin and have been reluctant to take a tougher line. But in traditional European Union style, they agreed to the latest text after extracting concessions on other issues – in this case, wording critical of Turkey's actions in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean, the site of tensions over drilling for gas.

Though the European Union's show of support for Britain is so far largely symbolic, it suggests that even after Brexit, London could retain close ties to the bloc on foreign policy, security and defense. It also underscored the strength of Anglo-French cooperation on such issues, with France taking the lead in pushing for a tough, Europe-wide, response. Mr. Macron said that in the poisoning case the French had been asked for "technical cooperation" by the British, and had reached similar conclusions about Russian culpability.

Yet, this time Mrs. May was arguing as the leader of a big member nation from inside a European summit. After next March, Britain's prime minister will no longer attend such meetings, making the prospect of such a unified European response to a British concern less likely.

On the broader Brexit agenda, things will undoubtedly get difficult again soon. European Union leaders agreed on Friday to the terms of a 21-month transition deal to prevent a "cliff edge" change in trading rules when Britain officially leaves the bloc next March.

The leaders also paved the way for far-reaching talks on a future trade partnership, though there is still no agreement on how to avoid border checkpoints on the frontier between Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, and Ireland, which will remain in the European Union.

On trade discussions, Mr. Macron took an uncompromising stance over Britain's intention to quit the European Union's single market, which lays down common rules and standards for goods and many services.

"If you are out of the single market you are totally out of it," he said, adding that, to preserve its integrity, "Europe will stand united."

Credit: STEPHEN CASTLE; Ivan Nechepurenko contributed reporting from Moscow.

AuthorAffiliation

Follow Stephen Castle on Twitter: @_StephenCastle .

Photograph

Prime Minister Theresa May, center, speaking with President Dalia Grybauskaite of Lithuania, one of the countries that has said it might expel Russian diplomats in solidarity with Britain. (POOL PHOTO BY GEERT VANDEN WIJNGAERT)

DETAILS

Subject:	Diplomatic &consular services; EU membership; Prime ministers; Poisoning; Cooperation
Location:	Estonia Ireland Russia Turkey Denmark United Kingdom--UK Poland Cyprus France Northern Ireland Europe Lithuania Greece Latvia Germany
People:	Grybauskaite, Dalia Johnson, Boris Merkel, Angela Skripal, Sergei V Varadkar, Leo May, Theresa Macron, Emmanuel Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120

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College Basketball; Hurley Hired to Bring Back UConn's Luster

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FULL TEXT

The University of Connecticut has hired Dan Hurley as its next men's basketball coach, hoping to turn the page on the coaching tenure of Kevin Ollie, which began with a national championship but ended with an N.C.A.A. investigation, the team's first losing seasons in 30 years and potential litigation.

Hurley spent the previous six seasons as Rhode Island's head coach, and the two before that as the head coach at Wagner, on Staten Island. He took Rhode Island to the last two N.C.A.A. tournaments. Last week, the seventh-seeded Rams beat Oklahoma before falling to second-seeded Duke.

Hurley is the son of Bob Hurley, formerly the longtime coach at St. Anthony High School in Jersey City, and the younger brother of Bobby Hurley, a college star at Duke who is now the head coach at Arizona State.

The UConn men's program was largely overlooked and unaccomplished until Jim Calhoun took over in the mid-1980s. Calhoun made the Huskies competitive and then dominant, winning three national titles in his final 14 seasons. Ollie, Calhoun's former player, succeeded Calhoun, and in 2014, his second season, he led the program to its fourth national title.

But that was also the first season that UConn played in the American Athletic Conference. The former Big East, of which the university had been a charter member, had splintered, and unlike several other former Big East members who either landed in the Atlantic Coast Conference or a newer, football-less Big East, UConn has arguably struggled to recruit in the A.A.C.

In January, UConn revealed that the N.C.A.A. was investigating the recruitment of at least three players. This month, shortly after its season ended, UConn fired Ollie "with cause," which according to reports could save the university millions of dollars. Ollie pledged to contest this decision and said that he had always "promoted an atmosphere of compliance." MARC TRACY

WOMEN'S N.I.T. St. John's advanced to the quarterfinals by defeating Duquesne, 65-52. Akina Wellere scored 17 for host St. John's. Fordham lost at Virginia Tech, 81-50.

GOLF

Johnson Can't Repeat in Match Play Event

Justin Thomas can reach No. 1 by winning the current World Golf Championship match play event in Austin, Tex., because Dustin Johnson, the defending champion, was among 20 players mathematically eliminated.

Still alive, but still needing some help, were Rory McIlroy and Phil Mickelson. Each lost his opening match but won his second. Mickelson rallied from four down after eight holes and won the last three holes to beat Satoshi Kodaira, who missed putts in the 10-foot range on all of them.

HOCKEY

Rangers Lose in Philadelphia

The Philadelphia rookie Oskar Lindblom scored the deciding goal 8 seconds into the third period as the host Flyers defeated the Rangers, 4-3. Travis Konecny scored twice for Philadelphia.

Jesper Fast scored the last two Rangers goals and assisted on the first, which was Mika Zibanejad's sixth goal in four games and his 26th of the season. (NYT)

TAMPA BAY 7, ISLANDERS 6 The host Islanders, trailing 7-3, scored three goals in the first 4 minutes 36 seconds of the third period but could not tie the conference-leading Lightning. Anders Lee, one of three Islanders who scored two goals each, raised his season total to 38.

PRO BASKETBALL

For Howard, Ecstasy and Agony

Becoming the first player since 2010 to produce at least 30 points and 30 rebounds in one game was not enough for Charlotte Hornets center Dwight Howard to avoid a suspension.

The league suspended Howard for one game without pay after he picked up his 16th technical foul of the season in the third quarter of Charlotte's comeback win over the Nets on Wednesday. Howard scored 32 and had 30 rebounds.

In his first season with the Hornets, Howard, 32, is averaging 16.6 points and 12.2 rebounds per game and played in all of the team's first 72 contests. (REUTERS)

PRO FOOTBALL

Familiar Face at San Diego Pro Day

Johnny Manziel threw in front of scouts from 12 N.F.L. teams during the University of San Diego's pro day.

Ben Brunnschweiler, the university's director of football operations, told USA Today that Manziel had been working out recently with Torero players.

The Cleveland Browns selected Manziel, who won the 2012 Heisman Trophy, in the first round of the 2014 draft and released him in March 2016.

HORSE RACING

Pennsylvania Jockey, Thrown in Race, Dies

A jockey who was among the best in Pennsylvania history died of injuries sustained in a racing accident.

Jose Flores, 56, was racing at the Parx track in suburban Philadelphia on Monday when his horse went down and he was thrown off. Flores hit the ground headfirst and suffered a massive trauma. He was removed from life support Thursday afternoon.

Flores won 4,650 races and was the top career earner at Parx, formerly known as Philadelphia Park. His mounts earned \$64 million in nearly 29,000 career starts, according to the Equibase thoroughbred database.

SOCCER

Tart Exchange Over World Cup and Putin

A day after Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson of Britain said that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia would exploit hosting the World Cup as Hitler did the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Gareth Southgate, manager of the England national team, said he had "little interest" in Johnson's opinion. Anglo-Russian relations are in crisis over the March 4 nerve agent attack on the former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in Britain, which Britain has accused the Kremlin of carrying out. (AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE)

Manchester United Star Leaves for U.S.

The star striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic was freed from his contract with Manchester United to move to the Los Angeles Galaxy. Ibrahimovic, 36, is the highest scorer ever for Sweden's national team, with 62 goals in 116 games. In a career at many of Europe's leading clubs, he won league titles in Italy, Spain and France before linking up with his former Inter Coach José Mourinho at United. (REUTERS)

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Credit: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Photograph

Dwight Howard had a big game Wednesday against the Nets but drew a technical that led to a one-game ban.

(PHOTOGRAPH BY ABBIE PARR/GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Athletic recruitment; High school football; Professional hockey; Horse racing; Tournaments & championships; Professional golf; Soccer; High school basketball
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Location:	Italy Russia United Kingdom--UK England Pennsylvania Virginia France Cleveland Ohio Europe Sweden Spain United States--US Arizona Los Angeles California Rhode Island Oklahoma
People:	Manziel, Johnny Johnson, Boris Ibrahimovic, Zlatan Howard, Dwight Southgate, Gareth Lee, Anders Johnson, Dustin Mickelson, Phil McIlroy, Rory Calhoun, Jim Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Atlantic Coast Conference; NAICS: 813990; Name: Philadelphia Park; NAICS: 711212; Name: Los Angeles Galaxy; NAICS: 711211; Name: Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University; NAICS: 611310; Name: University of San Diego; NAICS: 611310; Name: Charlotte Hornets; NAICS: 711211; Name: USA Today; NAICS: 511110; Name: National Collegiate Athletic Association--NCAA; NAICS: 813990; Name: National Football League--NFL; NAICS: 711211, 813990; Name: Cleveland Browns; NAICS: 711211; Name: Equibase; NAICS: 511199; Name: University of Connecticut; NAICS: 611310; Name: American Athletic Conference; NAICS: 813990
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From 'Farewell, Chemical Weapons!' to Under Scrutiny Over a Poisoning

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]22 Mar 2018: A.7.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Last fall, President Vladimir V. Putin summoned a Kremlin television crew to his residence for a ceremony marking the destruction of Russia's last declared stocks of chemical weapons.

The occasion called for a touch of theater: Shells were dismantled on camera, decorated with flowery Cyrillic script reading, "Farewell, chemical weapons!" Mr. Putin spoke proudly of Russia's status as a peacemaker, and derided the United States for lagging behind. An official from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the global body that monitors agreements to whittle down stockpiles, stood by, beaming.

Just six months later, Russia has been accused of secretly producing a strain of lethal nerve agents for years, in what would be a grave violation of its international commitments.

A team of inspectors from the global watchdog organization -- the same agency that celebrated with Mr. Putin last September -- this week joined the investigation into the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter, who were found unresponsive in the English city of Salisbury on March 4.

Britain has accused Russia of exposing Mr. Skripal to Novichok, a top-secret, military-grade nerve agent developed in the last years of the Soviet Union. On Sunday, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson sharply escalated the case against Russia, saying that Britain had proof that Russia had been stockpiling Novichok and researching its use in assassinations.

Russia has denied the charge.

If proven true, it will cast doubt on the work of the monitoring body, which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013 for making chemical weapons "taboo under international law."

"This is a real shock to the system," as members question Russia's reporting of its own stocks, said Paul F. Walker, director of environmental sustainability at Green Cross International, a disarmament advocacy group.

"Nobody that I know of has questioned their veracity about declaring everything," Mr. Walker said. "Now, with the Novichok situation, it is a new day at the O.P.C.W. People will ask, is this inspection system intrusive enough? In the executive council in particular, people are raising questions about secret stockpiles."

Mr. Walker said that he was surprised by Britain's claim it had proof Russia has been producing and stockpiling the nerve agent, and that he had not yet seen evidence to back it up.

"They must have something we haven't seen," he said. "That has to come out."

Russia has pushed back hard against the accusation, comparing it to the American case, later discredited, that Saddam Hussein was stockpiling chemical weapons. Moscow has suggested that the nerve agent used on the Skripals could have been produced in Britain, Sweden, Slovakia, the Czech Republic or the United States.

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova and Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov have each said that no Novichok program existed in either Russia or the Soviet Union.

But scientists have come forward to describe it. Leonid Rink, who worked at a Soviet chemical weapons laboratory, told the Ria Novosti news service that "a big group of specialists" had worked on the strains and that it would be "zero problem" for laboratories outside Russia to produce the nerve agent.

Vladimir Uglev, who worked in the same laboratory as Mr. Rink, told The Bell news website that he helped produce four agents under the code name Foliant, from 1972 until 1988. He said he believed that, by analyzing the remains of chemical agents in the blood, it would be possible to determine "where the specific dose was produced and by whom."

He added that, based on what he witnessed at that time, the victims were not likely to survive.

"I can say with nearly 100 percent certainty that if Skripal and his daughter are taken off life support, they will die," Mr. Uglev said. "They are now only technically alive."

The British authorities have been tight-lipped about the inquiry, but in recent days intensified their focus on vehicles the Skripals traveled in, where the agent, in powder form, could have been planted on a door handle or in a ventilation system. In an interview with RIA Novosti, Mr. Rink, the Russian scientist, scoffed at the theory that Novichok could have been planted in Ms. Skripal's suitcase, saying that it was so lethal that, as he put it, "she would not have reached London."

At present, inspectors from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have a limited task: to take samples of the agent used in the attack and send them to independent laboratories to determine whether it is Novichok.

If the dispute escalates, however, Britain could request a so-called challenge inspection of Russian laboratories to look for signs of Novichok production -- a measure that has never been invoked in the monitoring group's 21-year history. Russia, in turn, could request its own challenge inspections.

Challenge inspections are designed to be intensive and carried out at short notice; inspectors are to be allowed access to a laboratory within 36 hours of arrival.

The Chemical Weapons Convention was designed to eliminate large stocks of chemical weapons that could be used on the battlefield. Russia committed to destroying 40,000 metric tons, and the United States to 31,500 metric tons. Russia announced last year that it had completed this task. The United States has eliminated seven of nine stockpiles, holding about 90 percent of its agents.

Novichok, then an early-stage project, was not included on a list of banned chemicals compiled in 1987, so Russia was under no obligation to regularly report on its stockpiles and their destruction. But producing Novichok would be a serious violation, because the treaty broadly prohibits the development and use of chemical weapons, said Richard Guthrie, an independent chemical weapons expert and editor of CBW Events.

Mr. Johnson said on Sunday that Britain had evidence that Russia had stockpiled Novichok during the past decade and had investigated ways to deliver nerve agents for assassination. A Foreign Office spokesman declined to describe the evidence, saying only that "clearly, the information the foreign secretary was referring to is very sensitive."

Experts said that Britain could have learned of a secret program in various ways: communications intercepts, moles within laboratories, publications by Russian chemists reporting their synthesis of rare compounds, or a computer virus lurking within Western equipment sold for use in Russian laboratories.

Mr. Guthrie said that concerns about a Novichok program had surfaced occasionally, but that Britain probably chose not to raise the issue publicly with the weapons-monitoring organization for fear of derailing trade deals or other agreements with Russia.

"If your information isn't perfect, you might think, 'We'll leave this allegation, maybe these aren't so serious,'" Mr. Guthrie said. "They didn't feel it was important enough, and I think Novichoks would have stayed on the back burner if they hadn't been used in Salisbury."

This would not be the first time the chemical weapons watchdog was shaken by great-power politics. In 2002, its director general, José Bustani, was ousted amid divisions over whether Iraq maintained stockpiles of chemical weapons. Mr. Bustani, in an interview, said the United States pushed for his removal because he had persuaded Mr. Hussein to accede to the convention, which he said would have undermined the American case for invading Iraq.

More recently, Russia has used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council repeatedly to block action against Syria, its ally, based on the monitoring group's reporting on chemical weapons use there. Andrew C. Weber, a former assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical and biological defense programs, said this had tarnished Russia's "extraordinary achievement" in destroying 40,000 metric tons of stockpiled weapons.

"It does take away from their achievement – frankly, it's disgraceful – and now the Russian Federation has apparently been caught in a flagrant violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention," said Mr. Weber, who emerged on Tuesday from a routine meeting with Russian chemical weapons experts on disarmament projects. They were "embarrassed," he said, when Novichok came up in conversation.

"They don't want to believe that their government actually did this," he said.

Photograph

President Vladimir V. Putin during a video conference in September 2017, when he played up the destruction of chemical weapons. (POOL PHOTO BY ALEXEI NIKOLSKY)

DETAILS

Subject:	Laboratories; Poisoning; Biological &chemical weapons
Location:	Czech Republic Sweden Russia United States–US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics–USSR Iraq United Kingdom–UK Slovakia Syria
People:	Hussein, Saddam Johnson, Boris Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Green Cross; NAICS: 813319; Name: RIA Novosti; NAICS: 519110; Name: United Nations Security Council; NAICS: 928120
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/20/world/europe/russia-chemical-weapons-novichok.html
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Trump Says He Fostered Relations In Putin Call

Julie Hirschfeld Davis; Sullivan, Eileen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]22 Mar 2018: A.15.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- President Trump defended on Wednesday his decision to disregard the advice of his national security team and congratulate President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia on his re-election, lashing out at the news media for reporting on how he diverged from his script and attacking his predecessors for failing to improve relations with Moscow.

Mr. Trump, enraged after officials leaked the contents of confidential notes he was given for the private phone call on Tuesday that exhorted him "DO NOT CONGRATULATE" Mr. Putin, argued in a pair of tweets on Wednesday afternoon that the conversation was part of his effort to foster better relations with Russia. He said such engagement could help the United States confront a host of national security challenges.

"I called President Putin of Russia to congratulate him on his election victory (in past, Obama called him also)," Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter, referring to President Barack Obama's call to Mr. Putin in 2012. "The Fake News Media is crazed because they wanted me to excoriate him. They are wrong!"

But Mr. Trump's handling of the call and his defense of it also pointed up his aversion to confronting Mr. Putin about Moscow's misdeeds, which has become a theme of his presidency even as a special counsel investigates Russia's efforts to sway the 2016 election in his favor.

Mr. Trump's own advisers had warned him against congratulating Mr. Putin and, in briefing cards prepared before the call, told him to raise Moscow's role in a nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy and his daughter living in Britain, an instruction he also ignored. The Washington Post first reported on the briefing cards, a leak that stunned some senior officials at the White House, where aides said on Wednesday that John F. Kelly, the chief of staff, had been deeply disappointed and frustrated by the disclosure.

One senior White House official said Mr. Trump had never seen the briefing cards. Another said the president had been determined not to antagonize Mr. Putin, believing that his rapport with the Russian leader was the key to better relations between the countries.

It was that rationale that Mr. Trump appeared to embrace on Wednesday.

"Getting along with Russia (and others) is a good thing, not a bad thing," the president wrote. "They can help solve problems with North Korea, Syria, Ukraine, ISIS, Iran and even the coming Arms Race."

The president also took on his predecessors, both Republican and Democrat, saying they had been incapable of forging better relations with Moscow.

"Bush tried to get along, but didn't have the 'smarts,'" Mr. Trump wrote. "Obama and Clinton tried, but didn't have the energy or chemistry (remember RESET)."

He was referring to the policy of Hillary Clinton, his 2016 campaign rival, who as secretary of state in Mr. Obama's administration pursued a "reset" with Russia aimed at turning around a dysfunctional relationship.

The call revived questions about Mr. Trump's stance toward Mr. Putin just after his administration had taken its most aggressive steps against Moscow, moving last week to impose sanctions for Russia's interference in the election and other "malicious cyberattacks."

The United States also joined Britain, France and Germany in denouncing the Russian government for violating international law for the attack on the spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia.

Still, since his first face-to-face meeting with Mr. Putin over the summer, Mr. Trump has consistently refused to criticize the Russian president directly. In November, after a meeting with Mr. Putin on the sideline of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit meeting in Danang, Vietnam, Mr. Trump said the Russian president "means it" when he denied having meddled in the 2016 election, and was "very insulted by" the charge, which is the conclusion of American intelligence agencies.

Mr. Trump began his day on Wednesday indirectly criticizing Robert S. Mueller III, the special counsel, for the Russia investigation, continuing to attack him by name against the advice of his own lawyers.

"I was opposed to the selection of Mueller to be Special Council," Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter in quotes he attributed to Alan M. Dershowitz, a professor emeritus at Harvard Law School. "I think President Trump was right when he said there never should have been a Special Council appointed because there was no probable cause for believing that there was any crime, collusion or otherwise, or obstruction of justice!"

It was not immediately clear on Wednesday which remarks of Mr. Dershowitz's the president was quoting. An interview with Mr. Dershowitz on Fox News on Tuesday and an opinion piece by Mr. Dershowitz published on Wednesday did not include the exact phrasing that Mr. Trump used in his tweets. And the language was not found in a search of Mr. Dershowitz's cable news appearances over the past week.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Credit: JULIE HIRSCHFELD DAVIS and EILEEN SULLIVAN; Justin Bank and Emily Cochrane contributed reporting.

DETAILS

Subject:	News media; Presidents; Obstruction of justice; National security; Social networks; Political campaigns
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK Iran Syria Asia France Ukraine North Korea United States-US Germany Vietnam
People:	Trump, Donald J Skripal, Sergei V Obama, Barack Mueller, Robert S III Clinton, Hillary Rodham Putin, Vladimir Kelly, John F
Company / organization:	Name: Fox News Channel; NAICS: 515120; Name: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation; NAICS: 926110; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Harvard Law School; NAICS: 611310
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LINKS

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Document 145 of 176

President's Call To Putin Dodges Talk of Foul Play

Landler, Mark . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]21 Mar 2018: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- President Trump called on Tuesday to congratulate President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia on his re-election, but did not raise with him the lopsided nature of his victory, Russia's meddling in the 2016 presidential election or Moscow's role in a nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy and his daughter living in Britain. Instead, Mr. Trump kept the focus of the call on what the White House said were "shared interests" -- among them, North Korea and Ukraine -- overruling his national security advisers, who had urged him to raise Russia's recent behavior.

"We had a very good call," Mr. Trump told reporters in the Oval Office, where he had just welcomed Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia. "We will probably be meeting in the not-too-distant future."

The president's upbeat characterization came five days after his administration imposed sanctions on Russia for its interference in the election and for other "malicious cyberattacks," the most significant action it has taken against Moscow since Mr. Trump took office. The United States also joined Britain, France and Germany in denouncing the Russian government for violating international law for the attack on the spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter Yulia.

Both actions highlighted a contradiction at the heart of the Trump presidency: the administration's steadily tougher stance toward Russia and Mr. Trump's own stubborn reluctance to criticize Mr. Putin.

Mr. Trump, a senior official said, signed off on the sanctions and the harsh language in the administration's statements. But he was determined not to antagonize Mr. Putin, this person said, because he believes his leader-to-leader rapport is the only way to improve relations between the two countries.

That strategy has put Mr. Trump at odds with his own advisers: in preparing the president for the call, aides advised him to raise the nerve-agent attack and wrote on his briefing materials, "DO NOT CONGRATULATE." The Washington Post first reported these details.

A second official, however, said that while Mr. Trump's briefing cards did contain those suggestions, he spoke to his aides by phone and never saw the cards.

The White House also insisted that it was not the place of the United States to question how other countries conduct their elections -- a contention that is at odds with years of critical statements about foreign elections by

the United States, as well as recent statements by the Trump administration about elections in Venezuela and Iran. "What we do know is that Putin has been elected in their country, and that's not something we can dictate to them how they operate," said the press secretary, Sarah Huckabee Sanders. "We can only focus on the freeness and fairness of our elections, something we 100 percent fully support."

Echoing the president, she went on to rail against the investigation of the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, into links between the Trump campaign and Russia.

"To pretend like going through this absurd process for over a year would not bring frustration seems a little bit ridiculous," she said.

Ms. Sanders noted that other foreign leaders, including Chancellor Angela Merkel, of Germany, had called Mr. Putin. Ms. Merkel's office released a terse account of their call, saying she had told the Russian president, "Today, it is more important than ever to continue the dialogue with one another and to foster relations between our states and peoples."

Republican lawmakers, even those who have resisted criticizing Mr. Trump, faulted him for congratulating Mr. Putin.

"When I look at a Russian election, what I see is a lack of credibility in tallying the results," said the Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. "Calling him wouldn't have been high on my list."

Senator John McCain of Arizona, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, was harsher.

"An American president does not lead the free world by congratulating dictators on winning sham elections," he said in a statement. "And by doing so with Vladimir Putin, President Trump insulted every Russian citizen who was denied the right to vote in a free and fair election to determine their country's future, including the countless Russian patriots who have risked so much to protest and resist Putin's regime."

In fact, both Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush called to congratulate Mr. Putin after previous election victories.

In Mr. Obama's case, said Michael A. McFaul, who served as ambassador to Moscow during the Obama administration, there was lively internal debate about whether, and when, the president should make that call. Mr. Obama waited several days after Mr. Putin's election in March 2012 before calling.

After that election, the State Department issued a statement in which it said, "The United States congratulates the Russian people on the completion of the presidential elections, and looks forward to working with the president-elect after the results are certified and he is sworn in."

The language, Mr. McFaul said, was carefully chosen to applaud the Russian people for voting without praising Mr. Putin for winning. The statement also noted the reservations of outside observers about the "partisan use of government resources, and procedural irregularities on Election Day," though it credited the Russian authorities for reforms after a widely criticized parliamentary election the previous December.

The parliamentary election drew condemnation from Hillary Clinton, then the secretary of state, who said the Russian people, "like people everywhere, deserve the right to have their voices heard and their votes counted." Her statement planted the seeds for the antipathy between her and Mr. Putin, who accused her of fomenting unrest in Russia.

This time, Mr. Putin prevailed with more than 76 percent of the vote. International observers said Russian electoral authorities counted the votes efficiently, but that several other factors prevented the contest from being fair.

"Restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of assembly, association and expression, as well as on candidate registration, have limited the space for political engagement and resulted in a lack of genuine competition," observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said in a report.

During their call on Tuesday, a senior official said, Mr. Trump told Mr. Putin he had been concerned by a recent speech in which Mr. Putin talked about Russia developing an "invincible" intercontinental cruise missile and a nuclear torpedo that could outsmart all American defenses.

Mr. Putin's presentation included animated videos depicting multiple warheads aimed at Florida, where the president often stays at his Mar-a-Lago resort. Mr. Trump raised the nuclear threat in calls with Prime Minister

Theresa May of Britain, President Emmanuel Macron of France and Ms. Merkel.

More recently, however, Mr. Trump noted that Mr. Putin had taken a more moderate tone, talking about the need to de-escalate the nuclear arms race between Russia and the United States.

Mr. Trump, this official said, told Mr. Putin that he welcomed the shift in tone. But Mr. Trump reminded Mr. Putin that his administration was spending \$700 billion to upgrade the American military, and that the United States would win any arms race between the two.

"We will never allow anybody to have anything even close to what we have," Mr. Trump told reporters.

Credit: MARK LANDLER; Maggie Haberman contributed reporting from New York.

Photograph

"We had a very good call," President Trump said of Vladimir V. Putin, at a rally in Moscow, above, who was re-elected this week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAXIM SHMETOV/REUTERS) (A9)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Bills; Politics; Election results; Presidential elections; International relations-US; Influence; Foreign policy
Location:	Russia United States–US United Kingdom–UK
People:	Trump, Donald J Mohamed bin Salman, Prince of Saudi Arabia Mueller, Robert S III May, Theresa Merkel, Angela Skripal, Sergei V Macron, Emmanuel McConnell, Mitch Bush, George W Putin, Vladimir
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LINKS

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Document 146 of 176

Russians Rallied Around Putin in Protest of West's Pressure, Kremlin Says

Macfarquhar, Neil . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]20 Mar 2018: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW -- The Kremlin gave credit to a surprising source for the outpouring of support for Vladimir V. Putin in Sunday's presidential election -- the West.

Ella A. Pamfilova, the chairman of the Central Election Commission, said pressure on Russia from Western leaders -- helped to generate the 76.7 percent support for Mr. Putin.

"Our people always unite when the chips are down," Ms. Pamfilova said on live television, in what appeared to be a reference to what Britain has said was a Russian nerve agent attack on one of its former spies, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter in Salisbury, England.

"That's why a big thanks to certain leaders, I won't name them, of Western states, who also made their positive contribution, which contributed to the consolidation and unification of our people," she added.

Mr. Putin's campaign spokesman, Andrei Kondrashov, was more explicit, saying, "Thanks to Britain, they've ensured a level of turnout we weren't hoping to achieve by ourselves."

The Kremlin propaganda machine swung into action spreading that same message, that the results of the vote on Sunday were a rebuke to the West and a sign that Russia cannot be intimidated and should not be threatened.

"Before he was simply our president and he could be changed. But now he is our vozhd," wrote Margarita Simonyan, the editor in chief of the Kremlin's main foreign-language bullhorn, the RT broadcast network, on Twitter. "And we will not allow him to be changed. And you did this yourselves."

Vozhd is an old Russian word for chieftain, most commonly applied to Soviet rulers like Lenin and Stalin.

Indeed, some commentators found parallels between the vote on Sunday and its Soviet-era antecedents. There was no real competition and no concrete discussion of issues. The front-runner neither participated in any debates nor laid out a campaign platform. As a result, there is now no real sense of what, if anything, the vozhd will do with his mandate.

"The election results should be compared not with democracies, but with the Soviet Union," wrote Ivan Kurilla, a historian, on Facebook. "Back then it was 99.9%, and now it's 75%. It's precisely by that 24% that today's elections are freer than Soviet ones."

Observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe also found the entire process wanting, if well organized. "Overall, the campaign was marked by a lack of genuine competition among contestants," the group's election observation mission concluded in a statement.

There were also some complaints about irregularities. A few videos of ballot stuffing appeared, although the results from a couple such polling stations were quickly nullified. But critics worried about more sophisticated techniques.

One of those was the new "absentee voting" system that allowed people to vote where they were physically rather than where they were registered. One opposition organizer who said he managed to vote twice using the system was immediately charged with a misdemeanor. But that left open the question of how many people might have been able to abuse the system.

The "electoral sultanates" that previously produced whopping numbers for Mr. Putin also seemed to have curbed their enthusiasm. In previous years the Republic of Chechnya, for example, habitually awarded Mr. Putin more than 99 percent of the vote with more than 99 percent turnout. This year it was a slightly more temperate 91.5 percent on both scales.

Over all, Mr. Putin received some 56.4 million votes out of more than 110 million eligible voters, the most ever cast for a Russian president. Turnout was 67.5 percent. The closest candidate to him was Pavel N. Grudinin from the Communist Party with 11.78 percent, followed by Vladimir V. Zhirinovsky, a right-wing nationalist, with 5.65 percent. Ksenia A. Sobchak, the only woman, attracted just 1.68 percent.

What effort Mr. Putin did make toward defining the next six years and his fourth term as president came in a March 1 state of the nation address, in which he promised to sharply increase social spending and to develop a whole new generation of nuclear weapons unlike any the world has ever seen. (Some were already operational, he claimed.)

Critics worried that it was all part of a set piece of continued confrontation that started with the annexation of Crimea and the uprising in eastern Ukraine, and continued with the Skripal case.

There was also no clear explanation of how Russia, with its stagnant economy, would pay for it all, but it certainly would mean abandoning the previous plan of turning Russia into a center of high-tech industries integrated into the global financial system, said Konstantin Gaaze, an analyst who writes frequently for the Carnegie Moscow Center.

"It is the Soviet model," Mr. Gaaze said. "Sell more oil and send more money to research and development. Both schemes were tested in the late Soviet economy and both failed."

Some experts dismissed the guns and butter speech as just so much campaign rhetoric that would go the way of other such promises and decrees, like the assurances of economic and social welfare improvements that Mr. Putin made the time of his last inauguration in May 2012.

From the point of view of these experts, the overwhelming choice of Mr. Putin was rooted in his establishment of stability and rising living standards, especially after the chaotic 1990s, and pride in the rebuilt military and the country's higher standing in the world.

The mood, said Evgeny Gontmakher, a prominent economist, was that "only Putin can provide for us." The current federal budget projects a growth of 2 percent for each of the next three years, he noted, modest but enough to underwrite basic needs without pronounced change.

Indeed, no voters interviewed at random in polling stations around Moscow mentioned "national consolidation" in

confrontation with the West as the reason they chose Mr. Putin, but plenty mentioned the economy. "We need to improve the economy now," said Irina I. Kuzmenko, who teaches the tenets of the Russian Orthodox faith to children, speaking after voting for Mr. Putin. "Lots of factories are lying in tatters." Later Sunday, as Mr. Putin moved between victory celebrations near the Kremlin, one man was shown on television telling him he needed to focus on the economy. "The people are asking that you do the same with the economy that you did with the army," the man said. Mr. Putin did not respond directly, saying that it was important for all political forces to act according to "their common interests."

"This is a very Soviet slogan," said Natalya V. Zubarevich, an expert in social and political geography at Moscow State University, noting that the mandate made it easier for Mr. Putin to do whatever he wanted. "It means gathering around the flag and maintaining patience when things are not so good."

They will need that patience, say many Western economists, who have attributed Russia's poor economic performance to the corruption and cronyism of the system Mr. Putin created and doubt it will much improve until that changes.

The steady parade of Soviet memes fed speculation that the next piece of Soviet heritage that Mr. Putin might try to resurrect was erasing the term limits in the Constitution and returning to the leader-for-life Politburo system. Mr. Putin scoffed when asked about the idea on Sunday night, but others are not so sure, saying he may find it easier to change the Constitution and become president for life than to try to manage the succession struggle that would ensue when he steps down.

However, while neighbors like China and Kazakhstan have found ways to keep their current leaders in place indefinitely, he noted, Russia needs a more rigid structure. "In Russia there is no tradition of being the ayatollah without serious formal steps," said Nikolai Petrov, a political scientist at the Moscow Higher School of Economics. If Mr. Putin's acolytes and supporters exulted at his victory, it left his critics with the uneasy sense that the leader would use his mandate to continue his campaign to muzzle the news media and restrict other civil liberties.

Yevgeny Roizman, the mayor of Yekaterinburg and a rare elected independent politician, wrote on Twitter: "Life will get worse and worse, and at each subsequent election the turnout will be bigger and bigger, the rating of the President will be higher and higher and North Korea will be closer and closer."

Credit: NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Ivan Nechepurenko contributed reporting.

Author/Affiliation

Follow Neil MacFarquhar on Twitter: @NeilMacFarquhar

Photograph

President Vladimir Putin speaking on Sunday in Moscow for a rally on the fourth anniversary of Russia's annexation of Crimea. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXEI NIKOLSKY/SPUTNIK)

DETAILS

Subject:	Term limitations; Social networks; Absentee voting; Presidents; Leadership; Elections; Voter behavior
Location:	North Korea Russia Crimea Western states Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK England China Kazakhstan Ukraine Europe
People:	Sobchak, Ksenia A Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Facebook Inc; NAICS: 518210, 519130; Name: Moscow State University; NAICS: 611310

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Britain and European Union Reach Deal for 21-Month Brexit Transition

Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]20 Mar 2018: A.11.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- British and European Union negotiators on Monday agreed on the terms of a 21-month transition period to keep Britain inside Europe's economic structures and to avoid an economically damaging "cliff edge" when the country formally departs the bloc next March.

The transition accord was announced on Monday at a news conference in Brussels by David Davis, Britain's main negotiator, and his European Union counterpart, Michel Barnier, who described it as a "decisive step" toward an orderly withdrawal, or Brexit.

The deal, however, depends on a broader agreement on Britain's withdrawal, which is to be finalized this year but is by no means certain. One of the main sticking points in those talks has been the border between Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, and Ireland, which will remain in the European Union.

To achieve the transition accord, the British government retreated from an earlier pledge and conceded that European Union citizens who arrived in Britain during the transition period would have the same rights as those already in the country. (Earlier this year, Prime Minister Theresa May insisted that the rights of those newcomers would be "different.")

Talk in Britain about quitting the European Union's fisheries policy next year has also evaporated, with Mrs. May accepting that the standstill transition -- or "implementation period," as she calls it -- meant full compliance with current rules.

Even so, Mr. Barnier made it clear that the transition agreement could not be considered legally binding until after ratification of a wider agreement on withdrawal, which negotiators say they hope to reach in the fall. Among other issues, it would set out how the two sides intend to avoid a "hard border," one with checkpoints, between Northern Ireland and Ireland. Such a barrier could jeopardize the two-decade-old peace process that largely ended sectarian strife in the north.

"Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed," Mr. Barnier said.

European Union leaders are expected to endorse plans for the transition when they meet in Brussels on Thursday and Friday, clearing the way for detailed talks on a future trade relationship.

Even though it is not legally binding, the transition agreement is seen as important for Mrs. May's government, which has been eager to offer assurances to businesses to help mitigate uncertainty over Brexit. Mr. Davis said that the deal would allow companies "to plan for the future with confidence."

That remains to be seen. Carolyn Fairbairn, director general of the Confederation of British Industry, a business lobby group, welcomed the accord as "a critical milestone."

But Mats Persson, head of international trade at the advisory firm EY, noted that businesses faced a decision: whether to put their faith in a political agreement -- and assume the transition will take place, and stop contingency planning -- or to trust in legal certainty, and take nothing for granted. "I'd say a 50-50 split among businesses I speak to," he wrote on Twitter.

During the transition, Britain will aim to complete the details of its future trade ties with bloc, and will be under considerable time pressure.

Mr. Davis said that Britain would be able to negotiate and sign trade deals around the world during the transition period, thereby "seizing one of Brexit's greatest opportunities." Yet, most experts say such discussions generally take longer, and new partners would first want to know the details of Britain's new trade relations with the European Union.

In Britain, meanwhile, the political situation remains volatile, and the government's ultimate intention to quit a customs union with the European Union is likely to be tested in a close vote in Parliament. Any broader deal Mrs. May strikes would have to be approved by lawmakers, too.

Casting a shadow over the process is the Irish border issue, still considered the most complex problem in the negotiations, one that provoked a crisis in December before a fudged, last-minute compromise was reached. A "backstop" solution, keeping Northern Ireland within European economic structures, remains on the table even though Mrs. May is unlikely to accept it.

So far, there has been no definitive progress on Britain's favored alternatives and, in a Twitter post, the Irish foreign minister, Simon Coveney, said there would be "no backsliding" on the Irish border issue.

Keir Starmer, the opposition Labour Party's spokesman on Brexit, called on the government to "prioritize negotiating a final agreement that protects jobs, the economy and guarantees there will be no hard border in Northern Ireland."

"This agreement could have been signed months ago, but ministers wasted time fighting among themselves, holding out on negotiating objectives that they have failed to achieve and pursuing their reckless red lines," Mr. Starmer added.

Meanwhile, Nigel Farage, former leader of the U.K. Independence Party and a supporter of a clean break with the bloc, described Mrs. May as "Theresa the Appeaser."

In addition to the Brexit negotiations, Brussels also hosted the British foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, on Monday as he urged his European Union counterparts and NATO officials to keep solidarity with Britain over the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal, a former Russian spy, and his daughter.

Mr. Johnson, who has accused Russia of violating international agreements banning chemical weapons by creating and stockpiling the Soviet-era nerve agent Novichok, which Britain says was used to poison the Skripals, said that Russian denials of responsibility were "increasingly absurd."

He said that Moscow was using "a classic Russian strategy of trying to conceal the needle of truth in a haystack of lies and obfuscation," adding, "They're not fooling anybody anymore."

But given hesitations by Greece and some other countries, which demanded more proof of Russian responsibility, the European ministers finally issued a relatively weak statement that did not contain any new sanctions against Moscow.

The ministers expressed "unqualified solidarity" with Britain, but did not endorse Britain's conclusion that Russia was responsible, instead calling on Russia to provide answers.

They called on Russia "to address urgently the questions raised by the U.K. and the international community and to provide immediate, full and complete disclosure of its Novichok program."

Credit: STEPHEN CASTLE; Steven Erlanger contributed reporting from Brussels.

AuthorAffiliation

Follow Stephen Castle on Twitter: @_StephenCastle .

Photograph

David Davis, Britain's chief negotiator, left, and Michel Barnier, his E.U. counterpart, in Brussels on Monday to announce a deal. (PHOTOGRAPH BY OLIVIER HOSLET/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

DETAILS

Subject:	Agreements; International agreements; Social networks; Negotiations; EU membership; Poisons
Location:	Ireland Greece Russia United Kingdom--UK Northern Ireland Europe

People:	Starmer, Keir Johnson, Boris May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Davis, David
Company / organization:	Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Confederation of British Industry; NAICS: 813910; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization–NATO; NAICS: 928120; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120
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LINKS

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Britain Says It Can Prove That Russia Has Stockpiled a Lethal Nerve Agent

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]19 Mar 2018: A.4.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Britain has evidence that Russia has been manufacturing and stockpiling the nerve agent used in an attack on a former Russian double agent on British soil, the British foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, said on Sunday.

Mr. Johnson said Russia had been actively researching the use of nerve agents for use in assassinations within the past decade.

The foreign secretary's statements, made in a BBC interview, came 12 days after the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, were found unconscious on a bench in the quiet city of Salisbury, in southwestern England, on March 4.

Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain announced the following week that the poison used in the attack was Novichok, a military-grade nerve agent developed by Soviet scientists for use on NATO troops.

The identification of Novichok as the weapon has become the linchpin of the British case for Russia's culpability in the poisoning. Though one of the scientists who developed the nerve agent, Vil Mirzayanov, published its chemical structure and now lives in the United States, it is extremely dangerous to manufacture. He said in an interview that the only laboratories known to have fine-tuned the process were in Russia and parts of the former Soviet Union.

Russian officials have strenuously argued against this point in recent days, suggesting at different times that the Skripals had not been attacked and that Britain was behind the attack.

In Moscow on Sunday, in his first extensive remarks about the poisoning, President Vladimir V. Putin called it "total rubbish, drivel and nonsense" to think that someone in Russia would carry out such "antics" so close to Russia's presidential election, which was Sunday, and the World Cup soccer tournament, which begins in June in Russia.

Mr. Putin said he first learned about the poisoning, which he called a "tragedy," from the news.

His initial reaction, he said, was that people would have died on the spot if it had really been a military-grade poison. He also denied that Russia had any such substance.

"We destroyed all of our chemical weapons under the control of international observers," Mr. Putin said, speaking at a late-night news conference to celebrate his election victory. "Moreover, we were the first to do this, unlike some of our partners who promised to do this but have yet, unfortunately, to keep their pledge."

On Sunday morning, Russia's ambassador to the European Union, Vladimir A. Chizhov, suggested to a BBC reporter that Britain must have had samples of Novichok at its chemical weapons laboratory, Porton Down, near the site of the attack. He suggested that would have been the only way for British authorities to identify the nerve agent so soon after Mr. Skripal and his daughter collapsed.

Mrs. May announced the name of the agent on March 12, eight days after the attack.

Asked how the nerve agent came to be used in Salisbury, the Russian envoy said: "When you have a nerve agent or whatever, you check it against certain samples that you retain in your laboratories. And Porton Down, as we now all know, is the largest military facility in the United Kingdom that has been dealing with chemical weapons research. And it's actually only eight miles from Salisbury."

Mr. Chizhov, however, backed away when asked whether he was accusing Britain of exposing the Skripals to the lethal poison, saying: "I don't know. I don't have any evidence of anything having been used."

Another senior diplomat, Alexander Shulgin, said on Saturday that Russia had discontinued its chemical weapons production when the Soviet Union collapsed.

"There has never been any program under the group name Novichok in the Russian Federation," said Mr. Shulgin, Russia's ambassador to the Netherlands and representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

"Back to 1992, Russia stopped all the activities in the area of military chemistry," he said. "Last year, we completed the destruction of all chemical arsenals and the completion of this program was duly certified by the O.P.C.W."

He added: "I've never heard about this program, about this nerve agent. That is very bellicose rhetoric."

In an interview with the Russian RT news channel on Friday, meanwhile, Russia's ambassador to Britain, Alexander V. Yakovenko, questioned whether the Skripals were sick at all.

"All the investigation about Skripal is classified," he said. "Nobody even saw the pictures of these people in the hospital -- whether they are alive, or maybe they are just in good health. Nobody talked to the doctors. You know, there is absolutely no transparency in this case."

He also said that British leaders might have concocted the Skripal poisoning as a way to distract from the frustrating logjam over Britain's withdrawal from the European Union.

Mr. Putin said Sunday that Russia was willing to cooperate in the investigation. "But for this we need interest from the other side," he said. "We don't see this for now."

Mr. Skripal's poisoning has set off an angry diplomatic confrontation between Britain and Russia. Last week, Mrs. May announced that the country would expel 23 Russian intelligence officers working under diplomatic cover in the embassy in London.

Mr. Putin responded on Saturday, expelling 23 British agents and closing the British Council, a cultural center, in Moscow.

Mr. Johnson, the British foreign secretary, said the Russian side had failed to put forward an alternative explanation for the Skripals' poisoning.

"We gave the Russians every opportunity to come up with an alternative hypothesis such as the one you have just described, and they haven't," he said to the BBC interviewer on Sunday. "Their response has been a sort of mixture of smug sarcasm and denial, obfuscation and delay."

He said that experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons would arrive in Britain on Monday to test samples of the agent used in the Salisbury poisoning -- something Russia has requested.

"We will share the samples with them," he said. "They will then be tested by the most reputable possible international laboratories."

Credit: ELLEN BARRY; Neil MacFarquhar contributed reporting from Moscow.

DETAILS

Subject:	Laboratories; Poisoning; Professional soccer; Biological &chemical weapons; Poisons
Location:	Netherlands Russia United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK England
People:	Johnson, Boris May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Skripal, Yulia
Company / organization:	Name: British Council; NAICS: 926110; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO; NAICS: 928120; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120

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Russia Expels 23 British Diplomats, Escalating Row Over Ex-Spy's Attack

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW – Russia on Saturday ordered 23 British diplomats to leave the country within a week, escalating a diplomatic crisis after a former Russian spy and his daughter were poisoned with a military grade nerve agent on British soil.

The order came days after Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain expelled the same number of Russian diplomats and called off high-level contacts between the two governments.

The Russians also ordered the closing of the British Council, a cultural and educational organization, in Russia, and revoked permission for the British consulate general in St. Petersburg.

The announcement came after the British ambassador, Laurie Bristow, was summoned to the Foreign Ministry in Moscow on Saturday morning.

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry cast Russia as the aggrieved party, asserting that Russia was acting "in response to the unfounded accusation against the Russian Federation for what happened in Salisbury."

It added, "The British side is warned that, in the case of further actions of an unfriendly character toward Russia, the Russian side reserves the right to take other answering measures."

The Kremlin delayed its response for three days until a day before national elections on Sunday, for which Mr. Putin has campaigned while casting himself as a defender of Russia against Western aggression.

The spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, were found unresponsive on a park bench in the cathedral city of Salisbury, England, after being attacked on March 4. British officials said the lethal nerve agent, Novichok, had been created in the Soviet Union in the 1970s and '80s.

The Kremlin has flatly denied any involvement in the attack, even as state television announcers have pointedly referred to the poisoning as a warning to traitors.

The case has roiled relations between the two countries, with Britain announcing that in addition to other measures, no ministers or members of the royal family would attend the World Cup hosted by Russia this summer. Mr. Bristow, the British ambassador, told journalists in Moscow on Saturday, "We will always do what is necessary to defend ourselves, our allies and our values against an attack of this sort."

The diplomatic crisis, he added, "has arisen as a result of an appalling attack in the United Kingdom, the attempted murder of two people using a chemical weapon developed in Russia and not declared by Russia" with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as is required by treaty.

The tit-for-tat expulsions were the second such episode following geopolitically related poisonings in Britain.

After the British government blamed a Russian agent for adding a lethal dose of the radioactive element polonium-210 to tea sipped by Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former Russian Security Service officer, Britain expelled four Russian diplomats in 2007, and Russia responded in kind.

At a going-away party in Moscow for the expelled Britons, the "James Bond" theme music played on a loop.

In December 2016, the Obama administration expelled 35 Russian diplomats in retaliation for Moscow's meddling in the United States presidential election that year. Russia, in turn, ordered the United States to cut its diplomatic presence in Russia to the same level as Russia's in America, a reduction of about 700 positions, though these included support staff.

This time, Britain's swift response seems to have played into the hands of President Vladimir V. Putin in domestic Russian politics.

As the Russian elections have approached and the row with Britain escalated, Mr. Putin has cast himself as the

protector of a country besieged by outside forces. In interviews released this past week, for example, he described previously undisclosed decisions he had made in tense moments during his long tenure as commander in chief. In 2014, he said, he ordered the downing of a passenger plane suspected of having been hijacked by terrorists intent on crashing it into the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, though it was a false alarm. Mr. Putin said terrorists who seized a theater in Moscow in 2002 had intended to execute hostages on Red Square, but were thwarted when he ordered the release of a powerful sleeping gas on the premises -- though this killed more than 100 hostages.

The Russian news media is generally portraying the poisoning of the Skripals in Britain as a plot against Russia, one intended, improbably, to derail Mr. Putin's election chances -- he is widely expected to win easily -- or as revenge for Britain's having lost a bid years ago to host the World Cup soccer tournament.

"A Nervous Paralytic Reaction," the state newspaper, Rossiyskaya Gazeta, proclaimed about the British response." "Theresa May Has Poisoned Relations Between London and Moscow," a headline in Izvestia declared.

Komsomolskaya Pravda, another newspaper, quoted a chemist, Zhores Medvedev, as saying that the attempted murders may have been the work of exiled Russian oligarchs who had somehow obtained the rare poison.

"This is a provocation," he said. "The campaign that Britain has fomented with the World Cup soccer tournament, which instead of England will take place this year in Russia, always leads to certain suspicions."

After the expulsions, Mrs. May said on Saturday that "Russia's response doesn't change the facts of the matter: the attempted assassination of two people on British soil, for which there is no alternative conclusion other than that the Russian state was culpable."

The British Foreign Office said in statement, "In light of Russia's previous behavior, we anticipated a response of this kind and the National Security Council will meet early next week to consider next steps."

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Diplomatic &consular services; Biological &chemical weapons; Soccer
Location:	Russia United States-US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics-USSR United Kingdom-UK England
People:	May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir Skripal, Yulia
Company / organization:	Name: British Council; NAICS: 926110; Name: National Security Council; NAICS: 928110; Name: Izvestia; NAICS: 511110
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Document 150 of 176

Britain Says Poisoning Was an Order From President

Pérez-Peña, Richard; Rao, Prashant S . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]17 Mar 2018: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson of Britain said on Friday that it was "overwhelmingly likely" that President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia personally ordered the nerve agent attack against a former Russian spy this month.

Mr. Johnson's remarks were a significant escalation in the dispute between London and Moscow, directly linking the Russian leader to the poisoning of Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in the English city of Salisbury.

They came hours before Scotland Yard said it was treating the death of another Russian expatriate, who was a close associate of a prominent Putin critic, as a murder.

Until Friday, British officials had been careful to give the Kremlin a little room for deniability, saying that Russia had either directed the attack or allowed its chemical weapons to fall into the hands of unspecified rogue actors. That door may have been only slightly ajar, but Mr. Johnson appeared to shut it.

"Our quarrel is with Putin's Kremlin and with his decision, and we think it overwhelmingly likely that it was his decision to direct the use of a nerve agent on the streets of the U.K., on the streets of Europe, for the first time since the Second World War," Mr. Johnson said at a news conference. "That is why we're at odds with Russia." Mr. Johnson has a history of going further in his statements than Prime Minister Theresa May and other cabinet ministers, and it was not immediately clear whether his comments represented a new official position for the government.

"We have repeatedly stated on various levels that Russia has nothing to do with that story," Dmitry S. Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, told the Tass news agency on Friday. "Any reference to, any mentioning of, our president in this context is nothing else but a shocking, unforgivable breach of diplomatic proprieties."

Sergey V. Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, indicated that his country would expel British diplomats -- a move that was expected in response to Britain's crackdown this week. But he declined to give a number.

"We will be fair," he said, according to the Interfax news agency. "What would you do? This is elementary."

Also on Friday, Britain's Metropolitan Police said they were treating as a murder the death of Nikolai Glushkov, a former Russian business executive who was found dead in his home in London on Monday. The police said they made the change "following the results of a post mortem," but did not elaborate.

A Russian court tried and convicted Mr. Glushkov in absentia last year on corruption charges, and he was an associate of the former Russian business oligarch Boris Berezovsky, a Putin critic who died in London in 2013. The Skripals were poisoned on March 4 with a nerve agent known as a Novichok, a type of powerful chemical weapon developed by the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s, and both remain in critical condition, according to British officials. The case, including the use of an exotic toxin, had echoes of the 2006 assassination of Alexander Litvinenko, another former Russian agent, who was fatally poisoned in London with a radioactive isotope.

An official inquiry concluded that Mr. Putin had himself most likely ordered the death of Mr. Litvinenko, a harsh critic of the Russian government. British officials have promised to re-examine the suspicious deaths of more than a dozen people in Britain who had run afoul of the Kremlin.

In Moscow, the Russian authorities said on Friday that they had opened a criminal case into the poisoning of Ms. Skripal, which was committed by "a generally dangerous method," and the death of Mr. Glushkov.

"The investigation will be conducted in accordance with the Russian and international law," the Investigative Committee of Russia, the equivalent to the F.B.I., said in a statement. "The investigators plan to engage highly-qualified experts and are also ready to work with the competent agencies in Britain."

The attack on the Skripals has caused outrage in Britain and among its allies, pushing relations between London and Moscow to their lowest level since the Cold War.

Mrs. May said on Wednesday that Britain would expel "23 Russian diplomats who have been identified as undeclared intelligence officers," take financial measures against Mr. Putin's allies, and tighten controls on entry to the country by Russians suspected of wrongdoing.

Britain has sought to gather international condemnation against Russia over the poisoning, making its case to an array of international bodies, including the United Nations Security Council, and to several allies. On Thursday, the leaders of France, Germany and the United States joined Mrs. May in blaming Russia.

The following morning, Mrs. May spoke with her Australian counterpart, Malcolm Turnbull. Australia is a member of the "five eyes" intelligence-sharing alliance, along with Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, so it may be privy to more sensitive information than other British allies.

Mr. Skripal, a former colonel in Russian military intelligence, was convicted in 2006 of selling secrets to British intelligence and imprisoned in Russia. In 2010, he was sent to Britain as part of a spy swap between Russia and

the West.

He had lived quietly for years in Salisbury, and it is unclear what might have prompted an attempt – by the Kremlin or anyone else – to kill him.

British officials have said their own scientists have identified the nerve agent, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, an independent agency, agreed on Friday to review that finding. The country's closest allies have said they accept Britain's conclusion and the likelihood of Russian involvement.

Experts say that Novichok agents are notable in that they can consist of two compounds that are not dangerous until they are combined, making the elements easy to transport and hard to detect.

Under a 1997 treaty, most of the world's nations, including Russia, committed to destroying their chemical weapons stockpiles, except for very small amounts retained for research. Russia said last year that it had completed that process; the United States is one of a handful of countries that acknowledge that they have not yet destroyed their entire chemical arsenals.

Credit: RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA and PRASHANT S. RAO; Ivan Nechepurenko contributed reporting from Moscow.

Photograph

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson of Britain, above, on Tuesday. On Friday, British police said the death of Nikolai Glushkov, left, was being treated as a murder. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/ASSOCIATED PRESS; LONDON METROPOLITAN POLICE, VIA A.F.P. -- GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Diplomatic &consular services; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Murders &murder attempts
Location:	New Zealand Russia United States–US Canada Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR Germany Scotland United Kingdom–UK Australia France Europe
People:	Lavrov, Sergei V Johnson, Boris May, Theresa Turnbull, Malcolm Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
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Document 151 of 176

The Rise of Euro-Putinism

Stephens, Bret . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]17 Mar 2018: A.23.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

There aren't many certainties in politics, but here's one: Vladimir Putin will be re-elected to a fourth presidential term in Sunday's sham ballot. The larger question is what other elections can Putin win in the coming years. He's on a roll. The big winners in Italy's election this month -- the anti-immigrant Northern League and the populist Five Star Movement -- are highly sympathetic to Putin. Austria's young new chancellor, Sebastian Kurz, governs in coalition with the far-right Freedom Party, which in 2016 signed a contract with Putin's puppet political party, United Russia, to "exchange experiences" and "send delegations to each other." German elections in September saw gains for the far-left Left Party and the far-right Alternative for Germany. Both are popular with pro-Putin voters.

The list continues: The Russia-friendly left-wing government of Alexis Tsipras in Greece, in power since 2015. The Russia-friendly right-wing government of Viktor Orban in Hungary, in power since 2010. Marine Le Pen's second-

place finish in the 2017 French election. Donald Trump's second-place finish in the 2016 U.S. election. Then there's Britain. Putin won a victory in 2015 when Jeremy Corbyn – a man who in 2011 called NATO "a danger to world peace" – became leader of the Labour Party. Putin won a victory the following year with Brexit, which isolated the U.K. while accelerating the trend toward European disintegration.

It's in this light that the attempted murder of the former Russian intelligence agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia should be understood.

There are inconspicuous ways to eliminate an enemy. Using an exotic chemical agent produced by a single lab in the Soviet Union isn't one of them. There are inconspicuous moments at which to do it. The eve of Putin's re-coronation isn't one of them. It recalls the murder of the journalist and Kremlin scourge Anna Politkovskaya on Oct. 7, 2006 – Putin's 54th birthday.

In other words, the attack wasn't simply an act of revenge. It was a statement of dominance. The ostentatious disdain with which the Kremlin has treated the British government since Theresa May leveled the charges against Russia in Parliament this week underscores the message: We can do this. You can't touch us. We are winning. You are weak.

They're probably right. May's initial decision to expel 23 Russian diplomats was feeble and predictable. Her government is reportedly considering tougher measures, including seizing U.K.-based assets of Kremlin-connected oligarchs. Don't bet on it. "We're going to get very, very cross," was what one rueful Tory member of Parliament told me of what he expects of his government.

Translation: Russia will not have the pleasure of a royal visit when it hosts the World Cup this summer. A joint statement has been issued by Britain, France, Germany and the U.S. calling on Russia to "live up to its responsibilities" to "uphold international peace and security." Otherwise, no serious consequences. No serious additional sanctions on Russia. No major increases in European defense spending. No effort to wean Europe from its dependence on Russian energy. No boycott of the precious World Cup.

It doesn't help Britain or the rest of Europe to have, in Donald Trump, an American president who until recently was publicly infatuated with Putin, and has so far allowed only toothless sanctions on Russia for its electoral meddling. Nor does it help that, in the contest for European hearts and minds, Trump's America doesn't rate favorably against Putin's Russia, as my colleague Frank Bruni noted in an astute column on Sunday. When America puts an oaf in the Oval Office, the sly villain in the Kremlin will look appealing by comparison.

But Europe's larger problem in the face of Putin's serial aggressions isn't a dismaying and potentially compromised U.S. president. It isn't the methods the Kremlin has used to subvert Western democracies: the troll farms, propaganda channels, email hacks, rent-a-protests or loans to extremist parties. And it isn't a matter of ideology, either. The Kremlin is as happy to ally itself with fascists as it is with Communists, techno-anarchists or radical environmentalists.

The deeper reason Putin seduces is that he believes in the principle of power. He acts. The uses of his power are mainly wicked. But wickedness, at least, is a quality, particularly when it is wedded to political efficacy, personal forcefulness and the appearance of great cunning.

Compare that to the last decade or so of European leaders: David Cameron, Matteo Renzi, Nicolas Sarkozy, Jean-Claude Juncker, even Angela Merkel. What did any of them stand for? What in their personalities was anything other than feckless and pallid? Who among them would pull a trigger for their country's preservation – or even for their own? How many of them will be remembered in 20 years' time?

Vladimir Putin is a criminal president who poses a clear and present danger to democratic society. But nobody can accuse him of being feckless or pallid or unwilling to pull a trigger. He's exciting in the way of a tiger pouncing on prey. So long as he's allowed to pounce he'll continue to win new admirers and future elections, not just his own. I invite you to follow me on Facebook.

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DETAILS

Subject:	Conservatism; Members of Parliament; Politics; International relations; Political leadership; Election results; Presidential elections; Political power; Elections
Location:	Italy Russia United Kingdom--UK Austria France Europe Hungary Greece United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR Germany
People:	Trump, Donald J Sarkozy, Nicolas Juncker, Jean-Claude Merkel, Angela Tsipras, Alexis Cameron, David Le Pen, Marine Kurz, Sebastian Orban, Viktor May, Theresa Renzi, Mat teo Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Alternative for Germany; NAICS: 813940; Name: Five Star Movement; NAICS: 813940; Name: Nort hern League; NAICS: 711211; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO; NAICS: 928120
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LINKS

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Document 152 of 176

Britain Hints at Tougher Blow Against Russia: Stripping Tycoons' Assets

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]16 Mar 2018: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- As she probes for Russia's vulnerabilities during a week of deepening crisis, Prime Minister Theresa May does not have to look far. Within a few blocks of No. 10 Downing Street, she could find opulent homes owned by members of President Vladimir V. Putin's inner circle.

A short walk from Mrs. May's office is an apartment registered to a company owned by First Deputy Prime Minister Igor I. Shuvalov, with a value estimated at \$16 million. Roman Abramovich, a former member of the Russian Parliament and a longtime Putin associate, lives opposite Kensington Palace, in a house whose value has been estimated at \$163 million.

The rupture between Russia and the United Kingdom deepened on Thursday, eleven days after a former Russian spy was poisoned with a military-grade nerve agent in a sleepy town in southwest England.

In a rare joint statement, the United States, Germany and France condemned the attack, calling it the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since World War II. And in Washington, the Trump administration announced new sanctions against 19 people and five organizations implicated in cyberattacks.

In Britain, meanwhile, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson hinted that Putin associates in the United Kingdom might be targeted in an anti-corruption drive. That prospect, though still remote, is a significant threat to the tight circle of officials and businessmen around Mr. Putin.

"If you start to take away Astons and Bentleys and huge apartments in Kensington, freezing those assets, people will care a lot more," said Cliff Kupchan, chairman of Eurasia Group, a consulting firm, adding that the pressure would be conveyed to Mr. Putin.

"These people are loyal," Mr. Kupchan said. "Can they get him to do a 360? No. But is there some dual directionality, going up and going down, the elite to the president? Yes."

Wealthy Russians began shifting their money into Britain in the mid-1990s, snapping up properties through anonymous companies registered in overseas territories like the British Virgin Islands. A 2015 study by Deutsche Bank, based on figures from the Russian Central Bank and the Bank of England, suggested that since 2006, around \$129 billion had flowed into Britain through secret offshore transactions, much of it from Russia.

As capital migrated, the subculture known as Londongrad grew in size and influence. In 2003, Mr. Abramovich bought the iconic Chelsea Football Club. In 2009, Alexander Lebedev, a former K.G.B. officer, and his son, Yevgeny, bought a controlling share in The Evening Standard, one of London's oldest daily newspapers. In recent years, Russian expatriates have begun to build networks in British politics, making large donations to the Conservative Party.

Though Mr. Putin has condemned capital flight as unpatriotic, he tolerates it in his inner circle, Mr. Kupchan said. "Putin wants repatriation, but the social contract is that if you show loyalty, you can live the way you want," he said.

For Russians, part of Britain's draw was its offer of legal shelter; it refuses extradition requests from Russia. British institutions, meanwhile, have been lenient with wealthy foreign buyers, skimming through due diligence procedures intended to determine the source of a buyer's funds, said Ian Bond, director of foreign policy at the Center for European Reform.

"This has been a very weak part of our money-laundering system," Mr. Bond said. "Not enough questions are being asked about overseas shell properties. Estate agents are not asking the right questions -- or any questions -- about the beneficial owners."

The government has promised this will change.

On Wednesday, under pressure to display a tough response to the poisoning of the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, Mrs. May promised to "freeze Russian state assets wherever we have the evidence that they may be used to threaten the life or property of U.K. nationals or residents." She went on to say that investigators will crack down on "serious criminals and corrupt elites."

"There is no place for these people -- or their money -- in our country," she said.

Mrs. May has several tools available to challenge the legitimacy of Russian holdings. Just six weeks ago, Britain rolled out a new campaign to stem the flow of dirty money into its real estate sector, presenting an unnamed political figure, reportedly from Central Asia, with the first-ever "unexplained wealth order." The order requires the target to present a court with evidence that the property was purchased with legal funds. If that fails, the state can seize the asset.

Unexplained wealth orders could most easily be used against government officials, whose incomes are clearly insufficient for them to purchase billion-pound London properties, said Ben Cowdock, a researcher at Transparency International. The orders would be difficult to use against wealthy businessmen with multiple income streams, he said.

Mrs. May also promised on Wednesday to introduce legislation similar to the Magnitsky Act in the United States. That act allows American officials to deny visas to Russians implicated in human rights violations and freeze their assets. In 2012, when Congress passed its legislation, the British government chose not to follow suit, arguing that it had sufficient sanction powers.

Mrs. May said she was also ready to freeze Russian state-owned property that had been used in attacks on British soil, a category potentially broad enough to include Aeroflot planes that carried assailants to Britain, Mr. Bond said.

"It is intended to say, 'We will go after anything that isn't nailed down,'" he said.

One concern for Britain is whether the measures would jeopardize British business interests in Russia -- in particular, its flagship oil producer, BP, which owns a 20 percent stake in Rosneft, the Russian oil and gas giant. Anti-Putin activists and investigative journalists here have long urged a crackdown on oligarchs' lavish holdings, whose ownership is often concealed by layers of offshore transactions. Mark Hollingsworth, co-author of "Londongrad: From Russia With Cash," has spent years compiling a database of thousands of properties by cross-referencing public records and prowling neighborhoods popular with wealthy Russians.

"They love the area near Harrods, they love Eaton Square, Belgrave Square," he said. "Of course, they don't live there. It's all about parking their money, and acceptance and reputation. Being accepted by the British establishment."

Mr. Hollingsworth said an aggressive campaign of asset seizures could serve as "a warning shot against Russian billionaires who have made their money in dubious circumstances," stripping them of their sense of security.

"If they target the right ones and shut them down, they'll lose a fair amount of money," he said. "If that happens, Londongrad probably no longer exists."

But Roman Borisovich, an anti-Putin campaigner who organizes a "klepto-tour" of mansions and penthouses owned by people close to the Kremlin, said Mrs. May's speech on Wednesday suggested she was not ready to press forward with asset seizures.

"Now all the arsenal of weaponry is available to the government," he said. "The prime minister can use any tools, but she didn't use them."

Credit: ELLEN BARRY; Ceylan Yeginer contributed reporting.

Photograph

Top, Prime Minister Theresa May in Salisbury, England, on Thursday. Above, President Vladimir V. Putin on Tuesday in Dagestan, Russia. He has condemned capital flight as unpatriotic. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACK TAYLOR/GETTY IMAGES; ALEXEI NIKOLSKY)

DETAILS

Subject:	Equity stake; Sanctions; Prime ministers
Location:	Russia United States–US Central Asia Germany United Kingdom–UK England British Virgin Islands France Eurasia Europe
People:	Johnson, Boris May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: Bank of England; NAICS: 521110; Name: Chelsea Football Club; NAICS: 711211; Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120; Name: OAO Rosneft; NAICS: 324110; Name: Transparency International; NAICS: 813319; Name: Eurasia Group; NAICS: 523930; Name: Deutsche Bank AG; NAICS: 522110, 551111
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Document 153 of 176

Britain's Sharp Rebuke of Russia Over Poisoning

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

To the Editor:

Re "Britain Expels 23 Russians. That's the Easy Part" (front page, March 15):

The rapid endorsement by its European and North American allies of Britain's assessment and retaliatory actions in relation to the Salisbury nerve agent attack is to be welcomed. However, we have yet to see exactly what actions will be taken by France, Germany, the United States and Canada in response to the attack.

A number of key European Union countries are dependent on Russian gas and may be reluctant to provoke Vladimir Putin beyond words.

Many are warning that Britain's actions alone, or even in concert with others, will have no impact on Mr. Putin's international misbehavior and will only serve to increase tensions and build his domestic support.

Then there are others, myself included, who ask, "What if we had done nothing?" We'd effectively be saying to a bully, "Come on in and use the U.K. as your playground -- we'll turn a blind eye." Game over.

When deciding what action to take, it is not always enough to ask what might come of it. We should also ask what bad may result from inaction. As Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

PAUL WENMAN
ABINGDON, ENGLAND
To the Editor:

What was the purpose of this poisoning of a former Russian spy, apparently by the Russian state? The spy, Sergei Skripal, had ceased to be an active threat to its interests. The method pointed clearly to its source.

A British inquiry's finding of probable Russian state involvement in the 2006 fatal poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko, an opponent of Vladimir Putin, made the Skripal poisoning particularly likely to draw a significant British reaction.

It seems likely that Russia wished to send a clear message to other Russian nationals that any betrayal of Mr. Putin would be at the risk of his or her life. And what is the current subject of investigation that is arguably the most consequential to Russian interests? The Mueller investigation of Russian involvement in United States elections -- and in particular any collusion by President Trump and Russian leverage over Mr. Trump -- must be at the top of that list.

CHRISTOPHER FOURNIER
CHELSEA, QUEBEC

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Opinions
Location:	Russia United States–US Canada France Germany United Kingdom–UK
People:	Trump, Donald J Putin, Vladimir
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Document 154 of 176

U.K. Labour Leader's Stance on Former Spy's Poisoning Splits Party

Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]16 Mar 2018: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- While Prime Minister Theresa May has united her warring Conservative Party by denouncing Russia over the poisoning of a former spy, things have not gone so smoothly for the opposition Labour Party. Among Labour lawmakers, familiar wounds have reopened over the more ambivalent stance of its left-wing leader, Jeremy Corbyn.

Twice in Parliament this week, Mr. Corbyn, whose political views were forged in his leftist activism in the 1980s, has eschewed the supportive, cheerleading role that opposition leaders traditionally play to the prime minister when Britain is in conflict with a foreign power. At times, in his reluctance to criticize Moscow, he sounded like his ideological opposite, President Trump.

While he condemned the attack in Salisbury, England, as an "appalling act of violence," Mr. Corbyn has claimed that the Conservatives took donations from wealthy Russians, and he has highlighted cuts to the British Foreign Office and called for the Russian authorities to be "held to account on the basis of the evidence."

On Thursday, in an article in The Guardian, Mr. Corbyn added that criticism of Russia should not mean acceptance

of "a 'new cold war' of escalating arms spending, proxy conflicts across the globe and a McCarthyite intolerance of dissent."

His resistance to falling into line with Mrs. May's tough stance revived tensions with centrist Labour lawmakers who were reluctantly reconciled to Mr. Corbyn's leadership last year after his better-than-expected performance in national elections.

After Mrs. May and Mr. Corbyn spoke in Parliament on Wednesday, several Labour lawmakers welcomed the prime minister's statement, including Hilary Benn, a former shadow foreign secretary, who argued that "as Russia has chosen to act against us in such an outrageous way, we have to demonstrate our determination to defend ourselves."

One Labour critic of Mr. Corbyn, John Woodcock, tabled a parliamentary motion "unequivocally" accepting Russian culpability in the poisoning of the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia.

The right-wing press piled on, with the front page of the tabloid Daily Mail describing the Labour leader as a "Kremlin Stooge."

"He didn't want to say -- he couldn't say -- the things that everybody would normally have expected the leader of the opposition to say, and that is an expression of Jeremy Corbyn's deeply held foreign policy position," said Steven Fielding, professor of political history at the University of Nottingham, who noted that the Labour leader's political education was rooted in organizations like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Stop the War Coalition. "The fact that Jeremy Corbyn is still waiting for the evidence to be confirmed, is a reflection of the genuine Jeremy Corbyn position of skepticism about the British state," Mr. Fielding added. "The assumptions are very simply a deep mistrust of the British state and an internationalism defined by anti-imperialism."

That worldview was on display in a briefing to journalists on Wednesday, in which Mr. Corbyn's spokesman drew attention to the "problematic" history of the British intelligence services, particularly the claims of Iraqi stockpiles of chemical weapons that were used to justify British involvement in the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Those comments, relayed instantly back via Twitter to the parliamentary chamber, prompted Mrs. May to say that she was "surprised and shocked by the statement."

Under the conventions of British politics, the spokesman is generally not named, but several Labour lawmakers identified him as Seamus Milne, a close ally of Mr. Corbyn, a former journalist at The Guardian and a powerful but divisive figure within the leadership team.

"Mr. Milne's comments do not represent the views of the majority of our voters, members or MPs," wrote the Labour lawmaker Chuka Umunna on Twitter, referring to members of Parliament. "We'll get abuse for saying so but where British lives have been put at risk it is important to be clear about this," he added.

In an editorial, Mr. Milne's former newspaper described Mr. Corbyn's statement as "dispiriting," noting that his "reluctance to share Mrs. May's basic analysis of the Salisbury incident made him look eager to exonerate a hostile power."

Even some Corbyn-loyalists have taken a more aggressive stance against Moscow. The shadow chancellor of the Exchequer, John McDonnell, pledged on Sunday to make no further appearances on the Kremlin-sponsored broadcaster Russia Today, saying that its coverage "goes beyond objective journalism." He told the BBC that it was "right," after the events in Salisbury, that Labour lawmakers did not appear on the Russian-sponsored channel.

But one commentator, John Rentoul, suspects that there is more support for Mr. Corbyn's position outside Parliament where, he wrote, the Labour leader's "idealistic opposition to warlike words goes down well with much of the general public." And it remains true that despite the strong circumstantial evidence of Russian involvement, the British police have neither identified any direct link to the Kremlin nor named any suspects.

Whether Mr. Corbyn pays a political price for his stance may depend on how the Anglo-Russian rift develops. His supporters are likely to give him the benefit of the doubt, and most of his internal critics are already well-known opponents. While his comments gave plenty of ammunition to the right-wing press, many analysts, pointing to last year's elections when the tabloids vilified the Labour leader, concluded that he might wear their criticism as a badge of honor.

Again Labour's divisions are out in the open but, if nothing else, it proves that Mr. Corbyn is a different type of politician, one for whom calculation matters less than conviction.

"It's not going to win him any votes," Mr. Fielding said, "it can only harm him, but the question is how much."

Photograph

Jeremy Corbyn, the leader of the Labour Party, called a nerve gas attack an "appalling act of violence," but he has been reluctant to criticize Moscow or fall in line behind his prime minister. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA REUTERS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Members of Parliament; Political leadership; Social networks; Espionage; Parliaments; Prime ministers
Location:	Russia Iraq United Kingdom--UK England
People:	Trump, Donald J Benn, Hilary May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V
Company / organization:	Name: University of Nottingham; NAICS: 611310; Name: Guardian (newspaper); NAICS: 511110; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Russia Today; NAICS: 515120
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Mr. Trump Has A Bad Word for Russia at Last

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

The West's response to Russian aggression has usually been too little, too late, and devoid of the one voice that really matters – President Trump's.

But at last, his administration is taking action, and Mr. Trump has spoken out, tentatively. On Thursday the Treasury Department announced it was imposing sanctions for the Kremlin's interference in the 2016 election. Officials have denounced the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain and Russia's devastating bombing missions in Syria.

While such steps are encouraging, only a more robust, unified response from the United States and its NATO allies would impede President Vladimir Putin from expanding his pattern of heinous behavior.

Before leaving office, President Barack Obama expelled 35 Russian diplomats, seized two diplomatic properties and imposed sanctions in response to the election interference. Mr. Trump, for reasons that have never been made completely clear, has until now resisted a congressional mandate that he expand the penalties. This was despite the warnings of intelligence agencies that Russia is already trying to meddle in the 2018 election and Congress's near unanimous passage of the law demanding more sanctions.

The sanctions announced on Thursday affect five Russian organizations and 19 individuals cited for spreading disinformation and propaganda to disrupt the election.

While this was Mr. Trump's most significant anti-Russia move, these are the same entities identified by Robert Mueller, the special counsel investigating Russian meddling, in a recent indictment and only add two new senior Russian officials, with ties to military intelligence, to the list Mr. Obama sanctioned in 2016, according to Representative Adam Schiff, the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee.

The penalties need to go further, subjecting Mr. Putin's wealthy cronies and their families to sanctions like travel bans and asset freezes that would put even more pressure on the Russian leader.

The administration also took the unusual step of citing the Russian government for a previously unconfirmed series of intrusions into American power plants and the computer networks that control power grids that occurred

about the time of the election. Those attacks suggest Russian state-sponsored hackers have been actively mapping out Western industrial, power and nuclear facilities for eventual sabotage, experts say.

While Mr. Trump said nothing on Thursday about either the sanctions or Russia's interference in the election, he did end days of silence about the attack with a military-grade nerve agent against the former spy, Sergei Skripal, and his daughter, despite Moscow's denials. "It certainly looks like the Russians were behind it," he told reporters in the Oval Office. "Something that should never ever happen. We're taking it very seriously, as I think are many others."

But Mr. Trump's comments came a full day after his United Nations ambassador, Nikki Haley, took the lead with a more powerful statement at the Security Council. She insisted the United States stands in "absolute solidarity" with Britain after the attack. Russia's use of chemical weapons on the soil of another United Nations member is a "defining moment," she said, and there is a need to "hold Russia accountable."

And the piling on didn't stop there. Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, the national security adviser, whom Mr. Trump reportedly may fire, condemned Russia in a speech on Thursday for being "complicit in Assad's atrocities" in Syria and conducting more than 100 bombing missions in Eastern Ghouta, as well as being "responsible" for the Skripal poisoning.

All of this occurred after Prime Minister Theresa May announced plans to expel 23 Russian spies and suspend high-level contact with Moscow, and also joined the United States, France and Germany in a statement denouncing Russia's action as a clear violation of international law.

But the statement said nothing about joint action, and Mrs. May's measures either lacked details or didn't go far enough. Mr. Putin, an authoritarian leader who is expected to be re-elected easily to another six-year term on Sunday, has paid little or no price for his aggressions, including annexing Crimea, destabilizing other parts of Ukraine and enabling President Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria.

He won't stop until he knows that the United States will stand up to him and work with its allies to impose stronger financial and diplomatic measures to rein him in.

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Credit: THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Illustration

DRAWING (DRAWING BY ALEXIS JANG)

DETAILS

Subject:	Editorials; Poisoning; Diplomatic & consular services; Intelligence gathering; Presidents; Sanctions; Political power; Presidential elections; International relations-US; Influence; Foreign policy
Location:	Russia United States-US United Kingdom-UK Syria
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Document 156 of 176

New Sanctions Put on Moscow Over 2016 Vote

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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- The Trump administration imposed sanctions on a series of Russian organizations and individuals on Thursday in retaliation for interference in the 2016 presidential election and other "malicious cyberattacks," its most significant action against Moscow since President Trump took office.

The sanctions came as the United States joined with Britain, France and Germany in denouncing Russia for its apparent role in a nerve-gas attack on a former Russian spy and his daughter on British soil, calling it a "clear violation" of international law. But the joint statement said nothing about any collective action in response.

In his first comment on the poison attack, Mr. Trump agreed that, despite its denials, Russia was likely behind it. "It looks like it," he told reporters in the Oval Office, adding that he had spoken with Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain.

"We are in deep discussions," Mr. Trump continued. "A very sad situation. It certainly looks like the Russians were behind it. Something that should never, ever happen. And we're taking it very seriously, as I think are many others." In keeping with his reluctance to blame Moscow for meddling in the 2016 presidential campaign, Mr. Trump did not mention the sanctions or election interference. The president has repeatedly dismissed the suggestion that Russia sought to influence the vote in his favor as a "hoax" and "fake news," even as a special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, has concluded otherwise and is investigating whether Mr. Trump's campaign collaborated with Russian agents. Before leaving office, President Barack Obama expelled 35 Russian diplomats, seized a pair of diplomatic properties and imposed sanctions in response to the election interference. But while Mr. Trump's administration has issued sanctions against some Russians for human rights abuses or for the country's intervention in Ukraine, the measures announced on Thursday represented the first time he took action on the meddling, and only after Congress passed legislation to force his hand.

The sanctions targeted the same three Russian organizations and 13 individuals indicted by Mr. Mueller for an audacious operation spreading disinformation and propaganda to disrupt American democracy and, eventually, promote Mr. Trump. The sanctions also targeted two other organizations and six individuals in response to various cyberattacks dating to March 2016, including a previously unconfirmed attempt to penetrate the American energy grid.

"The administration is confronting and countering malign Russian cyberactivity, including their attempted interference in U.S. elections, destructive cyberattacks and intrusions targeting critical infrastructure," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement. "These targeted sanctions are a part of a broader effort to address the ongoing nefarious attacks emanating from Russia."

Moscow dismissed the move as political. "This is purely tied to the internal American infighting," Sergei Ryabkov, a deputy foreign minister, told the Interfax news agency. "This is also tied to our elections calendar."

President Vladimir V. Putin is virtually guaranteed of winning re-election on Sunday, but state-run media outlets tirelessly speculate that Western governments are creating provocations to make his victory and future rule less secure. "The Americans don't have any grounds to impose sanctions," Mr. Ryabkov said. "When talking about some 'intrusion,' the authors of these decisions should better talk about their own madness."

Among those targeted for election meddling was the Internet Research Agency, a troll factory that Mr. Mueller accused of creating fake online personas, infiltrating social media, posting thousands of ads and even organizing political rallies to shape the 2016 contest.

Nine of the 24 entities and individuals targeted on Thursday had already received sanctions from Mr. Obama or Mr. Trump for other reasons, including Yevgeny V. Prigozhin, an oligarch known as "Putin's cook" who was accused of controlling the Internet Research Agency. Also hit with sanctions again were the Federal Security Service and its military intelligence counterpart.

The measures were an important statement by an administration that has avoided taking action on election interference, but the tangible impact of freezing assets and barring business transactions may be minimal. Mr.

Prigozhin brushed it off, noting that sanctions had already been imposed against him. "I have no business either in the U.S. or with Americans," he told Ria Novosti, a state news agency. "I don't care about this. Except perhaps that I won't be dining at McDonald's."

In addition to the election meddling, the Treasury Department said it was retaliating for the NotPetya cyberattack that caused billions of dollars in damage in the United States, Europe and Asia last year in what the department called "the most destructive and costly cyberattack in history."

The administration also took the unusual step of naming the Russian government as the force behind a series of intrusions into American power plants and the computer networks that control power grids. The attacks, known as "Dragonfly," pierced many layers of security and would have allowed the intruders to sabotage systems, experts say. But there is no evidence any sabotage took place.

Those attacks have been known to the American government for more than a year, but kept highly classified.

Symantec Corporation, which markets systems that detect and combat malware, issued a report about Dragonfly in October, but stopped short of naming the Russians.

Among the targets was the Wolf Creek Nuclear Operating Corporation, which runs a nuclear power plant near Burlington, Kan., according to security responders and a joint report issued by the Department of Homeland Security and the F.B.I. last June.

Those attacks suggest Russian state-sponsored hackers have been mapping out Western industrial, power and nuclear facilities, perhaps in preparation for eventual sabotage. There is no evidence that Russian hackers were able to jump from the operator's corporate networks into the production networks that control plant operations, but forensic investigators and government officials believe the attacks were designed to look for ways to make that jump.

The joint statement responding to the March 4 poisoning attack in Salisbury, England, came a day after Mrs. May expelled 23 Russian diplomats and announced other measures in retaliation. Sergei V. Skripal, the former Russian spy, and his daughter, Yulia, were left in a coma because of the attack, which British investigators attributed to Novichok, a potent nerve agent developed in the Soviet Union in the 1970s and '80s.

"This use of a military-grade nerve agent, of a type developed by Russia, constitutes the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since the Second World War," the statement by the four allies said. "It is an assault on the United Kingdom's sovereignty and any such use by a state party is a clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and a breach of international law. It threatens the security of us all."

Although it did not include concrete steps in response, the joint statement was a notable display of unanimity among countries that have taken varying stances toward Russia in recent months. Mrs. May has sought in recent days to marshal criticism of Russia, submitting statements to international organizations like the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Russia has denied responsibility for the attack. "Neither Russia nor the Soviet Union has ever pursued any programs to develop chemical warfare agent called Novichok," Mr. Ryabkov said. "The allegations that such a program existed have been spread by people who were earlier transferred to the West and who actually emigrated not without Western governments' assistance."

He added that "all stockpiles of toxic substances were destroyed last year."

The poison attack increased pressure on Mr. Trump to take a more vocal public position regarding Russia, something he has steadfastly avoided. Lawmakers of both parties have been angry that, until Thursday, he had not imposed the sanctions envisioned in the law they passed nearly unanimously over his objections last year.

Democrats said the sanctions made it harder for Mr. Trump to dismiss Mr. Mueller's investigation as an illegitimate political exercise.

"The fact that the administration has issued sanctions against individuals and entities indicted by Special Counsel Mueller proves that his investigation is not a 'witch hunt' as the president and his allies have claimed," Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic minority leader, said in a statement.

Senator Bob Corker, Republican of Tennessee and chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who

helped broker the sanctions law last year, said he was satisfied with Thursday's announcement but skeptical that new punishments would ultimately change Russia's behavior.

"I think Russia is on course to do what Russia is going to do," Mr. Corker said in an interview. "I think it's good that we're doing it, and I think we ought to continue to push back, but I think they are going to continue to attempt to create the kind of disharmony that they have been good at doing."

Still, there was a bipartisan consensus that Mr. Trump still had not done enough.

Representative Ed Royce, Republican of California and chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, called the sanctions an "important step" but said that "more must be done." Senator Jack Reed, Democrat of Rhode Island, called them "the bare minimum" that seemed "designed more for domestic public relations purposes than for actually deterring Russian misbehavior."

Follow Peter Baker on Twitter: @peterbakernyt.

Credit: PETER BAKER; Reporting was contributed by David E. Sanger and Nicholas Fandos from Washington; Nicole Perlroth from Boulder, Colo.; Ivan Nechepurenko and Oleg Matsnev from Moscow; and Prashant Rao from London.

Photograph

President Trump on Tuesday. "It looks like it," he said on Thursday about Russians being behind a nerve gas attack in Britain. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM BRENNER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A11)

DETAILS

Subject:	Investigations; Network security; Politics; International law; Diplomatic & consular services; Internet crime; Presidents; International organizations; Sanctions; Influence; Poisons; Nuclear power plants; Foreign policy; Security services; Poisoning; Social networks; Voter fraud; Presidential elections; International relations-US; Human rights; Congressional committees
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK United States--US
People:	Trump, Donald J Skripal, Sergei V May, Theresa Putin, Vladimir
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URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/15/us/politics/trump-russia-sanctions.html
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LINKS

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Hitting Putin Where It Hurts

Glenny, Misha . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]16 Mar 2018: A.27.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

EDITORS' NOTE APPENDED LONDON -- In private, even some of Theresa May's most ardent supporters concede that she is a reluctant decision maker. But after the attempted assassination of Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, the British prime minister had no choice but to do something.

Mr. Skripal, a former Russian double agent who was released to Britain in 2010, appears to have been poisoned with a Russian-made nerve agent while eating with his daughter at an Italian restaurant in the town of Salisbury in southern England. There have been several suspicious deaths of Russians in Britain in recent years, but the authorities have declined to investigate most of them because they were considered domestic conflicts that happened to be played out in London. The poisoning of Mr. Skripal, who had provided information to Britain, appears to be different. He had been part of a spy swap; it was believed he was safe from retaliation.

On Wednesday, Mrs. May announced her decision: the expulsion of 23 Russian diplomats who Britain believes are

engaged in espionage. It was not an insignificant move, and Russia has indicated it will respond with tit-for-tat expulsions.

But the prime minister should have gone in harder. If she really wanted to teach Russia a lesson, she should have announced measures allowing her government to scrutinize the billions of dollars invested in Britain by Russian oligarchs and their associates, some of whom have criminal or intelligence backgrounds. This kind of transparency would hit President Vladimir Putin and his allies where it hurts most: their bank accounts.

To this day, anybody from Mexican cartels to Saudi arms dealers to Russian oligarchs (and even American real estate magnates) can invest money in Britain through anonymous companies registered in Crown Overseas Territories like the British Virgin Islands. In London's central borough of Westminster alone, some 10,000 apartments and houses are owned by companies whose proprietors are entirely unknown to the government.

In 2016, Mrs. May's predecessor, David Cameron, was preparing legislation to force anonymous companies to reveal their real owners. Then he lost the referendum on Britain's membership in the European Union and found himself out of power. After Mrs. May took over, she postponed introduction of the legislation, claiming the need for further consultation. The crisis with Russia right now would have been the perfect opportunity to bring the law before Parliament.

Mrs. May probably has her reasons for not going forward with the law. She is the country's weakest prime minister to assume office since World War II. Brexit has not only polarized public opinion but also created bitter divisions in her cabinet, and several ministers are open about their desire to take her place. Because of this, she has had to handle the relationship with Russia after the murder attempt with great care. If she gets it wrong, her already enfeebled administration could collapse.

And she's hardly any stronger on the world stage. Britain's European allies are tired of the hectoring language used by British ministers negotiating Brexit, and at first they used this crisis to express their frustration. For several days, President Emmanuel Macron of France pointedly refused to blame Russia for the assassination attempt, saying he needed more conclusive proof. On Thursday, though, Germany, France and the United States came around to issuing a joint statement condemning the poisoning.

Mr. Putin may have realized how weak Mrs. May is, which is why he would decide to act now to take revenge on a man he sees as a traitor and to cause Britain new headaches.

Russia's motivation is understandable. Its economy faces serious structural problems, including a dangerous overreliance on oil and gas. At the same time, business leaders are worried about the country's long-term demographic decline. Mr. Putin seeks to bolster his domestic popularity by looking powerful as he sows discord with the West.

And Britain has made itself an easy target for Russian intrigue. To be fair, this is not a problem of Mrs. May's making. The government is reaping the dubious rewards of having opened the City of London since the late 1990s to foreign capital with no questions asked about its origin. The initial aim of this permissive approach was to persuade investors that London – rather than New York – was best suited to be the world's financial capital.

Among the many to take advantage of the light-touch regulations were oligarchs, spies and gangsters.

Britain needs to make a concerted effort to ascertain where all of this fabulous wealth comes from. Russian oligarchs have made an indelible mark on London. Some own newspapers, others our most successful soccer clubs, while many more own huge chunks of high-end property in the most fashionable parts of the capital.

And some of those characters are close collaborators and friends of President Putin. British newspapers have been full of articles about Russian oligarchs and their relatives buying luxury London houses through anonymous companies. Reports say that this is now an ever more popular trick – squirreling away corrupt money by passing it on to relatives in the hope that it will evade scrutiny.

If Mrs. May is convinced that Russia is behind this attack, then she needs to devise a way of getting to President Putin's friends and collaborators. And that means great transparency. She should reintroduce the stalled proposal to force anonymous companies to reveal the sources of their cash. If any members of Parliament or the cabinet tried to oppose a move now, their motives would immediately look suspicious. Now is the moment to confound her

critics by acting decisively.

If Britain knows where the money is coming from, it can develop smarter sanctions against Mr. Putin's inner circle. But that information has the added advantage of making it easier to spot criminal money from across the world being laundered through London's real estate and financial industries.

If Moscow is indeed responsible for the poisoning of Mr. Skripal and his daughter, then the attempted murders look like another tactic in a strategy that seeks to exploit the political vulnerabilities of our democracies. But unlike fake news and the meddling in elections, this one could prove deadly.

Follow The New York Times Opinion section on Facebook and Twitter (@NYTopinion), and sign up for the Opinion Today newsletter.

Online Editors' Note: March 22, 2018, Thursday

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction: An earlier version of this article referred to news reports that a Russian oligarch used family members to invest in property in London. Those news reports did not establish specific instances in which that took place and the article has been altered to better reflect the scope of that reporting.

Misha Glenny (@MishaGlenny) is the author of "McMafia: A Journey Through the Global Criminal Underworld," which is the basis of an AMC television drama of the same name.

DRAWING (DRAWING BY MICHAEL GEORGE HADDAD)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Politics; Expulsions & suspensions; Intelligence gathering; Oligarchy; International relations-UK; Presidents; Assassinations & assassination attempts; Retaliation; Espionage; Treason
Location:	Russia United States-US United Kingdom-UK
People:	May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Yakunin, Vladimir Skripal, Yulia Cameron, David Putin, Vladimir
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LINKS

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Document 158 of 176

Why Attack on Ex-Spy Adds to Image of Putin As a Fearless Defender

Higgins, Andrew . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]15 Mar 2018: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

MOSCOW -- Cruising toward a certain victory in this Sunday's presidential election, President Vladimir V. Putin briefly dropped his image as Russia's tough but merciful czar to make clear that he could forgive misdeeds by wayward subjects, but "not everything."

Asked what could not be forgiven, Mr. Putin said bluntly, "Betrayal."

Mr. Putin's unforgiving contempt for treachery, displayed in a new hagiographic film released this week, provides the emotional and political backdrop to a pattern of Russian behavior that, Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain

announced on Monday, made it "highly likely" that Moscow was responsible for a March 4 nerve-agent attack in Salisbury, England, on Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia.

Viewed from London, the attack on Mr. Skripal, a former colonel in Russian military intelligence who was recruited as a spy by Britain, was in Mrs. May's words, an "indiscriminate and reckless act" that "put the lives of innocent civilians at risk," while sending Russia's relations with the West into yet another downward spiral.

Britain followed through on those allegations on Wednesday, expelling 23 Russian diplomats and outlining an array of other actions it would take.

But do not expect any apologies or even a serious discussion from Moscow. From the Kremlin's perspective, said Mark Galeotti, a Russia expert at the Institute of International Relations in Prague, it plays into "the central geopolitical narrative of the current incarnation of Putinism: Russia is just too formidable and fearsome to be ignored. This is all about demonstrating that Russia not only has capacity to act but the will to act, too."

Far from damaging Mr. Putin, with just days to go before Russia's presidential election, the accusations leveled at Moscow by Britain only reinforce Mr. Putin's position that Russia is a besieged fortress under constant threat from enemies within and outside its borders.

[Read more about the clash escalating between Britain and Russia.]

While steadfastly denying any involvement in the attack, the Kremlin has added the episode to a daily diet of news on state news media outlets that showcase what Mr. Putin, in a recent state of the nation address in Moscow, described as Russia's invincible might and its readiness to strike back at enemies wherever they are.

Like the new missile systems unveiled by Mr. Putin in that speech, the attack on Mr. Skripal has only added to the president's stature, at least among his base at home, as a fearless defender of the nation ready to do anything, no matter how risky, to assert Russia's status as a great power to be feared.

Rather than bow to British demands for an explanation of how a Russian-made military nerve agent ended up in Salisbury, Moscow went on the offensive. Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov on Tuesday dismissed British accusations as "nonsense" and demanded that Britain hand over the nerve agent used against Mr. Skripal and his daughter. Russia, he added, had so far "received an incoherent response, which amounts to a rejection of our legitimate demands."

Just as Britain did earlier to Russia's ambassador in London, the Kremlin on Tuesday summoned the British ambassador to Moscow to demand an explanation.

Vladislav Inozemtsev, a Russia scholar currently at the Polish Institute of Advanced Studies in Warsaw, said the nerve-agent episode showed that "talking to Mr. Putin has become senseless." The Russian president and his senior officials, he said, would "never assume responsibility," whatever the facts were, and would only gloat over the suffering of a traitorous former spy – still unconscious and in critical condition – while blaming Britain for it. "They will stick to the thesis that Westerners kill agents they do not need anymore and then blame Russia," Mr. Inozemtsev said.

Russia under Mr. Putin, said Mr. Galeotti, an expert on Russia's security services, "has given up on winning respect through soft power and is pursuing what I call 'dark power.' "

This approach, which involves Russia throwing its weight around and then reveling in the outrage this causes, Mr. Galeotti added in a telephone interview, "plays into Putin's own natural instincts that a great power is one that is feared. It is better and much easier to be feared than loved."

Of all the virtues in which Mr. Putin takes pride, none has more importance to the Russian leader -- a veteran of a Soviet security apparatus built around a cult of loyalty to the state -- than his commitment to the idea that nobody, especially not spies who defy their vows, can escape punishment for betrayal.

Answering questions from citizens in a 2010 phone-in program, Mr. Putin praised intelligence officers as "people who lay their whole lives on the altar of the Fatherland" and denounced those who betrayed this mission as "pigs" whose fate would be so miserable that they would "regret a thousand times" their treachery.

Mr. Skripal, who was convicted of high treason in Russia in 2004 and then allowed to settle in Britain after a 2010 spy swap, was a case study of all that Mr. Putin loathes.

Mr. Skripal almost certainly had no more Russian secrets to betray when he was attacked with a nerve agent identified as one of a Russian-produced class of chemicals known as Novichok. But he still represented an affront to the principle that betrayal must never go unpunished: He was alive and living comfortably in a pleasant English cathedral town.

As happened after accusations that Russia was responsible for the 2006 murder in London by radioactive poisoning of another intelligence turncoat, Alexander V. Litvinenko, the downing of a Malaysian passenger aircraft over Ukraine in 2014 and meddling in America's 2016 presidential election, officials and state news media outlets in Moscow responded with a barrage of denials and mockery to the latest outrage. They have scoffed at the idea Russia could possibly have had any role in the attack on Mr. Skripal and even suggested that the whole episode might have been fabricated.

The Russian Embassy in London, in sneering statements on its website and Twitter feed, refers to the "Sergei Skripal Case," using quotation marks to suggest it does not believe there really is such a case.

Russia has yet to address in any detail the main piece of evidence pointing to a Russian hand – that Novichok agents have been produced only in Russia – and has instead developed conspiracy theories involving Ukraine, British revenge for past athletic defeats ahead of this year's World Cup soccer tournament in Russia and other far-fetched explanations.

Moscow has been exasperated that its denials are not taken seriously and have been mocked relentlessly under a Twitter hashtag, #Russiadenies, even though officials have in the past acknowledged what they had earlier denied. Mr. Putin and his lieutenants, for example, denied for weeks that Russian soldiers were involved in the seizure of Ukrainian military bases and government offices in Crimea in March 2014. The action, they insisted, was entirely the work of local "self-defense units." The following month, however, Mr. Putin made a sharp U-turn, declaring, "Of course our troops stood behind Crimea's self-defense forces."

Maria V. Zakharova, the Russian Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman, mocked Mrs. May's statement to Parliament in London as a "circus show," adopting a sneering and decidedly undiplomatic tone now in vogue among Russian diplomats and commentators.

But in an earlier comment, soon after news of the nerve gas attack in Salisbury broke, the evening news host on the state-controlled Channel One gave voice to what, under Mr. Putin, is the Russian state's view of traitors.

"I don't wish death on anyone, but for purely educational purposes, I have a warning for anyone who dreams of such a career," the newscaster Kirill Kleimenov told viewers. "The profession of a traitor is one of the most dangerous in the world."

Credit: ANDREW HIGGINS; Matthew Luxmoore contributed reporting.

Photograph

President Vladimir V. Putin, center, at a forum on young workers during a visit to a factory in Nizhny Tagil, Russia, last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENKO/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

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Location:	Russia Crimea United Kingdom–UK England Ukraine
People:	Lavrov, Sergei V May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
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Document 159 of 176

Britain Expels 23 Russians. That's the Easy Part.

Pérez-Peña, Richard; Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]15 Mar 2018: A.1.

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Few world leaders have looked weaker than Theresa May, the British prime minister. Yet in Parliament on Wednesday, she vowed to stand tough in the escalating confrontation with Russia over the use of a nerve agent to poison one of its former spies on British soil.

In language reminiscent of the Cold War, Mrs. May – until recently, accused at home of not being hard enough on Moscow – expelled 23 Russians she said were spies, promised a crackdown on corrupt Russians and the money they funnel into Britain, and called off high-level contacts between the two governments.

Suddenly, she is the most forceful Western leader in denouncing President Vladimir V. Putin's government, which she portrayed as a malevolent and lawless force.

Her decision makes for a particularly sharp contrast with President Trump, who has been notably reluctant to criticize Mr. Putin and is dogged by accusations that the Kremlin tried to help him in the 2016 election.

But it was not clear how strongly allies would rally to her side, and experts said that behind Mrs. May's tough talk lay relatively mild measures, aside from the headline-grabbing expulsion, which she described as the biggest one of Russian diplomats in more than 30 years. That, in turn, reflects Britain's weakened position in the world, as well as Russia's continuing success in sowing discord and division.

"I expected a stronger reaction," said Jonathan Eyal, international director at the Royal United Services Institute, a London-based defense and security research institute. He said Mrs. May might have calculated that in response to tougher measures, Russia would "decapitate the British Embassy in Moscow" with its own expulsions.

There are a number of tougher measures that Britain could also take, like seizing any assets of questionable provenance belonging to Russians who have invested and settled in the country, changing laws that made it possible to hide the true ownership of assets, and calling on the international community to tighten economic restrictions on Russia. [Read more about Britain's options against Russia.]

Britain's broadcast regulator has also hinted that it could revoke the license of RT, the Kremlin-controlled English-language news channel.

Britain wants the support of its allies in taking action against Russia, but relations with those allies are shakier than they have been in generations, given Britain's pending divorce from the European Union and frictions with Mr. Trump.

The European alliance itself is being sorely tested, with the rise of far-right and anti-Europe movements in Italy and elsewhere, defiance from autocratic sounding governments in Poland and Hungary, and the long struggle in Germany to form a governing coalition.

By contrast, the Kremlin sees the tide of events moving in its direction, and little likelihood that Western allies possess the combined will to increase sanctions.

"The Russian authorities don't feel themselves isolated at all," said Thomas Gomart, director of the French Institute of International Relations, a research group based in Paris.

"They feel there is disarray in the West because of the situation in Washington, because of Brexit, because of the Italian elections and the difficulty of forming a government in Berlin," he added.

The Kremlin has denied any involvement in the nerve agent attack and vowed to retaliate for any measure Britain takes, and on Wednesday, the foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, accused the British government of "acting out political drama" rather than conducting a serious investigation.

In Britain, Mrs. May leads a minority government, and her nation is mired in painful Brexit talks. Every week brings fresh speculation that her own bitterly divided party will dump her.

Outside of the rhetorical realm, it is not clear what degree of international support she can muster.

She may find it hard to win allies to put increased economic and security pressure on Russia, which is already

under sanctions, though she lined up expressions of support this week from United Nations agencies, NATO, the European Union and elsewhere.

It is unclear why a few assassinations or attempts would spur allies to take tougher action against Moscow when killing civilians in Syria, shooting down a passenger airliner over Ukraine and meddling in the American election generally have not.

French officials have described the use of a nerve agent in Britain as an outrage, and Britain as a vital ally with shared values, but they have stopped short of blaming Russia or discussing any retaliatory action.

"Once elements are proven, then will come the time for decisions," Benjamin Griveaux, the French government spokesman, told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

Angela Merkel, who was sworn in as German chancellor for the fourth time on Wednesday, said only that she took Britain's conclusions seriously, and that more transparency was needed from Russia, according to the German news agency DPA.

Some of the strongest language came at an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday from the American ambassador, Nikki R. Haley, who has been tougher on Russia than Mr. Trump.

"Russia is responsible for the attack on two people in the United Kingdom using a military grade nerve agent," Ms. Haley said, calling the poisoning "an atrocious crime."

"We take no pleasure in having to constantly criticize Russia," she said, "but we need Russia to stop giving us so many reasons to do so."

Britain's ambassador to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen, also blamed Russia for the attack, calling its behavior "indiscriminate and reckless," accusations ridiculed by Russia's ambassador.

Even so, analysts say, Britain's friends would have little appetite for taking on a Russian government that has demonstrated a willingness to lash out with cyberwarfare, disinformation, assassinations and the manipulation of energy exports.

New sanctions are unlikely, Mr. Gomart said, but in Paris and Berlin, "the level of concern is higher than ever" over Russian behavior, and governments across the Continent will give Britain practical and intelligence support in facing down Moscow.

Mrs. May has said that Sergei V. Skripal, 66, and his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, 33, were sickened on March 4 with a "Novichok," an extremely potent class of nerve agents developed by the Soviet Union in the 1970s and '80s.

The Skripals, who remain hospitalized in critical condition, were poisoned in Salisbury, the small city where Mr. Skripal lives, potentially endangering hundreds of bystanders.

Mr. Skripal, a former colonel in Russian military intelligence, was imprisoned for selling secrets to Britain, and then sent to Britain in 2010 in a spy swap.

The prime minister said the British intelligence services have concluded that either Russia was behind the attack or that it had lost control of chemical weapons that, under an international treaty, it claims not to possess.

Mrs. May also said that the government had agreed on new powers to crack down on the activities of foreign intelligence agents in Britain, that there was no place for "serious criminals and corrupt elites" in the country, and that an invitation for Mr. Lavrov to visit had been withdrawn.

She added that no British ministers or royals would attend the World Cup in Russia this summer, that Britain would "increase checks on private flights, customs and freight," and that it would "freeze Russian state assets wherever we have the evidence that they may be used to threaten the life or property of U.K. nationals or residents."

"They have treated the use of a military-grade nerve agent in Europe with sarcasm, contempt and defiance," Mrs. May said of Russia. "Their response has demonstrated complete disdain for the gravity of these events. They have provided no credible explanation."

Her tough stance won widespread praise in Britain, uniting her fractious Conservative Party -- and much of the opposition, as well -- for now.

A notable exception was Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, who left open the possibility that the nerve agent could have been used by someone other than the Russian state, and whose aide, Seamus Milne, referred to

British intelligence failings over Iraqi weapons 15 years ago.

"This ghastly episode has put her in a position where her political interest, to show that she is an authoritative leader, coincides with the national interest," said James Sherr, a former British defense official who is an associate fellow at Chatham House, a prominent think tank.

"But she also had no choice," Mr. Sherr added. "The Russians have perceived this country for a long time as being very weak, and we have reinforced that perception with a very lackluster response to murders on our soil. She had to respond this time."

Experts questioned how much substance lay behind the prime minister's promises of action, and warned -- as she has, herself -- that going after Russia will hurt Britain, too.

Tens of billions of dollars in Russian wealth have poured into Britain in recent years, much of it invested by allies of Mr. Putin. Driving that money away could have painful consequences for London, on top of any range of economic setbacks that are expected to accompany Britain's decision to leave the European Union.

Mrs. May promised to invoke a law allowing the government to investigate and seize assets gained from corruption, but that law has been in effect since last year and has been little used. She said the government would compile better records on corporate ownership used to hide assets, but that project, too, has been underway for years.

And she said that her government would propose new legislative changes to use against Mr. Putin's allies, but offered few details.

"We will continue to bring all the capabilities of U.K. law enforcement to bear against serious criminals and corrupt elites," she said. "There is no place for these people -- or their money -- in our country."

But Mr. Sherr said that the real question "is whether there will be a serious, long-term strategy to keep up the pressure."

"One or two headline-grabbing speeches and a few other measures are not going to change things," he said.

Credit: RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA and STEPHEN CASTLE; Reporting was contributed by Aurelien Breeden from Paris; Christopher F. Schuetze from Berlin; Sophia Kishkovsky from Moscow; and Michael Schwirtz from the United Nations.

Photograph

Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain spoke Wednesday to the House of Commons about the poison attack attributed to Russia. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PARLIAMENT TV, VIA REUTERS) (A8)

DETAILS

Subject:	Expulsions &suspensions; Diplomatic &consular services; Intelligence gathering; International relations-UK; Sanctions; Biological &chemical weapons; Espionage; Poisons; Prime ministers
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Document 160 of 176

U.K. Has Array of Options to Respond to Moscow

Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]14 Mar 2018: A.7.

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FULL TEXT

Britain has financial and diplomatic weapons it can use against Russia to respond to the suspected poisoning of a former spy with a nerve agent, but it is unclear how willing the government is to wield them, or that they would influence the behavior of the Kremlin.

Prime Minister Theresa May told Parliament on Monday that her government had demanded that Russia explain the attack on the former agent, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter, Yulia, who remain in critical condition. Lacking a "credible response" from Moscow, she said, "I will come back to this House and set out the full range of measures we will take."

Britain's strongest stance against President Vladimir V. Putin's government would involve taking action both on its own and in cooperation with its allies, diplomatic and security analysts said on Tuesday.

But it is too soon to gauge how much appetite those allies have to stand up to Russia on Britain's behalf. The Kremlin is also likely to retaliate for any measures Britain takes, and past governments have been unwilling to engage in such an escalating fight.

Though Mrs. May has not hinted what her government might do, politicians and policy experts have suggested a number of punitive actions.

Squeeze the Oligarchs

The British government has historically asked few questions about where wealthy foreigners' money comes from, helping make London a favorite place for people from other countries to invest.

Russian émigrés and investors in Britain include many of Mr. Putin's enemies, but also some of his closest allies. Transparency International, an anti-corruption group, says it has identified more than \$6 billion in British real estate bought with possibly ill-gotten wealth, more than one-fifth of it owned by Russians.

But a law enacted last year allows British law enforcement to investigate where the money for big purchases came from, and to go to court to seize assets. Experts say that aggressive use of the new law could be the most effective way to inflict pain on Mr. Putin's inner circle.

The risk posed by such unilateral action is not just that Russia could respond, but that its retaliation would be aimed solely at Britain.

Shine Light Into Dark Corners

British law makes it fairly simple to hide the ownership of assets through opaque shell corporations; the multimillion-dollar homes of wealthy expatriates are often bought by such companies.

Watchdog groups say that it is too easy for people to create corporations for laundering illicit wealth, and that the government agency that tracks companies has neither the authority nor the resources to look deeply into what they do. They say that the registry of official companies is riddled with holes and inaccuracies.

"The openness and attractiveness of London is particular to London," said James Nixey, head of the Russia and Eurasia program at Chatham House, a London think tank. "That is something the U.K. can change on its own."

Kori N. Schake, deputy director of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, advocated taking transparency further.

"We should publish Putin's bank details, what we know of his property and that of his kids," she said.

Expel the Spies – and Maybe Some Others

Russia has, by some accounts, more spies in Britain than at the height of the Cold War, many of them operating under diplomatic cover. Lawmakers of all political stripes have called for the government to deport many of those people, though Russia would almost certainly respond by throwing out British diplomats and intelligence agents. In addition to expelling suspected spies, Britain could re-examine some of the other Russians it has allowed to live in the country.

Like many countries, Britain allows wealthy people to bypass the usual laborious process for getting a long-term residence visa. The deal is simple: Invest millions of dollars, and get a visa.

"The whole idea that money gives you access to state protection is quite ridiculous, quite wrong," said Kadri Liik, a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, based in London.

Critics said for years that the program was too lax and required little in the way of background checks. In 2015, the government tightened the rules, and the number of people receiving investor visas dropped sharply.

In the past week, analysts have said that Britain could restrict the program more, revisit visas granted under the old rules, and revoke the residency of people with shady histories.

Call on the International Community

Britain can call on NATO, the European Union, the United Nations and the United States to help it take action against Russia, but each approach has drawbacks.

Since 2014, the European Union and the United States have imposed sanctions on Russia over its aggression in Ukraine, which have hurt the Russian economy, but have shown no signs of altering Russian conduct. And European countries, heavily dependent on Russian oil and gas exports, have not been eager to strain relations with Moscow further.

Neither the allegations of Russian war crimes in Syria, nor Russia's meddling in other nations' elections, nor the downing of an airliner by pro-Russian forces in Ukraine, killing 298 people, prompted new sanctions from the European Union. Any such action in the Skripal case would require solidarity from the European Union at a time when Britain is leaving the bloc and relations with Brussels are uncertain.

While European officials were quick to condemn the use of a nerve agent, and an attempted murder on British soil, President Trump, whose administration is enmeshed in investigations into Russian election manipulation, has made no public statement about it.

Some diplomats and security analysts have said that Britain should invoke NATO's Article 4, which says that member nations "will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened." That consultation could be powerful symbolically but might not yield any substantive result.

The provision is usually interpreted as applying to actions on a far larger scale than attempted murder, said Adam Thomson, a former British ambassador to NATO and head of the European Leadership Network.

Author/Affiliation

Follow Richard Pérez-Peña on Twitter: @PerezPena.

Photograph

Prime Minister Theresa May of Britain said in Parliament on Monday that it was "highly likely" that Russia was behind the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Salisbury, England, last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Diplomatic & consular services; International relations; Prime ministers
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People:	Trump, Donald J May, Theresa Skripal, Sergei V Putin, Vladimir
Company / organization:	Name: United Nations--UN; NAICS: 928120; Name: European Leadership Network; NAICS: 541720; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Transparency International; NAICS: 813319; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization--NATO; NAICS: 928120; Name: European Union; NAICS: 926110, 928120; Name: European Council; NAICS: 928120
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Document 161 of 176

As Putin's Foes Fled to London, Spies Followed

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]14 Mar 2018:
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[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The Russian opposition figure Vladimir L. Ashurkov breathed a sigh of relief when he fled Moscow for London in 2014. After months of being followed by the Kremlin's intelligence agents to meetings, culminating in a televised raid of his apartment, he finally let his guard down, disappearing into the elegant, polyglot streets of Kensington.

Six months passed before he realized that he was still being followed.

An old friend returned from a trip to Russia with unnerving news: In Moscow, security officials had asked detailed questions about a private conversation he had with Mr. Ashurkov in a London cafe. As he built his life in London, Mr. Ashurkov learned to look for Russian agents reflexively -- men in dark suits sitting alone at émigré gatherings, dinner-party acquaintances rumored to be informants.

"You can't do much about it," he said. "Even after you escape from Moscow to London, you know they have long hands."

Russia now has more intelligence agents deployed in London than at the height of the Cold War, former British intelligence officials have said. They serve a variety of functions, including building contacts among British politicians. But the most important task is to keep an eye on the hundreds of heavyweight Russians -- those aligned with President Vladimir V. Putin, and those arrayed against him -- who have built lives in Britain, attracted by its property market and banking system.

The poisoning last week of Sergei V. Skripal, a retired Russian double agent, and his daughter has put pressure on the British government to rein them in.

The British authorities once devoted abundant resources to tracking the movement of Soviet agents here. But in recent years terrorist threats have become the clear priority, and MI5 has fewer resources to keep pace with Russia's expanding operations, said John Bayliss, who retired from the Government Communications Headquarters, Britain's electronic intelligence agency, in 2010 and now lectures on security threats.

"I think it's sort of accepted that there are more spies in London now than there were at the height of the Cold War," he said. "In the Cold War, it was quite difficult for Russians to move around the country, they were restricted outside London. But now they've pretty much got free movement, they can go anywhere. We haven't got enough people to follow everybody all the time."

London is also a base for commercial intelligence-gathering firms, like the one headed by the former MI6 agent Christopher Steele, who built a dossier on President Trump's links with Mr. Putin. The Russian government is keenly interested in these efforts, and their sources.

As a young K.G.B. officer, Mr. Putin was first assigned to a station in the East German city of Dresden, which dispatched spies to steal technological secrets and compromise and recruit influential figures, in both West and East Germany. As Russia's leader, he has expanded foreign intelligence networks so that they "reached or surpassed Cold War levels," said Mark Galeotti, a Russia expert at the Institute of International Relations in Prague.

"There is a sense that Russia is geopolitically in competition with the West," he said. "In these current circumstances, spies are relatively cheap and relatively effective. This is the way Putin runs his state."

Over the last 10 years, Britain has granted political asylum to a parade of Mr. Putin's critics, big and small, who have blended seamlessly into "Londongrad." It is a place where, as one denizen explained, a bureaucrat on vacation could dine cordially with a dissident novelist who speaks at anti-Putin rallies.

A former British intelligence official, speaking on the condition of anonymity in line with protocols, described it as "a lot of Putin's friends, and former friends, and enemies and allies, all swirling around together in this moneyed scene."

"And of course half of them send their kids to British public schools," the former official added, using the British term for private schools.

In interviews, prominent Russians here described a growing awareness that they were under close watch by the

Kremlin.

Yevgeny Chichvarkin, a mobile-phone tycoon who complained publicly about official corruption, fled Moscow for London in 2009 and was later accused of kidnapping and blackmail. Mr. Chichvarkin, who met for an interview in a fashionably moth-eaten pink cardigan and gaudy pantaloons, now owns Hedonism, a Mayfair wine shop where one bottle of vintage cognac is priced at \$340,000.

Mr. Chichvarkin said he had realized that he was under surveillance shortly after moving here, when he observed a group of two or three men standing for hours around 100 yards from his front door. Peering at them more closely, he saw that they were passing the time by peeling and eating sunflower seeds, a habit common among men from the Russian countryside.

"Stirlitz had arrived," he said, referring to an iconic K.G.B. agent, the hero of a 1973 television series set in Nazi Germany, "Seventeen Moments of Spring."

Still, Mr. Chichvarkin said he felt far safer in London than in Moscow, particularly after the 2015 assassination of the prominent opposition leader Boris Y. Nemtsov. He said that Russian security personnel were far more constrained on British soil -- "In Moscow, they can use guns," he said -- and that he had been deeply impressed by British policing and rule of law.

"I think they do more than all the other countries in the European part of the world," he said.

Mikhail B. Khodorkovsky, a Russian tycoon who served a decade in a Russian prison and received asylum here last year, wanders London without bodyguards, and can be seen in line for takeout coffee at the sandwich chain Pret a Manger. For his part, Mr. Ashurkov, who was granted political asylum in March 2015, learned to relax in London after what he described as "a period of paranoia."

"I know that Russian security services are capable of assassinations in London or any part of the world if a decision is made in Moscow, but you cannot think about it all the time," he said.

Other opposition figures, however, say they are constantly on alert.

Mr. Skripal is the second former Russian agent to be poisoned on British soil, after the 2006 killing of Alexander V. Litvinenko, which, a British inquiry concluded nearly 10 years later, was in all likelihood ordered by the Kremlin. The British government took modest countermeasures, and the two men accused of the killing remain at large in Russia.

Bill Browder, a wealthy investor who has led international campaigns to impose sanctions on Mr. Putin and his associates over corruption and human rights violations, says the poisoning of Mr. Skripal means that people like him are at greater risk.

"The British government has created a dangerous situation by not creating consequences for Litvinenko," said Mr. Browder, who has lived in London for three decades and has British citizenship. "If there is no reaction for Skripal after Litvinenko, then there is a high probability I will be killed next."

For years, the fulcrum of London's anti-Putin opposition was Boris A. Berezovsky, a billionaire who broke bitterly with Mr. Putin and received political asylum in 2003. Lord Timothy Bell, who was close to Mr. Berezovsky, said he had often sat in public places as his friend pointed out the agents following him.

"They weren't with anybody," he said. "They weren't sitting sociably. They were staring. It was unnerving. You got used to it after a while."

Mr. Berezovsky employed high-priced security services, staffed by former officers in the Israeli military or French Foreign Legion. But the cost became unmanageable as his fortune diminished, and the number gradually dropped from six to four to three to two, Mr. Bell said. Only one bodyguard was guarding him in 2013, when he was found dead in the locked bathroom of a manor house.

"I suppose it was not worth paying for, since it didn't protect him in the end," Mr. Bell said.

The coroner in the case said, the next year, that it was impossible to say whether Mr. Berezovsky had killed himself or been murdered. Mr. Chichvarkin, another friend, recalled that Mr. Berezovsky had regarded his security detail with a degree of fatalism.

"He used to say, 'He's not a bodyguard, he's a witness,'" he said.

Credit: ELLEN BARRY; David D. Kirkpatrick contributed reporting.

Photograph

Yevgeny Chichvarkin, above, who fled Moscow for London in 2009, at his wine shop in Mayfair. Left, Boris Berezovsky, center, addressing the news media outside High Court in central London in 2012. He was found dead the next year. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ANDREW COWIE/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A6)

DETAILS

Subject:	Cold War; Security services; Poisoning; National security; Politics; Bodyguards; Intelligence gathering; International relations-UK; Political asylum; Murders &murder attempts; Assassinations &assassination attempts; Espionage
Location:	London England Russia United Kingdom-UK
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Document 162 of 176

Britain to Scrutinize Suspicious Deaths

Barry, Ellen; Ceylan Yegin-su . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]14 Mar 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- For nearly three decades, since a Soviet whistle-blower told the world of its existence, the nerve agent Novichok has scared American weapons experts. The Pentagon sent teams to destroy abandoned laboratories that once produced the chemical, believed to be orders of magnitude more lethal than sarin or VX.

There was no sign of it ever being used. Until last week.

Now, Britons are taking in the disquieting information that a Novichok nerve agent, a weapon invented for use against NATO troops, was released in the quiet town of Salisbury, its target a former Russian spy named Sergei V. Skripal. Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, collapsed onto a bench in a catatonic state on March 4, and remain hospitalized, in critical condition.

Britain's Home Ministry on Tuesday indicated that it viewed state-sponsored violence by Moscow as a larger problem, announcing that it would scrutinize a series of suspicious deaths of Russians on British soil. Home Minister Amber Rudd said the police and MI5, Britain's domestic security agency, would review 14 cases cataloged last year in an investigation by BuzzFeed. The British police also announced an investigation into the death on Monday of Nikolai Glushkov, a close associate of one of Mr. Putin's most prominent foes.

In interviews, chemical weapons experts said it was possible that Novichok nerve agents had been used before on Kremlin targets in Britain, but had escaped detection.

Exposure, either by inhalation or through the skin, leads to muscle spasms, secretion of fluid into the lungs and organ failure, sometimes accompanied by foaming at the mouth. But if the victim has already died, experts said, the police could easily mistake the cause of death for a simple heart attack.

"It's entirely likely that we have seen someone expire from this and not realized it," said Daniel M. Gerstein, a former senior official at the United States Department of Homeland Security who is now at the RAND Corporation. "We realized in this case because they were found unresponsive on a park bench. Had it been a higher dose, maybe they would have died and we would have thought it was natural causes."

The Russian foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, said on Tuesday that his country had nothing to do with Mr. Skripal's poisoning, dismissing Britain's allegation that Moscow was to blame as "nonsense." Britain had sought an explanation from Russia by the end of the day on Tuesday on how the nerve agent could have been used. But Mr. Lavrov said that Moscow "had received an incoherent response" when it asked London for details, which he said amounted to a "rejection of our legitimate demands."

The dispute between the two countries has sharply worsened tensions between Russia and the West, already strained by Moscow's role in the Syrian conflict and its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

Though American laboratories stopped producing nerve agents around 1970, after the production of so-called third-generation nerve agents like sarin and VX, Soviet scientists continued their work for two decades, producing a "fourth generation."

The Novichok nerve agents came in solid form, like a powder or thick paste, and would not register on the chemical detector paper that NATO troops used.

A chemist who worked in the laboratory developing Novichok accidentally inhaled fumes while filling a syringe, and collapsed. Though he was injected with an antidote and eventually awoke, he suffered from depression and epilepsy and died five years later, leaving Vil Mirzayanov, a scientist who helped develop the agent, deeply disillusioned.

"Antidotes exist, but what does antidote mean?" Mr. Mirzayanov, who had leaked the project to the press and later immigrated to the United States, told Sky News on Tuesday. "You're saving a person who has been exposed to this gas -- but temporarily, not to die this time. But he will be an invalid for the rest of his life."

Andrew C. Weber, a former assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical and biological defense programs, recalls picking his way through a secret, abandoned Soviet research facility in Nukus, Uzbekistan, which the United States was asked to help destroy in the early 2000s.

Entering a basement room, Mr. Weber saw a disturbing sight: "dozens and dozens of restraining devices" used to immobilize dogs while their skin was exposed to Novichok agents in the form of a powder or paste. He said that he believed each test involved 50 to 100 dogs, and that at least 1,000 dogs had been killed at the facility.

The Pentagon, Mr. Weber said, "devoted a lot of resources to improving our protection, detection and countermeasures against it." But it did not anticipate its use in an assassination, he said, in part because it was so easily traced to Russia.

"It's obviously tightly controlled by the Russian government," he said. "It's implausible to me -- possible, but not probable -- that this chemical weapon would have been diverted from a Russian facility. It would be well guarded."

Dan Kaszeta, a chemical weapons specialist who once served as an adviser to the Secret Service, said the agents were "so shrouded in mystery that I don't know how many chemical compounds are in the Novichok family."

In Salisbury, where Mr. Skripal and his daughter were stricken, residents described mounting anxiety on Tuesday as they learned more about the nerve agent. The authorities reassured residents that there was no significant health risk. But they ratcheted up their precautions as the days went on, finally advising people who had been near the victims to wash or wipe everything they were wearing or carrying at the time.

Adam Langley, 44, a construction worker, said his 13-year-old daughter had been peppering him with questions, among them: "Is it true that it can stay in your body for years, and make you sick later?"

"She sends me texts throughout the day, asking if I'm sure we're not going to die," Mr. Langley said. He recalls swearing aloud when he researched Novichok on the internet.

Lisa Patterson, a local estate agent, had a similar reaction. "We're not talking about rat poison," she said, with a nervous laugh. "This stuff could kill a herd of elephants."

Mr. Kaszeta, who now heads a British-based security firm, said the nerve agent could have been transported in a glass jar and spread on Mr. Skripal's steering wheel, or on items he handled at a restaurant. The agent then could be transferred to anything Mr. Skripal touched for the next two hours, he said.

While the chemical would take effect "almost instantaneously" if inhaled, Mr. Kaszeta said, it would work much more slowly, perhaps over a matter of hours, if absorbed through the skin. The agent is activated when it comes in

contact with water and would be absorbed through the pores, slowed down by subcutaneous fat, Mr. Kaszeta said. At first the effect would be felt locally, around the point of exposure.

Once the chemical entered the bloodstream, it would cause the victim's muscles to go into spasms, pupils to shrink to pinpoints, and breathing to become very labored, said Alastair Hay, an emeritus professor of toxicology at the University of Leeds. At this point, the victim's life could be saved only by the administration of atropine, which counteracts the agent and allows the body to metabolize it.

The attack on Mr. Skripal and his daughter occurred a short drive from Porton Down, Britain's premier chemical weapons laboratory, which went to work isolating the agent from blood samples, breaking it into fragments and examining it through a mass spectrometer. Researchers would have initially looked for more common chemical agents, like sarin, and then proceeded through a long series of more obscure ones until they found a match, Mr. Hay said.

"When they get an unknown chemical, they will compare it with the information that's in the library and, bingo, you've got all your strawberries lined up," he said. Given how lethal the agent is, Mr. Kaszeta said, it seems probable that the two victims survived by happenstance.

"There are a few ways this could play out, and one is that something got screwed up in the delivery," he said. "The other is that he washed his hands and got most of it off. The third is that this dosage was sublethal, just to send a message. It could have been the horse head in the bed."

Credit: ELLEN BARRY and CEYLAN YEGINSU; Ellen Barry reported from London, and Ceylan Yeginus from Salisbury. Sophia Kishkovsky contributed reporting from Moscow.

Photograph

The Russian foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, left, said his country had nothing to do with the poisoning of a former Russian spy, dismissing Britain's allegations as "nonsense." (PHOTOGRAPH BY SERGEI KARPUKHIN/REUTERS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Laboratories; Poisoning; Skin; Biological &chemical weapons; Assassinations &assassination attempts; Poisons
Location:	Russia United States–US Crimea United Kingdom–UK Uzbekistan Ukraine
People:	Lavrov, Sergei V Skripal, Sergei V Rudd, Amber
Company / organization:	Name: University of Leeds; NAICS: 611310; Name: Sky News; NAICS: 515120; Name: Security Service-UK; NAICS: 928110; Name: Department of Homeland Security; NAICS: 922120; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization–NATO; NAICS: 928120; Name: Secret Service-US; NAICS: 922120
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Britain Says Russia Is Likely to Blame for the Poisoning of an Ex-Spy

Barry, Ellen; Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]13 Mar 2018: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- Britain's prime minister said on Monday that it was "highly likely" that Moscow was to blame for the poisoning of a former Russian spy attacked with a nerve agent near his home in southern England, and she warned of possible reprisals.

The remarks by Prime Minister Theresa May, delivered in an address to Parliament, were an unusually direct condemnation of a country that Britain has, in the past, been loath to blame for attacks on its soil. Critics say the British authorities took only modest countermeasures after Russian agents poisoned a former MI6 informant in 2006 with the rare isotope polonium 210.

The prime minister, who as home secretary resisted an open inquiry into Russia's role in that case, is under pressure to show more resolve this time. The March 4 nerve agent attack on Sergei V. Skripal, once an informant for Britain's foreign intelligence service, and his daughter, Yulia, exposed untold numbers of bystanders to risk around public spaces in the city of Salisbury. Traces of the poison have been found at a pub and a pizza parlor visited by the Skripals.

"It is now clear that Mr. Skripal and his daughter were poisoned with a military-grade nerve agent of a type developed by Russia," Mrs. May said in the House of Commons. "The government has concluded that it is highly likely that Russia was responsible for the act against Sergei and Yulia Skripal."

She said that either the poisoning was a "direct act of the Russian state against our country" or that Moscow had lost control of its nerve agent and had allowed it to get into the hands of others.

Russia has denied any responsibility.

In an interview on Monday, Secretary of State Rex. W. Tillerson, expressed astonishment at the use in a public space of a substance like the nerve agent. "It's almost beyond comprehension that a state, an organized state, would do something like that," he said. "A nonstate actor, I could understand. A state actor I cannot understand why anyone would take such an action."

Mrs. May said that her the government had summoned the Russian ambassador to demand an explanation, and that Britain expected a response from Russia by the end of the day on Tuesday. "Should there be no credible response, we will conclude that this action amounts to an unlawful use of force by the Russian state against the United Kingdom, and I will come back to this House and set out the full range of measures we will take in response," she said.

"We shall not tolerate such a brazen act to murder innocent civilians on our soil," the prime minister said.

The relationship between Russia and Britain under Prime Minister May has been punctuated by repeated confrontation, over the annexation of Crimea and Russian interference in elections, among other issues.

But Britain has held back from aggressive retaliatory measures. Expelling Russian spies, for example, would mean a cutoff in Britain's own flow of information from Moscow if Russia retaliated. Restricting visas would hurt Russian businessmen, officials and dissidents who have made Britain their home.

Earlier on Monday, before Mr. Tillerson spoke, the White House took a different approach, declining to point a finger at Russia.

Sarah Huckabee Sanders, the White House press secretary, said at her daily briefing: "The use of a highly lethal nerve agent against U.K. citizens on U.K. soil is an outrage. The attack was reckless, indiscriminate and irresponsible. We offer the fullest condemnation."

But Ms. Sanders brushed off several questions about whether the White House shared Britain's view that Russia was responsible. "Right now we are standing with our U.K. ally," she said. "I think they're still working through even some of the details of that and we're going to continue to work with the U.K."

The White House had no comment on the differing messages.

Moscow has insisted that it played no role in the attack, and did so again on Monday.

"This is a circus show in the British Parliament," the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, told journalists in Moscow, according to the Interfax news agency.

Vladimir Dzhabarov, first deputy head of the Federation Council's foreign affairs committee, was equally dismissive. Whatever Mr. Skripal may have once done, he said, he posed no threat to Russia now.

"This already is not our issue," Mr. Dzhabarov told Interfax. "He had access neither to our secrets nor facilities. He was of no use to us, to Russia in general."

Still, amid denials last week by Sergey V. Lavrov, Russia's foreign minister, an anchor on Russia's state-controlled

news broadcast struck a different note, warning Russians not to betray their country. If they do, he said, "Don't choose Britain as a place to live."

In her address to Parliament, Mrs. May said the nerve agent was part of a group known as Novichok – the Russian term for "newcomer." The chemical was produced by the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s, and, at the time, it was believed to be far more lethal than anything in the United States arsenal.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Vil Mirzayanov, a chemist who helped develop the agent, said that Soviet laboratories had developed enough of the substance to kill several hundred thousand people.

Dispersed in a powder, Novichok nerve agents blocked the breakdown of a neurotransmitter controlling muscular contractions, leading to respiratory and cardiac arrest, Mr. Mirzayanov told investigators at the time.

The use of a nerve agent drew the attention of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the group that polices the global treaty banning them. The group, based in The Hague, called it "a source of great concern." Almost two dozen people in Salisbury, including emergency workers, were given medical treatment related to the attack, and one police officer is still hospitalized.

Over the past week, chemical weapons experts fanned out through the sleepy cathedral city of Salisbury, and residents who may have been near Mr. Skripal and his daughter were told to wash their clothing and carefully wipe off other articles. Politicians have urged the government to respond.

"What it says to Russians living in the U.K. or those thinking of leaving the country is: Disloyalty is always punishable, you will never be free of us and you will never be safe, wherever you live," John Lough and James Sherr, Russia specialists at the British think tank Chatham House, wrote. "What it says to the British government is: We believe you are weak, we have no respect for you."

Mr. Skripal is one of several opponents of President Vladimir V. Putin's government, in Britain and elsewhere, who have been the victims of murder or attempted murder. Western intelligence officials say that the Kremlin has frequently had its foes killed. The most notorious case involved another former Russian agent, Alexander V. Litvinenko, who was fatally poisoned in London in 2006 with a radioactive element, an assassination that a British inquiry later concluded was probably approved personally by Mr. Putin.

The British government has, however, been accused of dragging its feet in investigating previous suspicious deaths.

On Tuesday, Yvette Cooper, a lawmaker with the opposition Labour Party, submitted a letter to Britain's home secretary demanding a review of 14 deaths which "have not been treated as suspicious by the U.K. police but have – reportedly – been identified by United States intelligence sources as potentially connected to the Russian state." But with the intense attention focused on the poisoning of Mr. Skripal, 66, and his daughter, 33, the government response has been swifter.

Officials from across the British political spectrum have called for a wide range of retaliatory measures against Russia, including the expulsion of diplomats, new economic sanctions, tighter controls on wealthy Russians entering Britain, and the revocation of the broadcast license of RT, the Kremlin-controlled broadcaster.

Britain must ensure that Russia's oligarchs "realize that they can't spend their wealth in London, that they can't enjoy the luxuries of Harrods and whatever else, and that we're absolutely firm in making sure that they feel the pain of being denied entry into the West," Tom Tugendhat, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Commons, told BBC Radio on Monday.

But expelling Russian intelligence agents would mean that Britain would lose some of its own agents in Moscow, which would have steep costs for London, according to John Bayliss, who retired in 2010 from the Government Communications Headquarters, Britain's electronic intelligence agency.

"It will cut off a flow of intelligence you have had for years," he said. "That will stop you gaining intelligence in future years, which would be critical."

Mr. Skripal and his daughter remained in critical condition on Monday, more than a week after being poisoned in Salisbury, where Mr. Skripal had lived quietly for years. The pair were found incoherent on a park bench, and a police officer who made contact with the nerve agent when he tried to help the Skripals, Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey,

was also hospitalized in serious condition.

While working for Russian military intelligence, Mr. Skripal became a double agent, selling secrets to Britain. He was found out, convicted and sent to a Russian prison in 2006. In 2010, he was freed and sent to Britain in a spy swap with the West.

Credit: ELLEN BARRY and RICHARD PÉREZ-PÉÑA; Reporting was contributed by Stephen Castle from London; Sophia Kishkovsky from Moscow; Peter Baker from Washington; and Gardiner Harris from Santa Maria, Cape Verde.

Author/Affiliation

Follow Ellen Barry and Richard Pérez-Peña on Twitter: @EllenBarryNYT and @PerezPena.

Photograph

Military personnel removed a police car and other vehicles on Sunday in Salisbury, England, as part of the inquiry into the poisoning. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS J RATCLIFFE/GETTY IMAGES)

DETAILS

Subject:	Fatalities; Local elections; Poisoning; Diplomatic & consular services; Biological & chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Assassinations & assassination attempts; Poisons; Espionage; Prime ministers
Location:	Russia United States--US Union of Soviet Socialist Republics--USSR United Kingdom--UK England
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/12/world/europe/uk-russia-spy-poisoning.html
Publication title:	New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y.
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LINKS

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Document 164 of 176

Tillerson 'Extremely Concerned' About Russia

Gardiner, Harris . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]13 Mar 2018: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

SANTA MARIA, Cape Verde – Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson on Monday called the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain "an egregious act" and added, "It appears that it clearly came from Russia."

The statement, made in an interview with reporters at the end of a five-nation tour of Africa, was the clearest statement yet from the Trump administration, after several days of equivocation in which American officials declined to explicitly blame Russia for the March 4 attack.

"I've become extremely concerned about Russia," Mr. Tillerson said in the interview. "We spent most of last year investing a lot into attempts to work together, to solve problems, to address differences. And quite frankly, after a year, we didn't get very far. Instead what we've seen is a pivot on their part to be more aggressive."

He added: "And this is very, very concerning to me and others, that there seems to be a certain unleashing of activity that we don't fully understand what the objective behind that is. And if in fact this attack in the U.K. is the work of the Russian government, this is a pretty serious action."

The Trump administration's relationship with President Vladimir V. Putin has been contradictory, with President Trump often complimenting the Russian leader while Mr. Tillerson has become increasingly critical.

On Monday night, the White House directed reporters to a formal statement from the State Department, which said: "There is never a justification for this type of attack – the attempted murder of a private citizen on the soil of a sovereign nation – and we are outraged that Russia appears to have again engaged in such behavior."

Mr. Tillerson spoke to reporters while on a flight from Nigeria to Cape Verde. Hours earlier, Britain's prime minister, Theresa May, said it was "highly likely" that Russia was to blame, and she demanded answers from the Kremlin.

Mr. Tillerson said that he had just spoken with his British counterpart, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, and that the State Department would issue a statement affirming the British findings.

"This is a really egregious act," Mr. Tillerson said. "It appears that it clearly came from Russia. Whether it came

from Russia with the Russian government's knowledge is not known to me at this point."

He added that he would be stunned if a government was behind the use of a deadly nerve agent. The former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, once an informant for Britain's foreign intelligence service, and his daughter, Yulia, were found unconscious on a park bench in of Salisbury, England, and a police officer who helped them has also been hospitalized, in serious condition.

"It's almost beyond comprehension that a state, an organized state would do something like that," Mr. Tillerson said in the interview. "A nonstate actor, I could understand. A state actor -- I cannot understand why anyone would take such an action."

He noted that the nerve agent used in the attack "is only in the hands of a very, very limited number of parties." The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, a watchdog agency, is also looking into the attack.

Asked whether the attack would prompt a response in defense of Britain, a NATO ally that the United States is legally obligated to defend if it came under attack, Mr. Tillerson said: "It certainly will trigger a response. I'll leave it that."

Mr. Tillerson cut short his Africa trip a day earlier than expected to start what he described as the intense homework for President Trump's meeting with the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un.

In a wide-ranging interview aboard his plane, Mr. Tillerson said he left behind a stronger relationship with President Idriss Déby of Chad, who was angered when Chad was placed on a list of countries whose citizens are virtually barred from entering the United States.

Mr. Tillerson appeared exhausted on the flight home Monday. He had left the United States on the evening of March 6, but after just a day of meetings in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, he woke at 2:30 a.m. on Thursday with the news that President Trump had decided to accept Mr. Kim's invitation for talks.

He had another urgent phone call Friday night -- he would not say about what -- so that by Saturday he had managed to get just four hours of sleep over three days, he said. And then he got food poisoning.

"So the combination of that, I just said, 'This is inhumane,'" he said with a chuckle.

Mr. Tillerson canceled his meetings set for Saturday in Nairobi, including a visit to an H.I.V./AIDS clinic, and he decided to fly home Monday night after quick visits to Chad and Nigeria.

The potential North Korean summit meeting dominated much of Mr. Tillerson's week even though he was halfway around the world from Washington. In a news conference Monday, Mr. Tillerson said that planning for the event was in "very early stages."

But he said in his later interview on his plane that, in his own experience as the chief executive of oil giant Exxon Mobil, intense preparation -- what he referred to as "homework" -- was needed to make such a meeting successful. Without good preparation, he said, "it's very difficult to map a way forward."

Early on Monday, Mr. Tillerson spent several hours in Ndjamenya, Chad, where he insisted that the people of Chad were "welcome in the United States."

He said that Chad's efforts to strengthen its passport controls and increase information sharing may result in its removal from the travel ban.

Chad's foreign minister, Mahamat Zene Cherif, called the inclusion of Chad on the travel ban an "injustice," and said that widely reported disparaging remarks attributed to Mr. Trump about Africa "shocked almost all Africans."

State Department and Pentagon officials wanted to keep Chad -- a partner in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel -- off the travel ban list when it was formulated but were overruled by the White House. Mr. Tillerson said he hoped the country's inclusion would soon be corrected.

At his last stop on the continent, in Abuja, Nigeria, Mr. Tillerson met with President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria and then held a news conference with Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama. They discussed cooperation on trade and in the fight against Boko Haram and an offshoot of the Islamic State.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

AuthorAffiliation

Follow Gardiner Harris on Twitter: @GardinerHarris

DETAILS

Subject:	Presidents; Poisoning; Press conferences
Location:	Cape Verde Islands Russia Nigeria United Kingdom–UK Africa England Addis Ababa Ethiopia United States–US Ethiopia Sahel
People:	Trump, Donald J Johnson, Boris Skripal, Sergei V Kim Jong Un May, Theresa Harris, Gardiner Putin, Vladimir Tillerson, Rex W
Company / organization:	Name: Boko Haram; NAICS: 813940; Name: Exxon Mobil Corp; NAICS: 211111, 447110; Name: Twitter Inc; NAICS: 519130; Name: Islamic State of Iraq & the Levant–ISIS; NAICS: 813940; Name: North Atlantic Treaty Organization–NATO; NAICS: 928120
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Database: Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

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Document 165 of 176

A Warning In Britain After a Spy Is Poisoned

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]12 Mar 2018:
A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- A week after a retired Russian double agent and his daughter were poisoned by a nerve agent in the small city of Salisbury, the British authorities on Sunday asked anyone who was near the former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, that day to wash their clothes.

They also advised putting unwashable items into sealed plastic bags, washing their eyeglasses in warm water and cleaning their phones with baby wipes.

The advisory applies to people who visited two locations where Mr. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, spent time on March 4: an Italian restaurant and a pub. Shortly after leaving the pub, Mr. Skripal and his daughter were found unconscious on a bench.

As many as 500 customers could be affected, the authorities said.

Four days after the Skripals were found, the police announced that the two had been poisoned by an unspecified nerve agent, a category of lethal chemical that includes sarin gas and VX.

On Sunday, the chief medical officer for England, Sally Davies, told reporters that trace contamination had been found at the pub and in the restaurant, Zizzi.

The authorities were clearly walking a fine line in the investigation, trying to recommend precautions without alarming the public.

"While there is no immediate health risk to anyone who may have been in either of these locations, it is possible, but unlikely, that any of the substance which has come into contact with clothing or belongings could still be present in minute amounts and therefore contaminate your skin," the advisory said.

"Over time, repeated skin contact with contaminated items may pose a small risk to health," it added.

The advisory said it was not necessary for people who had visited those venues to see a doctor unless they were experiencing symptoms. It also said that the risk to the general public "has not changed and remains low."

Chemical weapons experts in hazardous material protective suits have been deployed to five sites visited by Mr. Skripal and his daughter the previous Sunday: his home, the cemetery where his son and wife are buried, the restaurant, the pub and the bench where the two collapsed.

Around 180 military troops were called in to help clear the area, and the ambulance used to transport the two victims was wrapped in plastic and loaded onto a military transport vehicle.

Rebecca Hudson, a reporter for The Salisbury Journal, said on Sunday that local residents were beginning to

complain that they had been kept in the dark about the risk level.

"I think people are frustrated that this information has come out seven days on, when they've been told throughout that there's minimal risk," she said by phone. "There is definitely the sense that they were not given enough information earlier in the week."

In an editorial in the newspaper, Annie Riddle said that while there "wasn't a hint of panic" during the first days of the investigation, residents have become progressively more concerned, as they have watched "more and more areas being taped off, barriers going up, more and more military and emergency services rushing about, and with nobody in authority saying a word."

She added: "I find myself starting to wonder whether I've underestimated the potential danger. While no one expects any national security secrets to be given away, could we please be treated like grown-ups and be given a bit more idea exactly what is going on?"

Ruby Vitorino, 58, who works in a local jeweler's shop, said many of her neighbors in "Smallsbury," as she calls it, have responded with humor.

"People are making a lot of jokes about it," she said. "It sounds like they're being told to wash a week after the event. Most of them have already washed, hopefully."

She added that the owner of the Bishop's Mill pub, which has been sealed since the incident, kept two rabbits in the pub building and was so worried about their welfare that he started a "Save the Rabbits" campaign.

She said that he had been reassured that emergency workers in hazardous material suits "have been sent in to feed the rabbits and clean them out."

She added, "The English are very into their pets."

Author/Affiliation

Follow Ellen Barry on Twitter: @EllenBarryNYT .

DETAILS

Subject:	Intelligence gathering; Poisoning; Hazardous substances; Biological & chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; National security; Health risk assessment
Location:	London England United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Skripal, Yulia
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/11/world/europe/uk-russia-spy-poisoning.html
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Database:	Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

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Document 166 of 176

Investigators Visit Graves In Poisoning Of Ex-Spy

Barry, Ellen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 Mar 2018: A.5.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- British authorities investigating the poisoning of a former Russian spy, Sergei V. Skripal, and his daughter visited the graves of Mr. Skripal's wife and son in the cathedral town of Salisbury, England, on Friday. Dressed in large hazardous-material suits, the investigators began collecting evidence at Mr. Skripal's house in the town and erected a blue forensic tent around the grave of the son. The police said that they had requested military assistance to "remove a number of vehicles and objects from the scene."

Mr. Skripal's wife, Lyudmila, 59, died in 2012 of uterine cancer, according to records from the National Health Service. His son Alexander, 43, died last year.

The authorities did not provide details, saying only that they had not exhumed any bodies, but the forensic

activities at the London Road Cemetery intensified speculation about the poisonings.

Mr. Skripal, 66, and his daughter, Yulia S. Skripal, 33, were found unconscious on Sunday afternoon on a bench outside a shopping center in the southern English town.

The police later announced that the two had been poisoned with a nerve agent difficult to produce outside a government laboratory, heightening suspicions that Russia had played a role.

On Friday, army weapons experts and scores of troops were deployed to Salisbury to assist in the investigation. The 180 military personnel dispatched included the Royal Tank Regiment, Royal Marines, and chemical weapons specialists and bomb disposal units.

Russia's foreign minister, Sergei V. Lavrov, on Friday denied that the government was involved in the poisonings, but offered assistance in the investigation.

"We have not heard a single fact; we only watch footage on TV, where our colleagues say with serious faces and with gusto that if it is Russia, then a response will follow that Russia will remember forever," he said, according to Interfax. He added: "It is not serious. It is pure propaganda and the whipping up of hysteria."

But a day earlier, a presenter on Russia's Channel One news program struck a different note, saying – without mentioning names – that the poisonings should serve as a warning to Russians considering betraying their country.

"The profession of a traitor is one of the most dangerous in the world," said the presenter, Kirill Kleimenov, adding: "Don't choose Britain as a place to live."

In 2006, Mr. Skripal was convicted in Russia of being a double agent and secretly passing classified information to British intelligence. In 2010, he was released from prison and sent to Britain as part of a spy exchange with Western agencies.

Mr. Skripal and his daughter were both found in a catatonic state on a bench outside a Sainsbury's supermarket. The poisonings also affected some investigators, officials said. A police officer, Detective Sgt. Nick Bailey, remains in the hospital in stable condition. Ian Blair, a former commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, told the BBC that Sergeant Bailey appeared to have been sickened when he went to Mr. Skripal's house, suggesting that the nerve agent may have been released there.

Credit: ELLEN BARRY; Stephen Castle and Iliana Magra contributed reporting.

DETAILS

Subject:	Intelligence gathering; Investigations; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Assassinations &assassination attempts
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK
People:	Lavrov, Sergei V Skripal, Sergei V
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/09/world/europe/uk-skripal-poisoned-spy-wife.html
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Document 167 of 176

Ex-Russian Spy Is 'Stable' After an Attack in Britain

Castle, Stephen; Macfarquhar, Neil . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]09 Mar 2018: A.7.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- The former Russian spy Sergei V. Skripal and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, remain unconscious and are in critical but stable condition, Britain's home secretary, Amber Rudd, told lawmakers on Thursday, adding that it was too early to apportion blame for a "brazen and reckless" attack involving a nerve agent.

A police officer who assisted the two victims, and was also hospitalized, is in serious but stable condition and is "conscious, talking and engaging," Ms. Rudd added, in an update on an investigation that has stirred much speculation about Russian involvement. In a police statement, the officer was identified as Nick Bailey, a detective sergeant.

While she described the incident as an "attempted murder in the most cruel and public way," Ms. Rudd said she would refrain from attributing blame until the hundreds of antiterrorism police and security officials working the case reached conclusions based on solid evidence.

"There will come a time for attribution," Ms. Rudd said, promising that there would be "consequences" for those behind the attempt on the life of Mr. Skripal and his daughter, who were taken ill on Sunday afternoon in the city of Salisbury.

In 2006, a Russian court convicted Mr. Skripal, a former colonel in Russia's military intelligence arm, of selling secrets to the British. He was released in 2010 and sent to Britain as part of an exchange of spies.

Inevitably, the incident has revived memories of the murder in London of Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former Russian spy and critic of President Vladimir V. Putin who died in November 2006, aged 43, after ingesting polonium 210, a rare radioactive isotope.

That episode caused an international outcry and led to years of tension between Britain and Russia, though several British lawmakers have suggested that the government in London did not take tough enough measures against Moscow. It was not until 2016 that an official inquiry finally linked the killing to the Kremlin.

On Thursday, one Conservative lawmaker, Edward Leigh, said that circumstantial evidence that Russia was behind the Salisbury attack was strong and that, if its role were proved, it would be a "brazen act of war." An opposition Labour Party lawmaker, Ben Bradshaw, referred to the "terrorist Russian state."

On Wednesday Mark Rowley, Britain's chief police official for counterterrorism and international security, said that Mr. Skripal, 66, and Ms. Skripal, 33, "were targeted specifically," but did not say what kind of nerve agent was used, or even whether investigators had identified it.

On Thursday, the Wiltshire Police said that 21 people in all had been treated as a result of the nerve gas poisoning in Salisbury.

If the British government does ultimately attribute the attack to Russian state actors, the use of a nerve agent would suggest a significant statement was being made to other potential targets.

The Russian government has denied involvement, and on Wednesday the Russian embassy in London described warnings of potential British retaliation as "a testament of London's growing unpredictability as a partner in international relations," adding that British policy toward Russia was "inconsistent and looks rather miscalculated, not least in the eyes of the Russian public."

The Russian news media had mostly ignored the nerve agent attack, until the evening news on Wednesday on the government-controlled Channel One, when the host issued a lightly veiled threat to those like Mr. Skripal who had "betrayed the motherland."

"Being a traitor is one of the most dangerous professions in the world," the host, Kirill Kleimenov, said, adding that the stress could be so severe as to turn a person's hair white.

"Alcoholism, drugs, stress, nervous breakdowns and depression are inevitable illnesses of a traitor," he said. "As a consequence -- heart attacks, strokes, traffic accidents, suicides, ultimately."

In an apparent attempt at humor, he also said that Mr. Skripal's fate might have something to do with living in England, a place that has become home to hundreds of thousands of Russians, some of whom left to escape life -- and sometimes death -- under the government of Mr. Putin.

Whether you are a professional traitor or just hate Russia, Mr. Kleimenov said, "Don't go to England. There is something wrong there. Maybe the climate."

Wednesday's edition of *Moskovsky Komsomolets*, a Russian tabloid, quoted an anonymous intelligence officer as saying that Mr. Skripal was no longer of interest to Russia's security services, and blaming the incident on the British.

"What has happened is only in their interest. But with the poisoning they really put their foot in it, they acted too traditionally. Anyone who has studied history knows that it's precisely the Brits who are champions in poisoning," the officer was quoted as saying.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

Credit: STEPHEN CASTLE and NEIL MacFARQUHAR; Stephen Castle reported from London, and Neil MacFarquhar from Moscow.

DETAILS

Subject:	Security services; Poisoning; Terrorism; International relations; Intelligence gathering; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Assassinations &assassination attempts
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Rudd, Amber Skripal, Yulia Putin, Vladimir
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LINKS

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Document 168 of 176

Nerve Agent Was Used in Poisoning of Russian Ex-Spy, British Police Say

Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]08 Mar 2018: A.6.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- A former Russian spy and his daughter were poisoned by a nerve agent in Britain this week, the British police said on Wednesday, heightening suspicions that the episode was an assassination attempt by a national government, amid rampant speculation that Russia was responsible.

The development forces the British government to confront the possibility that once again, an attack on British soil was carried out by the government of President Vladimir V. Putin, which Western intelligence officials say has, with alarming frequency, ordered the killing of people who have crossed it. Prime Minister Theresa May and her cabinet ministers held a meeting on Wednesday of the government's emergency security committee to discuss the matter. "This is being treated as a major incident involving attempted murder by administration of a nerve agent," said Mark Rowley, Britain's chief police official for counterterrorism and international security.

The former spy, Sergei V. Skripal, 66, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, 33, "were targeted specifically," Mr. Rowley said. He refused to say what chemical was used, or even whether investigators had identified it.

Time and again, foes of Mr. Putin's have died suddenly in Britain, under suspicious circumstances. In the most notorious case, Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former Russian agent who was harshly critical of Mr. Putin, was fatally poisoned in 2006 with a rare radioactive metal, and an inquiry later concluded that he was assassinated by Russian operatives, probably with Mr. Putin's approval.

"I'm sure that in some of these cases, there is a relatively natural explanation, but it is beyond the bounds of probability that they all are," said James Nixey, manager of the Russia and Eurasia program at Chatham House, a British foreign affairs think tank.

The British government has been accused of being less than eager to get to the bottom of those deaths, or to hold anyone responsible, but political and security analysts say this time is likely to be different. Given the government's sensitivity to that criticism, and the intense worldwide attention on the Skripal case, a thorough investigation is probably unavoidable, they say, and if Russian involvement is found, an aggressive response may be inevitable, too.

The resources and expertise involved in producing and using a nerve agent suggest the involvement of a military

or intelligence agency, as in two highly publicized episodes last year: Syrian government forces used sarin gas, a nerve agent, against a rebel-held village, and the North Korean government is believed to have been behind the assassination of the half brother of the country's leader using another nerve agent, VX.

"We can't say for sure right now, but the more sophisticated and the rarer the poison, the more likely it is to come from the Russian state or elements within it," said Ben Judah, a biographer of Mr. Putin who has also researched the lives of Russian expatriates in Britain.

But the evidence of state sponsorship is not conclusive, security and political analysts said. In 1995, a religious cult killed 12 people in the Tokyo subway by releasing sarin, made by some of its adherents who were also scientists.

Experts also cautioned that even when evidence points to Moscow, it is hard to determine whether the attacks were ordered by Russian oligarchs or organized crime bosses whose interests are aligned with the Putin government's, elements within Russian intelligence acting on their own, or the Kremlin itself.

"Certainly, a nerve agent is not something an ordinary person can get their hands on," said Vladimir Ashurkov, a Russian dissident living in Britain who is allied with the Russian opposition leader Aleksei A. Navalny.

"But whether it's sanctioned by the state," he said, is still unproved. "It may have been a decision from Mr. Skripal's colleagues who he betrayed rather than from the highest circles of Russian power."

In 2006, a Russian court convicted Mr. Skripal, a former colonel in Russia's military intelligence, of selling secrets to the British. In 2010, he was released from prison and sent to Britain as part of an exchange of imprisoned spies. On Sunday afternoon, he and his daughter became severely ill in the quiet cathedral town of Salisbury, England. They lost consciousness and remain in critical condition.

Some of the emergency workers who went to the scene also became ill, and one police officer has been hospitalized in serious condition, Mr. Rowley said.

The Kremlin has denied any involvement in the attack, and on Wednesday, Maria Zakharova, a spokeswoman for the Foreign Ministry, said that suggestions of Russian culpability were part of an orchestrated campaign to drive a wedge between Russia and Britain.

"Before it was clear what happened, the traditional speculation was being put about," she said.

Mr. Skripal has lived quietly and openly for years in Salisbury. But in the past two years, his brother and his son have died in what family members have called mysterious circumstances.

"This one is very hard to read," said John Lough, a Russia specialist at Chatham House. "I just don't know how that guy would have represented a threat. If someone bore him a grudge, why did it take so long to deal with him? What would he have done of late to provoke it?"

Another Putin critic living in Britain – Alexander Y. Perepilichny, an apparently healthy 44-year-old – went for a run in 2012 and suffered a fatal heart attack. British authorities at first ruled out foul play; only later, when an insurance company ordered new tests, was a rare plant toxin found in his system.

In 2013, Boris A. Berezovsky, a wealthy Russian and prominent Putin foe, was found dead in his home near London. The authorities said the evidence was consistent with suicide by hanging; his family disagreed and noted that Mr. Berezovsky believed he had been the target of earlier murder plots.

In some cases, "there wasn't sufficient effort made to get to the bottom of what happened," said Misha Glenny, a British journalist who has written books on Eastern Europe and global organized crime.

Last year, Parliament published a 72-page report on relations with Russia. It mentioned Mr. Litvinenko's death once, briefly, and the others not at all.

Analysts cite several reasons successive British governments have reacted cautiously to Russian conduct, not least among them being money. London is a favorite place for wealthy Russians to live, buy homes and invest.

"The British government does not investigate Russian money coming in, at all," Mr. Glenny said, and has not wanted rocky relations to threaten that flow.

Experts say the government has shielded what it knows about some suspicious deaths to protect its intelligence methods and sources. They say that Britain, like its Western European allies, has also feared the consequences of

intensified conflict with Moscow, including cyberwarfare.

Mr. Nixey, of Chatham House, said many government officials believed that Britain was too small to act alone against Russia, and could do things like imposing sanctions or seizing assets only in coordination with the rest of Europe or with the United States.

Credit: RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA; Patrick Kingsley contributed reporting.

Photograph

The police at a restaurant near the site where a Russian ex-spy and his daughter were found poisoned, in Salisbury, England. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE PARSONS/PRESS ASSOCIATION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

DETAILS

Subject:	Evidence; Poisoning; Organized crime; Sanctions; Biological &chemical weapons; Criminal investigations; Assassinations &assassination attempts; Poisons; Espionage; Religious cults
Location:	Russia United States-US United Kingdom-UK Judah Eastern Europe Eurasia Europe
People:	Navalny, Alexei Skripal, Sergei V Skripal, Yulia Putin, Vladimir
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/07/world/europe/russia-spy-nerve-agent.html
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LINKS

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In Quiet English Town, Echoes of Poisonings Past

Kingsley, Patrick; Pérez-Peña, Richard . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]07 Mar 2018: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

SALISBURY, England -- The gentle stroll from Zizzi's, a restaurant in the center of this sleepy cathedral town, to Sainsbury's, a popular nearby supermarket, could scarcely be less remarkable. Turn right past the town library, through a covered alleyway, past the gym on the left, over a bubbling mill stream and -- 90 seconds later -- you have arrived.

Yet, on Sunday afternoon, this most brief and benign of walks may have been the setting for an attempted assassination reminiscent of the most far-fetched Cold War skulduggery.

It was the route that Sergei V. Skripal, a former intelligence official freed from a Russian prison as part of a celebrated 2010 spy exchange, is believed to have taken with his daughter before both were found in a catatonic state on a bench outside Sainsbury's.

The British foreign minister, Boris Johnson, said the episode had "echoes of the death of Alexander Litvinenko in 2006," another former Russian agent who British officials believe was poisoned in London on the orders of the Kremlin.

The British police say they have not yet drawn any conclusions about how Mr. Skripal, 66, and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, 33, were poisoned -- or if they were the victims of a crime. But in a series of unusually robust statements, British politicians dropped heavy hints that they suspected the involvement of the Russian state.

"Should evidence emerge that implies state responsibility, then Her Majesty's government will respond appropriately and robustly," said Mr. Johnson, who confirmed the identities of the victims. "Though I am not now pointing fingers, I say to governments around the world that no attempt to take innocent life on U.K. soil will go unsanctioned and unpunished."

The comment drew a rebuke from the spokeswoman for the Russian Foreign Ministry, Maria Zakharova. "This is simply ignorance," she said, the Interfax news agency reported.

Ms. Zakharova said she was bewildered that "the man, who works in foreign policy and has nothing to do with law enforcement, was making such claims." She said, "We presume that law enforcement and security agencies first will get at least some real evidence and then share it."

Mr. Skripal and his daughter remained in critical condition on Tuesday at Salisbury District Hospital, about 85 miles southwest of London. The police said they had suffered "exposure to an unknown substance."

With its echoes of stranger-than-fiction plots from the Cold War and earlier episodes from the Putin era, the case threatens to worsen the already tense relations between the West and a Russian government that has annexed Crimea, destabilized eastern Ukraine and propped up the government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, all while being accused of disrupting elections and sowing discord within Western democracies.

"This is a form of soft war that Russia is now waging against the West," said Tom Tugendhat, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the British Parliament.

British officials have accused the Kremlin of only one assassination on British soil in recent years, but the Russian government has been suspected of being behind numerous other mysterious deaths in Britain and elsewhere.

In Mr. Litvinenko's case, the weapon is believed to have been a poisoned teapot later found to contain polonium 210, a radioactive isotope; his death was slow and agonizing. In 1978, when Georgi Markov, a Bulgarian dissident, was killed on the Waterloo Bridge in London, the weapon was an umbrella tipped with a pellet of ricin.

The Skripal family has had its own suspicions about the Russian government, the BBC reported. Mr. Skripal's brother died two years ago, and just last year, the family said, his son succumbed to liver failure while on vacation in St. Petersburg, Russia. Mr. Skripal's wife, Lyudmila, died of cancer in 2012.

Mr. Tugendhat said that Britain should consider revoking the broadcast license of RT, the Kremlin-funded channel formerly called Russia Today. "I see absolutely no reason why we should allow information warfare to be carried out on U.K. soil by hostile agents," he said.

Citing the unusual circumstances, the Metropolitan Police Service put Britain's counterterrorism police in charge of the case on Tuesday, though it has not yet been determined whether terrorism was involved.

"We're speaking to witnesses, we're taking forensic samples at the scene, we're doing toxicology work," Mark Rowley, who leads the counterterrorism force, told BBC radio.

The idyllic setting of the episode, deep in the English countryside, a few hundred meters from one of Britain's oldest cathedrals, struck many as bizarre. In a town best known for its quaint streets and postcard-perfect cottages, as well as its proximity to Stonehenge, the world-renowned neolithic monument in the hills nearby, residents were stunned by their sudden proximity to international intrigue.

"We're as surprised as anybody at our elevation to the national stage," said John Walsh, a member of Mr. Skripal's neighborhood council. He said he had visited residents near Mr. Skripal's home a few days ago, "sorting out a problem with a hedge -- which is more my level of activity, rather than high espionage."

Police specialists wearing hazardous material suits cordoned off part of the shopping district where the Skripals were found, while officers from multiple law enforcement agencies combed the area for evidence.

"It's the talk of the town," said Frogg Moody, another councilor from Mr. Skripal's district. "It's absolutely taken Salisbury by storm."

On Mr. Skripal's quiet street in the west of the town, his neighbors seemed shocked by both the sudden carousel of journalists and by the news that they had been living next to a former Russian spy.

"He was just an ordinary person," said James Puttock, a 47-year-old scaffolder who lives four doors down from Mr. Skripal. "I didn't think he was a Russian spy."

"How do you even know?" he mused. "Do I look like a Russian spy?"

In 2006, Mr. Skripal, a former colonel in the Russian military intelligence agency G.R.U., was convicted in a Russian court of being a double agent, and secretly passing classified information to British intelligence. When he was arrested, the Federal Security Service in Russia said he had started spying for Britain in 1995, when he was stationed overseas, and continued to do so after retiring from the military in 1999.

In 2010, Mr. Skripal was released from prison and sent to Britain as part of a spy exchange with Western agencies.

That deal involved Anna Chapman, a Russian sleeper agent based in the United States who has maintained a decidedly less low-profile life than Mr. Skripal has. Ms. Chapman went on to a career in television, has developed her own clothing line and just this week was photographed posing on a beach in Thailand.

Yulia Skripal's Facebook page says that she graduated in 2008 from the Russian State University for the Humanities in Moscow, lived in several places in southern England beginning in 2010 and by 2016 had moved back to Moscow. It is not clear why she was in Salisbury on Sunday, or how long she had been there.

Marina Litvinenko, the wife of the Russian spy killed in London in 2006, told the BBC that the plight of Mr. Skripal was "like déjà vu," and suggested that Russia was behind his apparent poisoning.

The Russian government said it had no information about the incident, and Dmitri S. Peskov, a Kremlin spokesman, said accusations of Kremlin involvement "weren't long in coming."

"You know how he ended up in the West, what actions and decisions led him there," Mr. Peskov said.

Mr. Rowley, the British counterterrorism official, cautioned against jumping to conclusions. "I think we have to remember that Russian exiles aren't immortal," he said. "They do all die, and there can be a tendency for some conspiracy theories. But likewise, we have to be alive to the fact of state threats, as illustrated by the Litvinenko case."

On Tuesday afternoon, amid reports that some of the first emergency workers to tend to Mr. Skripal and his daughter were later treated for wheezing and eye problems, the bench where the pair was found was still cordoned off. It was obscured by a white-and-yellow evidence tent.

Credit: PATRICK KINGSLEY and RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA; Patrick Kingsley reported from Salisbury, England, and Richard Pérez-Peña from London. Stephen Castle and Iliana Magra contributed reporting from London, and Matthew Luxmoore from Moscow.

Author/Affiliation

Follow Richard Pérez-Peña and Patrick Kingsley on Twitter: @perezpena and @patrickkingsley.

Photograph

A tent covered the bench where Sergei V. Skripal, an ex-spy, and his daughter were discovered. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES) (A1); Sergei V. Skripal in a defendant's cage during a court hearing in Moscow in 2006. He was freed as part of a 2010 spy exchange. (PHOTOGRAPH BY YURY SENATOROV/EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY) (A6)

DETAILS

Subject:	Cold War; Poisoning; Law enforcement; Counterterrorism; Criminal investigations; Assassinations & assassination attempts; Classified information; Espionage; Information warfare
Location:	Russia Salisbury England United Kingdom--UK
People:	Johnson, Boris Skripal, Sergei V Chapman, Anna Assad, Bashar Al Skripal, Yulia
Company / organization:	Name: Parliament-UK; NAICS: 921120
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Database:	Global Newsstream,U.S. Newsstream,ProQuest Central

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A Russian Who Spied For Britain Falls Ill

Castle, Stephen . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]06 Mar 2018: A.10.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

LONDON -- A man identified by local news reports as a retired Russian military intelligence officer who once spied for Britain is critically ill at a British hospital, and the authorities were investigating his "exposure to an unknown substance."

According to several reports, the man, found unconscious on a bench in the city of Salisbury, is Sergei V. Skripal, 66. He was once jailed by Moscow, then settled in Britain after an exchange of spies between the United States and Russia in 2010.

The British police have not publicly identified the man in the hospital or a 33-year-old woman who fell sick with him at a shopping mall called the Maltings.

The authorities have, however, released enough detail about what they called a "major incident" to draw some comparisons, however premature, to the case of Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former Russian spy who was poisoned in London in 2006.

Mr. Litvinenko, 43, died in November 2006, after ingesting polonium 210, a rare radioactive isotope that investigators later found in high concentrations in a teapot at a central London hotel where the victim had met with Russian associates. That episode caused an international outcry and led to years of tension between the British and Russian governments.

In a statement on Monday, the Wiltshire police, who cover the Salisbury area, said that the man and the woman, who are believed to know each other, were found around 4:15 p.m. Sunday and taken to Salisbury District Hospital. They had no visible injuries.

"They are currently being treated for suspected exposure to an unknown substance," the statement said. Both were in intensive care, it said.

The police said a major incident, with a "multiagency response," had been declared.

"At this stage it is not yet clear if a crime has been committed," they said in a Twitter post, adding that they are "carrying out a full investigation & working with partner agencies, to clarify exact circumstances."

The priority, the police said, is to identify any substances involved. They said they were working with experts to make a speedy diagnosis to ensure "appropriate and timely treatment."

The temporary assistant chief constable, Craig Holden, said that the police were keeping "an open mind," about what had happened, and that specialists were helping them "to understand what we are or aren't dealing with at this time."

A local news organization, The Salisbury Journal, reported that emergency services suspected the drug fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opioid, may have been involved, though there was no police confirmation of that.

The male victim was taken to the hospital by car, while the woman was airlifted, said The Journal, which published pictures of firefighters in special gear decontaminating an area of the city.

The police have said that several locations in Salisbury were cordoned off as part of the investigation, but that they did not believe there was any risk to the wider public.

The BBC, which was among the news organizations that identified the victim as Mr. Skripal, reported that neighbors of his home in Salisbury described him as friendly. They said he had lost his wife in recent years. It also quoted an eyewitness, Freya Church, who said that it looked like the two people taken ill on Sunday had taken "something quite strong."

"On the bench there was a couple, an older guy and a younger girl," Ms. Church told the broadcaster. "She was sort of leant in on him, it looked like she had passed out maybe."

"He was doing some strange hand movements, looking up to the sky," she said, adding that "they looked so out of it I thought even if I did step in, I wasn't sure how I could help."

On Monday, the hospital in Salisbury, a city in southern England, said it was dealing "with a major incident involving a small number of casualties, with a multiagency response."

Mr. Skripal is a retired colonel in Russia's military intelligence service. He was convicted in 2006 of having passed classified information to British intelligence, MI6, for a decade, in return for \$100,000 wired to a bank account in Spain.

At the time of his conviction, the Federal Security Service, the domestic successor to the Soviet K.G.B., said in statements to Russian news agencies that Colonel Skripal began spying in 1995 while stationed overseas. His espionage activities were said to have continued even after he retired from the Russian military in 1999. According to those reports, he met regularly with British handlers and was paid each time, as well as in monthly installments into a bank account in Spain, the statements said. The newspaper Izvestia, which first reported the case, said the British were interested in the identities of Russian officers working in Europe. This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

DETAILS

Subject:	Poisoning; Convictions; Criminal investigations; Classified information; Espionage
Location:	Russia United Kingdom--UK
People:	Skripal, Sergei V Litvinenko, Alexander
Company / organization:	Name: Izvestia; NAICS: 511110; Name: Secret Intelligence Service-UK; NAICS: 922120
URL:	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/05/world/europe/russian-spy-falls-ill-in-britain-again.html
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Database:	Global Newsstream, U.S. Newsstream, ProQuest Central

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Intrigue and Ambiguity in Cases of 4 Russians Sent to West in Spy Swap

SCOTT SHANE and ELLEN BARRY . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 July 2010: A.9.

[ProQuest document link](#)

ABSTRACT

A retired colonel in Russia's military intelligence service, Mr. Skripal was convicted in 2006 of having passed classified information to British intelligence, MI6, for a decade, in return for \$100,000 wired to a bank account in Spain.

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- When Aleksandr Zaporozhsky, one of four Russians delivered to the West in this week's spy swap, landed at Dulles International Airport on Friday to join his family in the United States, it was only the latest unexpected twist in a classic story of espionage and deception.

For several years in the 1990s, Mr. Zaporozhsky, a colonel in Russian intelligence who became deputy chief of the American Department, was secretly working for the C.I.A., one of the highest-ranking American moles in history, Russian prosecutors say.

After surprising his colleagues by retiring suddenly in 1997, he moved with his wife and three children to the United States and went into business. But in 2001, confident that his C.I.A. link was unsuspected, Mr. Zaporozhsky was lured back to Moscow by his former colleagues for what they promised would be a festive K.G.B. anniversary party. He was arrested at the airport, convicted of espionage and sentenced to 18 years in prison.

On Friday, Mr. Zaporozhsky was flown to Vienna and then to the Washington area for the 10-for-4 spy exchange that promises to bring to a swift conclusion the saga of the Russian spy ring exposed by the F.B.I. early last week. His Moscow lawyer, Maria A. Veselova, said Friday that she "did not find any proof of his guilt" in her review. But circumstantial evidence suggests that he may well have provided valuable information to the United States and

was well rewarded for doing so. One account by a Russian security official published in January in the newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta claimed that Mr. Zaporozhsky, who it said was code-named The Scythian by his C.I.A. contacts, was given an estimated \$2 million in house purchases and other benefits by the Americans. Another of the four, Sergei V. Skripal, also seems to fit the classic cold war model, though without quite the roller-coaster intrigue of the Zaporozhsky case. A retired colonel in Russia's military intelligence service, Mr. Skripal was convicted in 2006 of having passed classified information to British intelligence, MI6, for a decade, in return for \$100,000 wired to a bank account in Spain.

But there is at least a little post-Communist ambiguity surrounding the two other men in the swap. Gennadi Vasilenko, a former K.G.B. major, was arrested in 1998 for contacts with a C.I.A. officer but soon released, only to be arrested again in 2005 and imprisoned not for spying, but for illegal trafficking in weapons and explosives.

And Igor V. Sutyagin, working at a Moscow think tank, did contract research for a British company that may or may not have been a front for Western intelligence. He has maintained his innocence, and human rights activists have defended him.

While all four men signed written confessions to espionage as a condition for their release -- and then were immediately pardoned -- some of the cases show how the definition of spying has grown murkier since relations have warmed between the United States and Russia. For an arms-control researcher like Mr. Sutyagin to supply information to a British company would have been unacceptable to the Kremlin in the 1970s. In more recent years, boundaries have not been so clear.

But American officials demanded precisely these four Russians as soon as talks about a swap began and valued them enough to make the lopsided trade. That suggests indebtedness on the side of the United States, said David Wise, a Washington author and veteran chronicler of espionage. "We obviously feel some obligation to them," Mr. Wise said in an interview on Friday. "You don't leave your men behind on the battlefield."

The American willingness to quickly release 10 Russian agents operating inside the United States, after huge expenditures of money and manpower on a decade of surveillance, would have been hard to imagine a few decades ago. The stakes for American security seem far lower today, said Steven Aftergood, who studies government secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists. "Now it seems more comical than anything else," he said.

But the case was never funny from the point of view of the 10 Russians who faced prison sentences here -- and certainly not for the four Russians serving time in grim Russian prison camps.

Yelena P. Lebedeva-Romanova, a lawyer for the 59-year-old Mr. Skripal, said his release was especially welcome because he had diabetes and she worried about his health in the prison camp in the central Russian republic of Mordovia, where he was serving his sentence.

The relationship of Mr. Vasilenko, once a top-ranked Soviet volleyball player, with a particular C.I.A. officer, Jack Platt, has been well documented over the years. Mr. Platt has said in interviews that he tried repeatedly to recruit Mr. Vasilenko, who worked for the K.G.B. in Washington and Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s, but was rebuffed.

But in 1988, the K.G.B. learned of the contacts between the men, and Mr. Vasilenko was arrested in Havana and imprisoned in Russia for about six months before the espionage case against him fell apart. Years later, Mr. Vasilenko and Mr. Platt, both retired from their intelligence agencies, went into the private security and

investigation business together.

But in 2005, when he was 64, Mr. Vasilenko, then providing security to a Moscow television channel, was rearrested and charged after a search of his home allegedly found pistols and TNT. He was convicted and remained imprisoned until his release for the exchange.

According to Maryland property records, Mr. Zaporozhsky still owns the house on a cul-de-sac in Cockeysville, north of Baltimore, where he lived until 2001 with his wife, Galina, and their three children. No one answered a knock at the door on Friday morning, and one son, Pavel Zaporozhsky, declined to comment by telephone.

Aleksandr Zaporozhsky might not want to risk another trip back to Russia. But he and the other three men who flew west on Friday are free to return when they wish, said Nikolai Kovalyov, a deputy in the State Duma and former director of the F.S.B., the successor to the domestic security operations of the K.G.B.

"There is no formal prohibition on this from the Russian side," Mr. Kovalyov told RIA-Novosti on Friday.

Credit: SCOTT SHANE and ELLEN BARRY; Scott Shane reported from Washington, and Ellen Barry from Moscow. James Risen contributed reporting from Washington.

Photograph

Aleksandr Zaporozhsky, Right, with His Lawyer in 2003, When He Was Sentenced to 18 Years in Prison. (Photograph by Yuri Mashkov/Itar-Tass); Sergei V. Skripal, a Retired Colonel, in Moscow in 2006, When He Was Convicted of Spying for Britain. (Photograph by Tar-Tass); Igor V. Sutyagin in a Moscow Court in 2005, When He Was Sentenced to Prison On Espionage Charges. (Photograph by Dmitry Korobeynikov/European Pressphoto Agency)

DETAILS

Subject:	Prisoner transfers; Espionage
Location:	United States--US Russia
People:	Zaporozhsky, Aleksandr Skripal, Sergei V Vasilenko, Gennadiy Sutyagin, Igor
Company / organization:	Name: Central Intelligence Agency--CIA; NAICS: 928110, 928120; Name: KGB--Soviet security police; NAICS: 922120
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Swap Idea Emerged Early In Case of Russian Agents

PETER BAKER, CHARLIE SAVAGE and BENJAMIN WEISER . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 July 2010: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

ABSTRACT

[...] they described a fast-moving sequence of events after the arrests in which both sides scrambled to reach an agreement, even to the point of Russian officials' offering money and other benefits to encourage one of their sleeper agents to consider the deal.

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- On a Friday afternoon in mid-June, President Obama sat down with advisers in the Oval Office and learned that the F.B.I. planned to round up the largest ring of Russian sleeper agents since the cold war. After discussion about what the agents had done, the conversation turned to the fallout: what to do after the arrests?

In that moment was born a back-to-the-future plan that would play out four weeks later, a prisoner exchange with surreal and even cinematic overtones as Russian and American airplanes met on a sunny tarmac in the heart of Europe on Friday to trade agents and spies much as had been done during a more hostile era.

From the first time the president was told about the case on June 11 -- 16 days before the Russian agents were actually arrested -- a swap emerged as an option that could resolve a potentially volatile situation without undercutting Mr. Obama's effort to rebuild Russian-American relations. The Russian spy ring would be broken, the Americans would secure the release of four Russian prisoners and both sides could then put the episode behind them.

Administration officials said Friday that the arrests were not made for the purpose of making a deal and that no decision about a swap was made until after the agents were in custody. But they described a fast-moving sequence of events after the arrests in which both sides scrambled to reach an agreement, even to the point of Russian officials' offering money and other benefits to encourage one of their sleeper agents to consider the deal. The officials described the episode as perhaps the most serious test yet of the new relationship, as well as a sign of its enduring complexity.

By Friday afternoon, the 10 Russian sleeper agents arrested in American cities and suburbs were flown back to Moscow, while four men released from Russian prisons were taken from the transfer point in Vienna to London. Two of them, Igor V. Sutyagin and Sergei Skripal, got off there, and the remaining two, Aleksandr Zaporozhsky and Gennadi Vasilenko, flew on to Dulles International Airport just outside Washington. The children of the sleeper agents all left with their parents or were preparing to join them, officials said.

The lawyer for one of the freed Russians called it "a historic moment" that she had long suspected would come. "It has to do with the relations between the two countries, and with political games going on at the top," said the lawyer, Maria A. Veselova, who represented Mr. Zaporozhsky, a former Russian intelligence agent. "It is always connected with these chess games."

The games have been played for years, and this one was no exception. The F.B.I. had been monitoring the Russian sleeper agents as far back as a decade, and along with the C.I.A. and the Justice Department, gave the first detailed briefing to the White House in February, American officials said.

By late May and early June, counterespionage officials grew concerned that several of the agents were planning to leave the country this summer and concluded that they would have to arrest them.

At the Southern District of New York, prosecutors pulled out files on the case and completed a 37-page complaint, describing the agents' activities, the sophisticated intelligence technology they used, and the F.B.I.'s extensive and long-term surveillance in unusual detail. A version of the document sat for years in a classified safe in New York, updated and rewritten by Michael Farbiarz, the lead prosecutor, as new evidence was developed, ready to be used whenever necessary.

"The value of a complaint like that is that you show immediately that you've got them dead to rights," said David S. Kris, assistant attorney general for national security. "It showed the defendants and the Russians that we've got

the goods. We're not bluffing here. We've had you under investigation for quite a while. We've been in your houses, we've done surveillance and we have got plenty. That obviously helps things move quickly."

Before they moved on the arrests, though, they had to tell the president. Mr. Obama was preparing to host the Russian president, Dmitri A. Medvedev, at the White House on June 24, so any arrests were bound to be politically explosive. The president's homeland security and counterterrorism adviser, John Brennan, led the June 11 Oval Office briefing, at which officials described who the agents were, what would be in the complaint and what they would be charged with.

"There was a full discussion about what was going to happen on the day after," said one senior White House official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe internal discussions. Mr. Obama then had a meeting on the case with his National Security Council on June 18, just six days before Mr. Medvedev's visit.

The visit went off without any discussion of the case, White House officials said, but three days later, the F.B.I. arrested 10 agents, a sweep that made headlines as a relic of the cold war. The administration moved quickly to keep the arrests from provoking the traditional volley of angry denunciations and retaliations, contacting Moscow to indicate the depth of the evidence and its willingness to resolve the situation.

Russian officials responded by removing an initial statement calling the charges "baseless" from the Foreign Ministry Web site and issuing a new one acknowledging that some of those arrested were Russian citizens. American officials were struck by the tempered remarks by Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin, a former K.G.B. colonel, during a meeting with former President Bill Clinton.

Led by Mr. Brennan, the White House held daily 7:30 a.m. teleconferences with various agencies and quickly agreed to a swap. Officials came up with a list of four Russians who had been convicted of illegal contacts with the West and whom they wanted freed: Mr. Zaporozhsky and two other former Russian intelligence officers, Mr. Skripal and Mr. Vasilenko, as well as an arms control researcher, Mr. Sutyagin.

It helped that after years of American surveillance there was little indication that the Russian agents had actually done any serious damage. Even the Justice Department did not complain about a deal because spy cases are often handled this way.

The C.I.A. was assigned to make the approach to the S.V.R., the Russian foreign intelligence agency, on June 30, less than three days after the arrests, according to an administration official. The same day, Under Secretary of State William J. Burns met with the Russian ambassador, Sergei I. Kislyak, and discussed the spy case.

The Russians considered the swap for two days and then agreed to negotiate. Leon E. Panetta, the C.I.A. director, negotiated the details with his S.V.R. counterpart, Mikhail Y. Fradkov, in three phone calls, sealing the deal on July 3. As part of the deal, Moscow agreed there would be no retaliatory action against Americans living in Russia. Nikita V. Petrov, a historian of Russian security services, said Moscow agreed to the deal "to save face" after the embarrassment of the arrests. The episode showed the contemporary Russian intelligence service's weakness, he said. "This was anachronistic Soviet methods." And Russia could say American interest in the four imprisoned Russians confirmed their convictions.

But there was still the matter of convincing the prisoners who were to be exchanged. Mr. Sutyagin, for one, had long maintained his innocence and was reluctant to sign the confession that the Russian government required for his release. Even after he did, he said he was not guilty.

Likewise, the Russian agents in the United States had been trained not to admit they were spies or even Russians.

But that facade soon crumbled after the Russian government acknowledged their citizenship. Soon afterward, the Russian Consulate requested meetings with them.

Not all of them were eager to make a deal, particularly those with children. Vicky Pelaez, a journalist in New York, was promised that she could go to her native Peru or anywhere else in the world and would be given free housing and a monthly \$2,000 stipend for life. She signed on, the last to do so, just hours before the court hearing on Thursday that completed the deal.

"Her biggest concerns were: 'What's going to happen to me? What are my children's lives going to be like? Are they going to be able to come see me?' " said her lawyer, John M. Rodriguez. He said the Russian promises helped to "cushion the circumstances," but were not what induced her to accept the deal.

Hours later, she and the others were whisked to La Guardia Airport and flown aboard a chartered Vision Airlines jet to Vienna. Within minutes of each other, about 11:15 a.m. local time, first the Russian plane and then the American plane landed. The prisoners switched planes and the Russian jet took off at 12:38 p.m. The American plane was in the air less than 10 minutes later.

Credit: PETER BAKER, CHARLIE SAVAGE and BENJAMIN WEISER; Peter Baker and Charlie Savage reported from Washington, and Benjamin Weiser from New York. Reporting was contributed by Mark L Andler from Washington, Nicholas Kulish from Vienna, and Ellen Barry, Andrew E. Kramer and Michael Schwirtz from Moscow.

Photograph

A Russian Plane, in the Background, Prepared to Leave Vienna for Moscow As an American Plane Waited After a Prisoner Swap. Four Agents -- Including, From Left, Igor V. Sutyagin, Sergei Skripal and Aleksandr Zaporozhsky -- Were Released From Russian Prisons As Part of the Deal. (Photographs by Herwig Prammer/Reuters; Maxim Marmur/Associated Press; Itar-Tass; Yuri Mashkov/Itar-Tass) (A1); the 10 Russian Agents Arrested in the United States Were Flown Aboard a Chartered Vision Airlines Jet to Vienna. After Exchanging Prisoners with the American Plane, the Russian Plane, Top, Departed Friday, and the American Jet Left 10 Minutes Later. (Photograph by Matthias Schrader/Associated Press) (A9)

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LINKS

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10 Plead Guilty in Spy Ring Case As Swap Unfolds

PETER BAKER and BENJAMIN WEISER . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]09 July 2010: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

ABSTRACT

The United States sealed an agreement on Thursday to trade 10 Russian agents arrested last month for four men imprisoned in Russia for alleged contacts with Western intelligence agencies, bringing to a quick conclusion an episode that threatened to disrupt relations between the countries. The Kremlin identified them as Igor V. Sutyagin, an arms control researcher held for 11 years; Sergei Skripal, a colonel in Russia's military intelligence service

sentenced in 2006 to 13 years for spying for Britain; Aleksandr Zaporozhsky, a former agent with Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service who has served seven years of an 18-year sentence; and Gennadi Vasilenko, a former K.G.B. major who was arrested in 1998 for contacts with a C.I.A. officer.

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON – The United States sealed an agreement on Thursday to trade 10 Russian agents arrested last month for four men imprisoned in Russia for alleged contacts with Western intelligence agencies, bringing to a quick conclusion an episode that threatened to disrupt relations between the countries.

The 10 long-term sleeper agents pleaded guilty to conspiracy before a federal judge in Manhattan after revealing their true identities. All 10 were sentenced to time served and were to be transferred to Russian custody as part of a deal in which Moscow will release the four Russian prisoners, three of whom were serving long sentences after being convicted of treason for spying.

The swift end to the cases -- the Russian agents were to be taken by bus Thursday night to a New York-area airport and flown out of the country -- just 11 days after their arrests evoked memories of cold-war-style bargaining but underscored the new-era relationship between Washington and Moscow. President Obama has made the "reset" of Russian-American relations a top foreign policy priority, and the quiet collaboration over the spy scandal indicates that the Kremlin likewise values the warmer ties.

"The agreement we reached today provides a successful resolution for the United States and its interests," Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. said in a statement.

Within hours of the New York court hearing, the Kremlin announced that President Dmitri A. Medvedev had signed pardons for the four men Russia considered spies after each of them signed statements admitting guilt.

The Kremlin identified them as Igor V. Sutyagin, an arms control researcher held for 11 years; Sergei Skripal, a colonel in Russia's military intelligence service sentenced in 2006 to 13 years for spying for Britain; Aleksandr Zaporozhsky, a former agent with Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service who has served seven years of an 18-year sentence; and Gennadi Vasilenko, a former K.G.B. major who was arrested in 1998 for contacts with a C.I.A. officer.

In a statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry attributed the agreement to the warming trend between Washington and Moscow. "This action was carried out in the overall context of improved Russian-American relations," it said. "This agreement gives reason to hope that the course agreed upon by Russia and the United States will be accordingly realized in practice and that attempts to derail the course will not succeed."

A White House spokesman, Ben Rhodes, said the episode would not affect the reset and that the two sides would cooperate when possible "even as we will defend our interests when we differ." Rahm Emanuel, the chief of staff, said the president was fully briefed on the decision. Mr. Emanuel said the case showed that the United States was still watchful even as relations improved. "It sends a clear signal to not only Russia but other countries that will attempt this that we are on to them," he told the PBS program "NewsHour."

The sensational case straight out of a spy novel -- complete with invisible ink, buried cash and a red-haired beauty whose romantic exploits have been excavated in the tabloids -- came to a dramatic denouement in court.

The 10 defendants sat in the jury box, while their lawyers and prosecutors filled the well of the packed courtroom.

Some of the Russian agents wore jail garb over orange T-shirts, while others wore civilian clothes. Natalia Pereverzeva, for example, known as Patricia Mills, sat in jeans with a dark sweater. Few of the defendants conversed with one another. Some looked grim. One, Vicky Pelaez, appeared to be weeping as she gestured to her sons at the close of the hearing.

At one point, Judge Kimba M. Wood asked each of the 10 to disclose their true names.

The first to rise was the man known as Richard Murphy, who lived with his wife and two children in Montclair, N.J. He said his name was Vladimir Guryev.

Then his wife rose. "My true name is Lydia Guryev," she said.

All but three – Anna Chapman, Mikhail Semenko and Ms. Pelaez – had assumed false names in the United States. The 10 each pleaded guilty to a single count of conspiracy to act as an agent of a foreign government without properly registering; the government said it would drop the more serious count of conspiracy to launder money, which eight of the defendants also faced. They had not been charged with espionage, apparently because they did not obtain classified information.

All of them agreed never to return to the United States without permission from the attorney general. They also agreed to turn over any money made from publication of their stories as agents, according to their plea agreements with the United States attorney's office in Manhattan. Several also agreed to forfeit assets, including real estate, in the United States.

At one point, the prosecutor, Michael Farbiarz, told the judge that although Russian officials had met with the defendants, they had done nothing to force them to plead guilty or entice them into doing so. Defense lawyers concurred.

One lawyer, though, John M. Rodriguez, said Russian officials had made promises to his client, Ms. Pelaez, but he assured the judge that they were not inducements to make her plead guilty. He said Ms. Pelaez was told that upon her arrival in Russia, she could go to Peru or anywhere else; she was promised free housing in Russia and a monthly stipend of \$2,000 for life and visas for her two children.

Ms. Pelaez was not formally trained as a spy, her lawyer has said. He has also said that she had no desire to go to Russia as part of a swap. "I know we were the last to sign" a plea agreement, Mr. Rodriguez said after the hearing on Thursday.

The defendants included several married couples with children. American officials said after the court hearing that they would be free to leave the United States with their parents.

Perhaps the most recognizable of the agents was Ms. Chapman, who ran her own real estate firm and who had attained a degree of notoriety after tabloid newspapers worldwide chronicled her sex life and reprinted photographs of her in skimpy attire.

Administration officials who insisted on the condition of anonymity to discuss the delicate decision would not say who initially proposed a swap but added that they considered it a fruitful idea because they saw "no significant national security benefits from their continued incarceration," as one put it. Some of the four Russians to be freed are in ill health, the official added.

Another American official, who was not authorized to speak about the case, said officials of the intelligence agencies were the channel for most of the negotiations, particularly Leon E. Panetta, the director of the C.I.A., and

Mikhail Y. Fradkov, director of the S.V.R., Russia's foreign intelligence agency.

The official said the American side decided "we could trade these agents – who really had nothing to tell us that we didn't already know – for people who had never stopped fighting for their freedom in Russia."

The spy ring case further fueled debate in Washington about Mr. Obama's outreach to Russia even as he tries to persuade the Senate to ratify the New Start arms control pact he signed last spring with Mr. Medvedev.

"The lesson here is this administration may be trying to reset the relationship, but I don't have any confidence that the Russians are," said Representative Peter Hoekstra of Michigan, the ranking Republican on the House Intelligence Committee. "They got caught."

David J. Kramer, a former assistant secretary of state under President George W. Bush, wondered whether the administration could have gotten a better deal. "The White House risks appearing overeager to sweep problems under the rug," he said.

But supporters of the administration said the spy case should not undermine the relationship or support for the treaty. Richard R. Burt, a former arms control negotiator who now heads a pro-disarmament group called Global Zero, pointed out that the United States ratified treaties during the cold war when there was an active espionage campaign waged between the two powers. "No arms treaty, including the New Start agreement, is based on trust," Mr. Burt said.

The Russian Agents' Real Identities: These are the real names of the Russian agents, which they provided to a federal judge in New York on Thursday, and the aliases that they used. Vladimir Guryev, known as Richard Murphy; Lydia Guryev, known as Cynthia Murphy; Andrey Bezrukov, known as Donald Heathfield; Elena Vavilova, known as Tracey Lee Ann Foley; Mikhail Kutsik, known as Michael Zottoli; Natalia Pereverzeva, known as Patricia Mills; Mikhail Vasenkov, known as Juan Lazaro; Three agents used their actual names: Vicky Pelaez; Anna Chapman; Mikhail Semenko;

Credit: PETER BAKER and BENJAMIN WEISER; Peter Baker reported from Washington, and Benjamin Weiser from New York. Reporting was contributed by Ellen Barry from Moscow, Scott Shane and Charlie Savage from Washington, and Colin Moynihan from New York.

Photograph

Family Members of the Journalist Vicky Pelaez, Who Pleaded Guilty to Conspiracy On Thursday. (Photograph by John Marshall Mantel for the New York Times) (A3)

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U.S. And Russia Discuss a Trade to End Spy Case

SCOTT SHANE and BENJAMIN WEISER . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y.] 08 July 2010: A.1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

ABSTRACT

A senior American diplomat, William J. Burns, the under secretary of state for political affairs, met on Wednesday with the Russian ambassador to the United States, Sergei I. Kislyak, but State Department officials would say only that the spy case was discussed.

FULL TEXT

WASHINGTON -- Just days after the F.B.I.'s sensational dismantling of a Russian spy ring, the American and Russian authorities on Wednesday were negotiating an exchange of some or all of the 10 accused agents for prisoners held in Russia, including a scientist convicted of spying for the United States.

Though American officials were close-mouthed, they confirmed the talks and there were signs that a swap might be completed quickly. The family of the imprisoned scientist, Igor V. Sutyagin, said he had been moved to Moscow and told that he would be flown to Vienna for release as early as Thursday. A lawyer for Anna Chapman, one of the suspected agents for Russia in New York, said he had spoken with American prosecutors and Russian officials about an equally speedy resolution.

"I feel our discussions will probably be resolved by tomorrow one way or another," said the lawyer, Robert M. Baum. Another defense lawyer, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said it was possible that many of the 10 defendants, or all of them, would plead guilty in federal court in Manhattan on Thursday, when they are to appear for arraignment. (An 11th defendant fled after being released on bail in Cyprus.)

But no deal was announced, and it remained unclear whether the two sides had reached a final agreement and which Russian prisoners, in addition to Mr. Sutyagin, might be part of an exchange. A senior American diplomat, William J. Burns, the under secretary of state for political affairs, met on Wednesday with the Russian ambassador to the United States, Sergei I. Kislyak, but State Department officials would say only that the spy case was discussed.

A lawyer for Mr. Sutyagin, Anna Stavitskaya, said in an interview with a Moscow radio station that her client was shown a list of 11 Russian prisoners the United States wanted in a trade. He was told that if he or any of the prisoners on that list declined to admit their guilt and participate, the entire agreement would be voided, Ms. Stavitskaya said.

"It was either this way or they would create a life like hell for him," she said. "He was thinking of his relatives, of his children -- he has two daughters. And that is why he accepted the offer."

An exchange would have some advantages for the Obama administration, avoiding costly trials that could be an irritant for months or years in American-Russian relations. But the White House might be reluctant to give up the accused agents, who were the targets of a decade-long F.B.I. investigation, without getting prisoners that the United States valued in return.

The potential exchange could also fuel accusations that the administration was being soft on Russia. Conservatives, including Mitt Romney, the former Massachusetts governor and a possible Republican presidential candidate, have urged the Senate to reject the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty agreed to by President Obama and President Dmitri A. Medvedev of Russia.

An exchange could prove awkward for both sides in other ways. Mr. Sutyagin's innocence has been championed by human rights activists, for instance, and his family said he would prefer to remain in Russia. And John M. Rodriguez, a lawyer for one of the federal court defendants, Vicky Pelaez, a veteran columnist for a Spanish-language newspaper in New York, said he believed that she would not want to move to Russia.

But a chance to escape prison appeared to be a powerful motivator in both countries. Mr. Sutyagin agreed to sign a confession, his family said, after being told it was necessary to be part of the exchange. And a lawyer for one of the defendants who had lived in Boston, known as Donald Heathfield, said his client's greatest concern was for his two sons. The man's wife, Tracey Lee Ann Foley, was also indicted as a member of the ring.

Mr. Heathfield's lawyer, Peter B. Krupp, said the children had been "the No. 1 one priority and concern for my client and his wife since this whole ordeal started."

He added, "If this case can be advanced or resolved more quickly and it helps them help their kids, they're interested."

The reports of a pending exchange, like the spy ring itself, seemed to have the accouterments of cold war espionage without the high stakes for national security. The accused Russian agents were described by American officials as using high-tech methods but acquiring no real secrets. A swap – in Vienna, a favorite rendezvous for 20th-century spies – would serve as a colorful final chapter for the espionage-novel plot.

No American accused of spying is known to be in Russian custody. But Mr. Sutyagin, who is serving a 14-year term, is one of a number of Russian scientists imprisoned after being accused of revealing secrets to the West. His family told reporters that the list of 11 prisoners he saw included Sergei Skripal, a colonel in Russian military intelligence sentenced in 2006 to 13 years for spying for Britain.

Jeffrey H. Smith, a former C.I.A. general counsel who negotiated a number of spy trades as a State Department lawyer in the 1970s and '80s, said that during the cold war the United States almost never brokered swaps before people suspected of being Soviet spies had been convicted and spent time in prison.

"It would have been considered unseemly to make a trade right after they were captured," he said. "It was believed that these were serious offenses and they needed to pay a price."

Mr. Smith said that he did not know the details of the current case but that if Washington was indeed in the midst of a hasty prisoner exchange, "it's fair to infer that these charges are not at the same level of seriousness."

Mr. Sutyagin's case resembled in one respect that of the 10 accused Russian agents. Federal prosecutors in Manhattan did not charge them with espionage because F.B.I. investigators apparently found no evidence that they had acquired classified information. And Mr. Sutyagin, an arms control researcher who worked for the Institute for the U.S. and Canadian Studies, a Moscow research organization, argued during his trial that he had no access to state secrets.

A physicist by training, Mr. Sutyagin was arrested in 1999 and accused of passing secrets about nuclear submarines to a British company that prosecutors claimed was a front for the C.I.A. He was convicted in 2004 and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Human rights organizations at the time criticized Mr. Sutyagin's prosecution, saying it suggested a Soviet-style wariness of contacts between Russian scientists and foreigners.

In an interview, Mr. Sutyagin's mother, Svetlana E. Sutyagina, said that he had been transferred from a prison colony in northern Russia to Moscow, and that she had met with him on Wednesday morning. Once in Lefortovo Prison in Moscow, she said, her son met with American officials in the presence of Russian security service officers. "The conversation was with our generals," she said. "The Americans weren't deciding anything."

Ms. Sutyagina said the authorities had tried for 11 years to compel her son to confess to being an American spy. He signed the confession this week, she said, in part to help the suspects in the United States avoid prison time. "He knows what it is to be in prison," she said. "He doesn't want to accept responsibility for letting those people go to prison."

F.B.I. officials, who saw the long investigation as a triumph for the bureau, declined to comment on Wednesday. But John P. Slattery, a former top F.B.I. counterintelligence official, said investigators might be disappointed to see it end with an exchange.

"The individuals who ran the wires and did the surveillance may feel some frustration," said Mr. Slattery, now with BAE Systems Intelligence and Security. "There would be some heartache in not seeing these guys do some jail time. But there are larger U.S. intelligence equities and policy considerations at stake, and they would understand that."

Credit: SCOTT SHANE and BENJAMIN WEISER; Scott Shane reported from Washington, and Benjamin Weiser from New York. Mark Mazzetti contributed reporting from Washington, and Andrew E. Kramer from Moscow.

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Russia Says It Opened Criminal Inquiry Into British Espionage

Steven Lee Myers; Alan Cowell contributed reporting from London. . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]16 June 2007: A.4.

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

A spokesman, Sergei N. Ignatchenko, said in a telephone interview that the security service was investigating information that Mr. [Andrei K. Lugovoi] "did not voice at the press conference," though at the time Mr. Lugovoi had suggested that he had incriminating evidence against Mr. [Boris A. Berezovsky] and Mr. Litvinenko.

Russia's prosecutor general, Yuri Y. Chaika, said Thursday that Britain had shared material that prompted the decision to accuse Mr. Lugovoi. But Mr. Chaika dismissed it as an "analysis of the evidence, no more than that."

In London, a British official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity under civil service rules, said that prosecutors were "still awaiting the formal Russian response" to the extradition request. The official described the Litvinenko case as "a criminal matter, not an issue of intelligence."

FULL TEXT

Russia's intelligence service said Friday that it had opened a criminal investigation into British espionage here in Russia, based on statements and undisclosed evidence provided by a businessman who is accused of poisoning Alexander V. Litvinenko, a former K.G.B. officer and a Kremlin critic.

The announcement by the Federal Security Service, the domestic successor of the Soviet K.G.B., further confused a murder investigation that has soured relations between Russia and Britain. The countries have staked out starkly different positions regarding the killing of Mr. Litvinenko and the motives behind it.

Mr. Litvinenko died in London in November after ingesting a radioactive isotope, polonium-210. Last month, British prosecutors accused a business associate of his, Andrei K. Lugovoi, of carrying out the poisoning, and demanded his extradition.

Mr. Lugovoi has denied the accusations. Two weeks ago, he held a theatrical news conference in which he accused Britain's foreign intelligence service, MI6, of orchestrating the whole affair and recruiting Mr. Litvinenko and a prominent Russia tycoon in self-exile, Boris A. Berezovsky. He said they had conspired with British intelligence operatives to provide compromising information about President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

Mr. Lugovoi's assertions were the basis for the new investigation, the Federal Security Service said Friday, though its one-sentence statement did not mention who was the focus of any potential espionage charges.

A spokesman, Sergei N. Ignatchenko, said in a telephone interview that the security service was investigating information that Mr. Lugovoi "did not voice at the press conference," though at the time Mr. Lugovoi had suggested that he had incriminating evidence against Mr. Berezovsky and Mr. Litvinenko.

Mr. Ignatchenko added that the investigation was focused on "reconnaissance work of the British intelligence service on the territory of the Russian Federation." His comments suggested that the investigation could also focus on Russians who may have cooperated with British operatives here.

Russia has accused Britain of spying before. In 2006, the Federal Security Service accused four British diplomats of communicating with Russian agents using a device disguised as a rock, though Russia chose not to expel them, as is standard practice in cases of suspected espionage.

Also last year, a Russian court convicted a retired officer, identified as Col. Sergei V. Skripal, of having passed classified information to MI6 for a decade. The court sentenced him to 13 years in prison.

The new investigation appeared to give an official endorsement to Mr. Lugovoi's assertions. Although investigators here have said that they are looking into the circumstances of Mr. Litvinenko's death, they have made it clear that Mr. Lugovoi is not a suspect. That has led to accusations by Mr. Litvinenko's relatives and supporters that Russia was harboring an accused murderer.

Russia has refused to consider a British request for Mr. Lugovoi's extradition to face charges, since the country's Constitution forbids it. Officials and the news media here continue to be scornful of the accusations that Mr. Lugovoi might have been involved in the killing.

Russia's prosecutor general, Yuri Y. Chaika, said Thursday that Britain had shared material that prompted the decision to accuse Mr. Lugovoi. But Mr. Chaika dismissed it as an "analysis of the evidence, no more than that."

In London, a British official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity under civil service rules, said that prosecutors were "still awaiting the formal Russian response" to the extradition request. The official described the Litvinenko case as "a criminal matter, not an issue of intelligence."

Photograph

Marina Litvinenko, widow of Alexander V. Litvinenko, a Kremlin critic who was poisoned, with Alex Goldfarb. They were in Hamburg, Germany, yesterday promoting their new book about Mr. Litvinenko's life. (Photo by Christian Charisius/Reuters)

DETAILS

Subject:	Espionage; Criminal investigations; Poisoning
Location:	United Kingdom UK Russia
People:	Litvinenko, Alexander Lugovoy, Andrei K
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Russia Convicts Retired Officer Of Decade of Spying for British

Steven Lee Myers; Michael Schwirtz contributed reporting for this article. . New York Times , Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y]10 Aug 2006: A.8.

[ProQuest document link](#)

ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

The officer, identified as Col. Sergei V. Skripal, was sentenced to 13 years in prison for treason stemming from a collaboration with Britain's secret intelligence service, MI6, officials said in interviews and in statements to Russian news media.

The Federal Security Service, the domestic successor to the Soviet K.G.B., said in statements to news agencies that Colonel Skripal, 55, began spying in 1995 while stationed overseas. His spying was said to have continued even after he retired from the Russian military in 1999.

Colonel Skripal reportedly received roughly \$100,000 from the British. A spokesman for the Federal Security Service confirmed the service's statements, but declined to discuss them further. Mr. [Sergei N. Fridinsky] said that he had asked for a 15-year sentence, but that the court had considered Colonel Skripal's guilty plea and cooperation with investigators in reducing the sentence.

FULL TEXT

In a new case of cold-war-style espionage, Russia on Wednesday announced the conviction of a retired military officer who had pleaded guilty to charges that he passed state secrets to Britain for nearly a decade.

The officer, identified as Col. Sergei V. Skripal, was sentenced to 13 years in prison for treason stemming from a collaboration with Britain's secret intelligence service, MI6, officials said in interviews and in statements to Russian news media.

The case is the latest of several espionage cases that have, at times, made it seem as if the cold war had resumed in a new form. Scientists who cooperated with foreign colleagues have been accused of espionage, including one sentenced Tuesday. There have also been disclosures like the one in January that British operatives communicated with Russian agents using a device concealed in a fake rock left near a Moscow park.

The officials did not specify the nature of the secrets Colonel Skripal was accused of betraying, nor did they explain why his case was disclosed only at the end of his trial, though he was reportedly arrested in December 2004. But his spying was said to have caused serious, though unspecified, damage to Russia's defense and national security.

"The damage cannot be measured in rubles or in terms of anything else," the new chief military prosecutor, Sergei N. Fridinsky, said in televised remarks, as transcribed by the British Broadcasting Corporation. "The fact is that the interests of the Russian Federation have been damaged by the dissemination of classified information."

The Federal Security Service, the domestic successor to the Soviet K.G.B., said in statements to news agencies that Colonel Skripal, 55, began spying in 1995 while stationed overseas. His spying was said to have continued even after he retired from the Russian military in 1999.

He met regularly with British handlers and was paid each time, as well as in monthly installments into a bank account in Spain, the statements said. The newspaper Izvestia, which first reported the case on Wednesday, said the British were interested in the identities of Russian officers working in Europe.

Colonel Skripal reportedly received roughly \$100,000 from the British. A spokesman for the Federal Security Service confirmed the service's statements, but declined to discuss them further. Mr. Fridinsky said that he had asked for a 15-year sentence, but that the court had considered Colonel Skripal's guilty plea and cooperation with investigators in reducing the sentence.

The colonel's case is the third in which Russia has described what officials here have called espionage by Britain, ostensibly a friendly country, though one with increasingly chilly relations of late.

In 2004, a jury convicted an arms control researcher, Igor Sutyagin, of passing classified information to a company based in London.

In January, a television program disclosed what officials later called an espionage ring run from the British Embassy using the fake rock. Senior officials, including President Vladimir V. Putin, accused British diplomats of hiding intelligence work behind the cover of providing aid to private Russian groups, which are now subject to new legal restrictions.

One of the accused British diplomats, Marc Doe, oversaw his government's grants to such groups. Despite the supposed gravity of the ring, neither he nor the other suspected diplomats were expelled, the usual practice.

A spokesman at the British Embassy in Moscow declined to comment, citing standard policy.

Photograph

Col. Sergei V. Skripal, sentenced to 13 years for treason, spoke with his lawyer yesterday in Moscow. (Photo by Misha Japaridze/Associated Press)

DETAILS

Subject:	Espionage; Convictions; Military officers; Criminal sentences; Treason
Location:	United Kingdom UK Russia
People:	Skripal, Sergei V
Publication title:	New York Times, Late Edition (East Coast); New York, N.Y.
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