

# The KGB Legacy in Russia

J. Michael Waller

The superstructure of the Soviet Communist Party is gone. But the secret police and intelligence agencies have survived the turmoil and remain firmly ensconced in Russian political, economic, and social life. There they threaten reform and imperil relations with the West.

As tank and artillery fire pummeled Dzerzhinskii Street in downtown Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, the world failed to note the irony. Boris Yeltsin's guns blazed death and destruction on a Russian city, his soldiers murdered and looted their way through private homes and businesses, and his minister of internal affairs and combat commanders on the ground publicly vowed—in their words—to “liquidate” those who resisted. The tactics, the plunder, the sheer disregard for innocent life, even the vocabulary reflected the street's namesake, Feliks Dzerzhinskii, who founded the first Soviet secret police in December 1917.

His statue may be gone from Lubyanka Square in Moscow, but Dzerzhinskii remains the most ubiquitous Bolshevik leader, except for Lenin, in the former Soviet Union. No other culture honors its secret police as enduringly as the sovietized culture of Russia. The “contaminated moral environment” created by decades of mass acceptance of and collaboration with the communist secret police, so painfully described by Czech dissident-turned-president Václav Havel in his New Year's Day 1990 address, remains deeply rooted in Russia's maelstrom of reform, anti-reform, and anti-anti-reform. Dzerzhinskii's Cheka, the Bolshevik secret police that called itself the “sword and shield of the Communist Party,” remains the physical and psychological glue binding the bureaucracy, armed forces, and agro-, energy-, and military-industrial sectors, which together form the five main pillars of the Russian state.

## Embedded in the Culture

The Cheka and its descendants, familiar to most of the world as the *Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti* (KGB), have influenced the Russian psyche every bit as much as the Communist Party, and perhaps even more. Even ridding post-Soviet society of the KGB structure,

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which no Russian authority has attempted to do (except during a very brief bout of euphoria after the August 1991 putsch), would be but a first step toward undoing the KGB's legacy.

***The KGB's main purpose was not merely to prop up a regime, but to destroy traditional Russian society and create a New Soviet Man.***

Some historians maintain that the Cheka and the KGB were mere extensions of the tsarist secret police, and thus inherently Russian. While this is true, the Cheka represented something deeper: its main purpose was not merely to prop up a regime, but to destroy traditional Russian society and create a New Soviet Man. The Bolsheviks used their Cheka enforcement arm not only to liquidate class enemies and political opponents, but to erase or at least subvert and control all of Russia's political, economic, commercial, educational, legal, scientific, social, cultural, and spiritual institutions. There was no pretense of civility. Dzerzhinskii openly went into the prisons and recruited hardened criminals to carry out what he approvingly called the "Red Terror." Hundreds of thousands of people were exterminated under his leadership. The Cheka's machinery of systematized coercion and murder herded the hapless hordes into concentration camps, a term the young Soviet regime used long before the Nazis came to power in Germany. Only afterward was the party able to impose its will.

Russia's rich cultures were uprooted, twisted, and coarsened. To survive, individuals became loyal only to themselves, informing on their neighbors, friends, and family members, often writing false accusations in order to spare themselves or to gain some meager privilege. The chekists (*chekisty*), as they called themselves, promoted destruction of personal relationships to eliminate "conspiracies" and to ensure obedience to the often uneducated, boorish new ruling class that became known as the *nomenklatura*.

This was the machinery that built the regime of Joseph Stalin and shaped the world view of most Russians today. Well into the 1990s, generations of schoolchildren were taught to be like Pavlik Morozov, the child-hero who turned in his parents to the secret police for execution. People sold themselves to an ideology and regime in which they did not believe and which they often hated; even the most righteous bought jobs, diplomas, or judicial verdicts by bribing those who

governed them. In so doing, they subverted themselves, making themselves permanent captives of the state machine. Those who resisted were turned over to the chekists for punishment or disposal. All but the bravest members of society became witting, unwitting, or meekly compliant collaborators. Through these means the "captive minds" described by Czesław Miłosz became the new Soviet intelligentsia.

Here is the source of Havel's "contaminated moral environment," in which trust and fidelity have lost their meaning. Havel blamed all citizens under the Soviet-imposed regimes, including himself: "We fell morally ill because we became used to saying something different from what we thought. We learned not to believe in anything, to ignore each other, to care only about ourselves. Concepts such as love, friendship, compassion, humility, or forgiveness lost their depth and dimensions. . . . We had all become used to the totalitarian system and accepted it as an unchangeable fact and thus helped to perpetuate it."

He called his citizens to action: "We have to accept this legacy as a sin we committed against ourselves. If we accept it as such, we will understand that it is up to us all, and up to us only, to do something about it. We cannot blame the previous rulers for everything, not only because it would be untrue but also because it would blunt the duty that each of us faces today, namely, the obligation to act independently, freely, reasonably, and quickly."

## **No Attempt to Uproot**

Because of its social roots, the KGB legacy had a profound impact on reform throughout the former Soviet bloc. The older the regime, the deeper went the roots. The Czech Republic, more than any of its newly free neighbors (East Germany, absorbed by the Federal Republic is a different case entirely), tried to dismantle the old chekist system, to expose its secrets, to stigmatize its former leaders and collaborators, and to prevent them from participating in key sectors of the post-communist political, legal, economic, and educational systems. Archives were opened. The Czechs developed a process called lustration in an attempt to prevent the old guard from contaminating the delicate new republic and to give society a chance to build faith in its new institutions. Post-communist leaders in Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and elsewhere also introduced lustration, but the process did not advance as far.

Though his liberal supporters in the Democratic Russia movement prodded him, Boris Yeltsin never even

tried such a program. Nor did the nation really wish it, once the euphoria of victory over the central Soviet government subsided. The West, too, offered no incentives for lustration. Yeltsin quickly realized that the KGB's institutions would be critical to helping him consolidate his rule. He supported an orderly partition of the organization into large, separate services, so as to knock the last legs out from under the Soviet regime while keeping their support for himself. The KGB was to remain divided so that it could not act against him, yet be preserved so that it could work for him. The mass firings promised after the failure of the 1991 putsch never materialized; the only high-ranking KGB official forced out in public disgrace and criminally charged was its chairman, the coup-plotter Vladimir Kriuchkov, and even he was eventually released from prison. There was no trial for crimes against humanity—not even a truth commission to establish the criminal acts of Soviet rulers against ordinary citizens. Russian citizens still cannot view their KGB files. Not only were informant files preserved and networks maintained, but the informants themselves have received new special privileges, including financial support. Even as Yeltsin attempted to impose greater control over the KGB internal security apparatus through a short-lived merger with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), he allowed the chekists to maintain their internal traditions.

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The renamed KGB components officially emerged as "new" organizations on December 20, 1991, the seventy-fourth birthday of the Cheka and the seventy-first birthday of its foreign intelligence arm. Chekist iconography was lovingly preserved in state security offices. Bronze sword-and-shield KGB crests still festoon the perimeter of the old KGB headquarters at the Lubyanka; updated versions sport the Russian tricolor. Busts and portraits of Dzerzhinskii adorn almost every office. The MVD maintains its elite division in his name. Polished brass memorials to chekists slain in action remain embedded in red marble, illuminated by an eternal flame. September 11, marking Dzerzhinskii's birth, remains the chekists' official holiday. And on December 20, 1992, the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) celebrated its anniversary: not its first, but its seventy-second!

## The Former KGB Today

Unofficially but visibly unified by a common bureaucratic and group culture, the chekists' place in post-Soviet society is difficult to define. Gone is the monolithic armed bureaucracy of spies and counterspies, informants and provocateurs, mechanized troops and border guards on air, land, and sea, cryptographers and physicists, linguists and chemists, smugglers and assassins, interrogators and executioners. The personnel and organizations remain, not under a single umbrella, but as a collection of unfamiliar and often changing acronyms: FSB, GUO, FAPSI, SVR, and lesser organizations.

Most of the KGB's internal security and repressive subunits are now grouped into the Federal Security Service (*Federal'naya sluzhba bezopasnosti*, FSB). FSB is its sixth name in four years. The KGB's former Ninth (Guards) Directorate is now part of President Yeltsin's praetorian guard, the Main Guard Directorate (*Glavnoe upravleniye okhrany*, GUO). The electronic Eighth Chief Directorate, Sixteenth Directorate, and Communications Troops have become the Federal Agency for Government Communications and Information (*Federal'noe agentstvo pravitel'svennoi svyazi i informatsii*, FAPSI). The Border Guards Chief Directorate is now the Federal Border Service. The foreign espionage First Chief Directorate is now the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (*Sluzhba vneshnei razvedki*, SVR). Many officers of the KGB Fifth Chief Directorate, responsible for political control, repression, and informants, now staff the new state tax police and enjoy broad confiscatory powers.

Because its familiar face is gone, the presence of the KGB is more difficult to see. But the ideological continuity is there: not as unshakable devotion to Marxism-Leninism, but as adherence to a shared world view, participation in a permanent bureaucratic culture in which select members identify themselves by their heritage as chekists, their search for enemies among their people, and their cult-like devotion to Dzerzhinskii. They occupy a special place in society. Top-level officers still share the same apartment buildings, clubs, and vacation spots. By law, an ordinary police officer cannot arrest a chekist unless another FSB officer is present. Even during Russia's most reformist period in 1992, a law was enacted that made it a crime for a citizen to "insult the honor and dignity" of chekist personnel or their family members.

While abuse of intelligence and counterintelligence is not unique to the Soviet system, its extensive reach into social and private life was most characteristic of

Soviet leaders and communist regimes. Western security and intelligence services, despite their imperfections, were created by men with Western values, a Judeo-Christian upbringing, and a generally democratic, pluralistic world view. The security and intelligence services of the modern Russian Federation were built and staffed by career members of the Communist Party, professional chekists who had dedicated their lives to crushing dissent and religion at home and to subverting Western values abroad. They were the core of what John J. Dziak called a "permanent counterintelligence enterprise to which all other major political, social, and economic questions are subordinated." Even in the Gorbachev era, Dziak wrote in his 1988 *Chekisty: A History of the KGB*, "the commonweal is not the principal objective of such an amalgam of ensconced power and security screen; self-perpetuation is."

Dziak's thesis was proven by the events that followed the Soviet collapse, when the chekist structures recovered quickly from their shock and retrenched. Whereas the party was the superstructure, the chekists formed the keel. President Yeltsin demonized the Communist Party, stripping it of its powers, property, and archives. But once in power he built his ship of state on the same keel, granting the chekists most of their old powers and privileges and never seriously criticizing the KGB and the successor bodies under his control. His half-hearted attempt to de-Leninize the country did not extend to casting disrepute on Dzerzhinskii.

## A Smooth Transition to Democratic Politics

In the late 1980s, as the Communist Party readied itself to relinquish its absolute monopoly of power, the chekists prepared for their own institutional survival. The KGB deepened its penetration of the new political system. With its own campaign schools, political intelligence, and funding, it ran 2,765 of its own uniformed officers as candidates from the union republics during the 1990 elections to the Congresses of People's Deputies, according to an internal KGB newsletter cited by Alexander Rahr of Radio Liberty,<sup>1</sup> and won 86 percent of the races in the first round. Several candidates, including KGB First Deputy Chairman Filipp Bobkov, who began his chekist career under Stalin and rose to control all internal security in the Soviet Union, won seats in the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet. Bobkov held a position on the parliamentary presidium. General Ivan Fedoseev, former deputy head of the Fifth Chief

Directorate (which Bobkov had created), became a ranking member of the Supreme Soviet Constitutional Commission. The parliamentary Committee on Defense and Security, which in theory had oversight of the armed forces and secret services, was dominated by officials from the KGB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the armed forces, and the military-industrial complex.

Secret collaborators also won seats, representing every major political bloc. Colonel Aleksandr Kichikhin, a former Fifth Chief Directorate officer, told *Moscow News*, "[KGB chairman] Kryuchkov told us to recruit agents from the democratic faction of the Russian parliament."<sup>2</sup> Recruitment of lawmakers who were members of the Communist Party, he said, was unnecessary, as they were already coopted. A ranking chekist confirmed Kichikhin's account, saying, "There are quite a few of our people among the parliamentarians!"

This may explain why neither the Supreme Soviet nor the Federal Assembly elected in December 1993 ever sought to pass legislation to reform or to control the security and intelligence organs. Both parliaments passed basic laws on security and intelligence that were drafted by the services themselves and vetted by the coopted committees. But the lopsided margins with which these very repressive laws were enacted suggest something larger, a complex situation revealed in the author's interviews with Russian lawmakers.

***Preserving a strong internal security force of chekists is seen as the country's best hope against crime.***

First, many members of parliament voiced fear of retaliation if they voted to restrict the former KGB. Second, reflecting public concerns, they see the chekists as the only effective barrier against the exploding crime rate. With crime the primary concern of a sizable percentage of the public and with public confidence in the ordinary police (under the Ministry of Internal Affairs) very low, preserving a strong internal security force of chekists is seen as the country's best hope against crime. (That the chekist services are riddled with corruption seems to be beside the point.) Third, lawmakers from across the political spectrum see little fundamental difference between their state security services and those of the West, particularly the idealized American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Such mirror-imaging is unwittingly reinforced by Western governments that accept ex-KGB components as part of the family of civilized law-enforcement agencies fighting the global-

ization of crime. In short, many lawmakers tend to see the chekists as normal officers of the law and express genuine puzzlement and resentment that they should not be accepted by the West. More reformist political leaders seem to view the former KGB as a necessary evil, at worst, though their sentiments often change with their audiences. Only the most radical democrats have publicly demanded that the chekists be completely dissolved and replaced with something befitting a real democracy.

## Taking Care of Business

Just as it exploited political openings and democratic processes to preserve its power base or to expand it beyond the Communist Party, the KGB took advantage of the slight but dramatic economic opportunity at the start of perestroika. KGB officers either set up their own companies or joined new Russian firms created by fellow chekists, party apparatchiks, and bureaucrats. These enterprises began to appear in observable numbers in 1988, under the supervision of party and state security organs. Internal documents and eyewitness accounts made public by Russian journalists and a 1992 parliamentary inquiry found that initially, privatization under Gorbachev was intended to benefit party leaders by creating banks, trading houses, and other corporate shells through which state property could be disbursed and hard-currency profits laundered. These efforts were carried out in conjunction with the KGB and the Komsomol. "Based on this, at all levels of the party hierarchy," parliamentary investigators concluded, "there was mass founding of party banks, joint enterprises, and joint-stock companies in 1990-1991." According to Kichikhin, the KGB also set up its own banks, joint enterprises, and joint-stock companies in the same period.

At that time, the law required that all foreign companies conducting business in the country have Russian partners. KGB officers were represented in the latter group far out of proportion to their numbers. Approximately three-fourths of all joint ventures with foreigners in that period included KGB personnel, according to Rahr and estimates by American businessmen sensitive to the subject. But few officers actually left the service. As the security and intelligence organs publicly lamented a mass exodus of experienced officers to the private sector, their ranks of "active reserve" officers ballooned. The active reserve consists of veteran officers who lead lives in the civilian sector as academics, journalists, businessmen, and so forth. As opposed to

Western-style military reservists who serve when formally called to duty, active reservists constantly function as security or intelligence officers during the course of their civilian careers. The active reserve is distinct from active duty undercover, but the result is similar. Thus Russia's new private sector has merged, to a large degree, with the security organs.

***KGB officers use the resources of the security and intelligence services for personal gain.***

This situation allows the chekists substantial, unfair advantages over ordinary entrepreneurs. A survey of chekists published by *Nezavisimaya gazeta* in August 1993 shows that KGB officers use the resources of the security and intelligence services for personal gain. Their fraternal, elitist culture encourages them to support one another. Not only do active duty and active reserve officers profit as individuals, but the institutions benefit as well. Income sources independent of the government-appropriated budgets give the organs more freedom from the civilian authorities. An April 1995 law allows FSB internal security to create and operate its own for-profit companies. The electronic intelligence monolith FAPSI, which administers the country's new telecommunications networks and leases lines to domestic and foreign companies, has the added advantage of 1995 presidential decrees that authorize it to monitor, record, store, and register all financial transactions in the Russian Federation. The SVR foreign intelligence service is reportedly running front companies to fund pensions for current Russian and retired Soviet espionage officers, and to buy dachas, automobiles, and luxury goods for their personal use. Victor Yasmann of the Jamestown Foundation reports that President Yeltsin granted the Main Guard Directorate (GUO) the right to control the lucrative Rosvooruzhenie arms export monopoly, and to administer the allocation of such privileges as the state automobile fleet and health centers.<sup>3</sup>

Such arrangements also provide the former KGB with a new *raison d'être* by bringing in hard currency, technology, and other resources needed to boost the sagging economy and military-industrial sector; various chekist services publicly justify themselves as benefiting the economy and everyday life. An anonymous SVR officer told *Pravda* in February 1992, "Business and intelligence work. These two professions are always side by side. Today they are moving closer and closer together." He added that the profits from espionage were

"far greater than those of scientific research institutes." The SVR's first deputy director, Viacheslav Trubnikov, asserts that "even something like finding yeast, which ensures that bread is of high quality, is at times the task of the intelligence service."

The new business ventures not only open themselves up to massive conflicts of interest, but compromise the integrity of the private sector and the professionalism of the security and intelligence services. Corruption is another major problem, and potentially a disastrous one for economic reform, if the KGB's resources are available for corrupt purposes.

A parliamentary investigation led by Democratic Russia leader Lev Ponomarev in 1991 and early 1992 found conclusively that during the waning years of perestroika the KGB had been put to work laundering billions of dollars controlled by the Communist Party abroad. His commission, the findings of which are presently being serialized in *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, called on President Yeltsin to "order the management of the Foreign Intelligence Service, the Ministry of Defense, and the presidential apparatus to provide direct access to the archives of the USSR KGB for an investigative crew and its experts," so that the stolen funds could be recovered and used to cushion the effects of economic reform. Yeltsin ignored the plea, and SVR director general Evgenii Primakov, who rebuffed similar efforts from the State Procuracy, successfully pressured the Supreme Soviet to shut down Ponomarev's commission.

***Russia's security and intelligence services have consistently been hostile toward attempts to bring them under civilian control***

Now, the Russian security and intelligence organs are moving one step further. An April 18, 1995, report in the Moscow newspaper *Segodnia* revealed a move by the Minister of Communications, the head of the Government Committee for Information Infrastructure Policy, and FAPSI director Aleksandr Starovoitov to control all electronic financial transactions in the Russian Federation. Yeltsin backed the plan with presidential decrees requiring all encryption technology in the country to be approved by FAPSI and empowering FAPSI to register and record all banking and securities transactions. In May 1995, *Kommersant Daily* reported FAPSI's planned acquisition of a large share of the firm that runs Russia's most extensive electronic mail net-

work, Relkom. These developments were ominous in themselves, but allegations that they might serve corrupt purposes appeared when it was learned that Viktor Barannikov, a former internal security chief whom Yeltsin had ousted for political disloyalty and alleged large-scale corruption in 1993, was part of the Starovoitov group.

## **To Reform?**

Russia's security and intelligence services have consistently been hostile toward attempts to bring them under civilian control, and few political leaders outside the Democratic Russia movement—whose co-leader Galina Starovoitova (no relation to the FAPSI chief) wrote a draft law on lustration—expressed any interest in taking them on. Taking control of the chekists was not part of Acting Prime Minister Egor Gaidar's agenda, and a second reformist political bloc was unlikely to act against the security services after it received substantial funding from a prominent bank affiliated with Filipp Bobkov, formerly KGB first deputy chairman. Russian activists and their Western colleagues who arranged workshops and conferences to discuss the issue were routinely harassed and denounced by the agencies as instruments of Western intelligence.

A series of ground-breaking conferences on "The KGB: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow," for example, organized by former prisoner of conscience Sergei Grigoriants and supported by the National Endowment for Democracy and the Soros Foundation, was repeatedly disrupted by state security, and security officers pressured guests and speakers not to attend the first event in February 1993. Grigoriants, a gulag survivor, received warnings that he was placing himself and his family in danger, warnings borne out in August 1994 when a professional team severely beat Grigoriants in his apartment, doing permanent damage to one eye, yet stealing none of his property. A fellow activist received similar treatment in St. Petersburg. Grigoriants received another warning in January 1995, after which his son Timofei was murdered in front of his apartment building. When Grigoriants sued the government for failing to investigate the case, he was promised the return of previously confiscated property if he would let the matter rest. He refused. His wife and daughter were subsequently given political asylum in France. The chekists then tried to discredit Grigoriants's foreign acquaintances. A top-ranking internal security general and the press bureau chief of the SVR singled out this author,

who was working with Grigoriants, and accused him of working for the CIA. More recently, the Federal Security Service sent a letter to Freedom House, warning it that its plan to hold a conference to discuss the lack of (or need for) civil controls in Russia was considered meddling in the nation's internal affairs.

Although the civilians in Yeltsin's inner circle were constantly aware of the problem, they did little to resolve it. On one of the few occasions when they tried to take action, in December 1993, they drafted a presidential decree affirming that the internal security organs, then called the Ministry of Security (*Ministerstvo bezopasnosti*, MB) were direct descendants of the Cheka and were "unreformable." The decree, tracing the lineage of the MB and echoing language used just days before by *Izvestiia* columnist Evgeniia Albats, began:

The system of bodies of the Cheka-OGPU-NKVD-MGB-KGB-MB has proved unreformable. The attempts at reorganization that have been made in recent years were basically superficial and cosmetic. To the present moment, the Russian Ministry of Security lacks a strategic concept of ensuring Russia's security. Counterintelligence work has deteriorated. The system of political investigation has been mothballed and could easily be recreated.

Against the background of the democratic and constitutional transformations taking place in Russia, the existing system of ensuring Russia's security has outlived its usefulness. It is ineffective, burdensome for the state budget, and a factor restraining the implementation of political and economic reforms.

The rhetoric, though a remarkable presidential acknowledgment of the truth, was only rhetoric. Yeltsin signed the decree, but his only action was to change the MB's name to the FSK (Federal Agency on Counterintelligence Services) and to carry out a few bureaucratic adjustments. No heads rolled. Indeed, its leadership, headed by Fifth Chief Directorate veteran Nikolai Golushko, remained unchanged for the moment. Later, the FSK was renamed the FSB, but the chekists had won. By 1995, the president's own staff had to leave their offices to have confidential discussions. Yeltsin's chief of staff, Sergei Filatov, told visiting Americans that the FSB had all the offices bugged.

## Implications for the West

The KGB legacy commands serious Western attention. Since the Soviet collapse of 1991, the West—particularly

## FOR FURTHER READING

For background on the Russian state security and intelligence services, see John J. Dziak, *Chekisty: A History of the KGB* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Press, 1988). On the KGB and its successors during perestroika and after the Soviet collapse, see Evgeniia Albats, *A State Within a State: The KGB and Its Hold on Russia, Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1994); and J. Michael Waller, *Secret Empire: The KGB in Russia Today* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994). Also see "Transcripts of the Supreme Soviet Commission to Investigate the Causes and Circumstances of the August 1991 Putsch," serialized in *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, beginning with vol. 3, no. 4 (Fall 1995).

the United States—has done nothing to discourage the chekist resurgence. Large-scale economic assistance has poured in—with no strings that would have helped reformers break up the old KGB's repressive internal structures or its well-established espionage networks abroad.

U.S. technical assistance programs have failed—and in some cases refused—to help Russians address the chekist legacy internally. A proposal to help the mayor of Nizhnii Novgorod develop ideas and methods of regional and local civil controls passed the review committees at the United States Information Agency, but was flatly rejected by political appointees in the Clinton administration. The Agency for International Development refused to support repeated requests for similar programs, but gave a grant to the KGB's interregional lawyers' association even after AID had been notified as to the nature of the group.

To make matters worse, the U.S. Secret Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other agencies have offered the chekists a coveted legitimacy by offering them training and intelligence sharing. The Internal Revenue Service is teaching the corrupt and abusive Tax Police how to collect from citizens who refuse to pay Russia's outrageously high taxes, although a substantial number of Tax Police officers were formerly with the KGB Fifth Chief Directorate. The FBI even encouraged Russia to adopt a version of the U.S. Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act that would allow the chekists to file criminal charges against individuals who have done nothing demonstrably dishonest but who merely belong to a corrupt organization. While RICO is a vital tool in fighting organized crime in the United States, there was no consideration of the political and legal culture within which a RICO statute—already abused in the United States—would be implemented in Russia. In this case, the FBI was liter-



ally, if unwittingly, providing the former KGB with Western political and legal cover for repressive activity.

Aggressive Russian espionage against the West remains a major problem. Unlike the United States, which failed to expel a single Russian spy in the wake of the arrest of CIA turncoat Aldrich Ames in early 1994, the Europeans did not close their eyes to Moscow's spying abroad. Since 1992, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom have arrested or expelled Russian espionage agents on their territory. Bonn issues annual reports on Russian spying, revealing that Moscow has re-activated old East German Stasi networks in a new economic and industrial espionage offensive. The West is still not attuned to the new approaches the SVR has developed to assess, recruit, and handle Western businessmen, journalists, and others on former Soviet territory.

Military modernization and proliferation remain serious problems. Russia relies on espionage to maintain and upgrade its largest source of hard-currency-generating manufactured products: weapons. Its main clients are states like the People's Republic of China, Iran, and Iraq, the latter being the beneficiary of Moscow's furious efforts to lift United Nations sanctions. Soviet/Russian military hardware lost much of its appeal after its failure in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, but through improved relations and espionage, the military-industrial complex stands to benefit substantially.

Emerging political, economic, and business structures are still being subverted by the former KGB. Democracy, the rule of law, and the post-socialist

economy being built with Western aid have been corrupted from the outset by a powerfully organized institution, the core purpose of which has been to abuse political, legal, and economic power. Politicians and business leaders who have no access to their KGB files remain potentially compromised by them. The still-active informant networks, the arbitrariness of chekist authority, and other signs of the old status quo have kept the past very much alive for the man in the street. The fact that the president's own aides cannot speak to one another in confidence for fear of being bugged shows that the problem extends all the way to the top and lies beyond the control of civilian leaders.

The former KGB is just that—the former KGB. It is not a set of new security, intelligence, and protective services designed to preserve freedom. The West should craft its policies with this in mind—looking beyond the personalities that foreign aid programs and diplomatic initiatives are supposed to “save” or “resist,” and into the psychic depths of a population and a group of political leaders who view the chekists as something normal.

### Notes

1. *Informatsionnyi biulleten KGB SSSR*, no. 2 (1990) cited by Alexander Rahr, “Kryuchkov, the KGB, and the 1991 Putsch,” *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 2, no. 31 (July 30, 1993): 16–23.

2. Evgeniia Albats, “Subjects of the KGB,” *Moscow News* (English-language edition), April 1, 1992. Kichikhin repeated this information in an interview with the author.

3. Victor Yasmann, “Security Services Reorganized: All Power to the Russian President?” *RFE/RL Research Report*, vol. 3, no. 6 (February 11, 1994): 7–14.

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