

II. CURRENT ISSUES

Wet Affairs

Part III¹

Russia's Assassination Pandemic

by Peter C. Oleson

Vladimir Putin has said that the demise of the Soviet Union was “one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th century.”² Since assuming power in 2000 he has undertaken a focused, revanchist campaign to restore what he believes should be Russia’s position in the world. Leading a nation that is economically stagnant with limited ability to increase its economic power, suffering from Western sanctions, he has come to believe in a zero-sum approach to international relations – for Russia to become strong, the West must be weakened. This underscores the approach he has undertaken in relations with perceived opponents, foreign countries, and the United States in particular.³

Putin has pursued a policy of silencing opponents at home and abroad, spreading chaos internationally,

and conducting a sub rosa conflict against the West across a broad front.

At home, after assuming the presidency in 2000, he quickly subjugated perceived opponents and critics. By 2004 the “freewheeling oligarchs of the 1990s were soon brought to heel.”⁴ *Financial Times* Moscow correspondent Catherine Belton, in her new book, states that using “...the ever-present threat of tax fraud charges was part of a process that was gradually turning Yeltsin-era oligarchs into loyal vassals...”⁵

Assassination was too. Today, the remaining oligarchs play to the Kremlin’s tune; none are independent actors; they are extensions of the state. There is no better example than Yevgeny Prigozhin’s network of companies. His Internet Research Agency (IRA) in St. Petersburg is best described as a troll farm spreading disinformation via social media. And his Wagner Group is a mercenary paramilitary company providing Russian fighters to the Assad regime in Syria and Khalifa Haftar’s Libyan National Army in Libya, and security forces throughout countries in Africa.

Even before the breakup of the Soviet Union, KGB leaders and senior members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, concerned about the direction of events, moved to preserve their positions as an organization.⁶ The KGB’s foreign intelligence elements⁷ created vast secret slush funds to ensure its power and ability to continue its operations that were not accountable to the Duma, hidden behind “byzantine layers of complexity.”⁸ Much of what the Kremlin was doing was exposed by Sergei Kolesnikov of Rossiya Bank in St. Petersburg (often referred to as “Putin’s Bank”), who defected to the US in 2010 with thumb drives full of data and tape recordings of conversations. His intelligence showed how funds were being siphoned off to, among other places, the British Virgin Islands (BVI) and Panama into Santal Trading, a company referred to as “the safe.”⁹ In time, these “black cash” funds totaled in the tens of billions of dollars. The Kremlin and the reorganized security services used its black cash funds for “active measures” overseas to hunt down Putin’s opponents and to “buy off

1. This is the third of a series of articles concerning Russia and its use of “active measures,” including assassination as an instrument of state power. See also Peter C. Oleson, “Stalin’s Disciple: Vladimir Putin and Russia’s Newest ‘Wet Affairs,’” *The Intelligencer: Journal of US Intelligence Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall 2016, pp 19-27 and Oleson, Peter C. “‘Wet Affairs’ Part II,” *The Intelligencer: Journal of US Intelligence Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1, Spring 2018, pp 7-16. Also available on-line at https://www.afio.com/publications/OLESON_on_Putin_from_AFIOINTEL_FALL2016_Vol22_no2.pdf and https://www.afio.com/publications/OLESON_Wet_Affairs_II_AFIO_INTELLIGENCE_SPRING_2018_Vol24_no1.pdf.

2. Lionel Barber and Henry Foy, “Vladimir Putin: liberalism has ‘outlived its purpose,’” *Financial Times*, Sep. 17, 2019.

3. “Ever since Lenin dispatched the first Soviet undercover agent across the Atlantic in 1921, Kremlin leaders have sought, with some success, to undermine the United States.” (Strobe Talbott and Jessica Brandt, “What Putin Is Up To,” *The Atlantic*, Mar. 2, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/03/putin-trump-russia-flynn-sessions-hack-kremlin/518412/>).

4. Catherine Belton, *Putin’s People: How the KGB Took Back Russia and Then Took on the West*, New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2020, p. 11.

5. Belton, p. 345-6.

6. Belton, see Chapter 4.

7. First Chief Directorate. Putin was a member of the foreign intelligence element of the KGB, which was reorganized as the SVR after the failed 1991 putsch against Gorbachev.

8. Belton, p. 341.

9. Belton, p. 315.

and corrupt officials... in Russia's neighboring states" and elsewhere.¹⁰

Assassinations

Washington Post reporter Jackson Diehl claimed "By some counts, more than a dozen people have been assassinated by Kremlin agents since 2004, while a number of others barely survived attacks."¹¹ His account is conservative. For dissidents and opponents of Putin, Covid-19 is not the only pandemic they face. [For specific cases see the Appendix, Russian-linked Assassinations and Attempts under Putin, at end of this article.]

The KGB's successor agency, the FSB, and the military GRU have carried out numerous assassinations, often using exotic poisons, such as Dioxin, Gelsemium, Cadmium, Polonium 210, and the nerve agents Sarin and Novichok. Other victims have been shot, supposedly committed "suicide," often by falling off balconies, or suffered "heart attacks." The secrecy surrounding investigations of suspicious deaths in Russia makes it often difficult to accurately determine the cause of death or the circumstances. Any death of a dissident, journalist, political opponent, or critic of Putin, or his closest cronies, needs to be viewed with skepticism.

Russian operatives have carried out numerous assassinations outside of Russia.¹² The UK and Ukraine have witnessed numerous murders of Russian exiles, dissident Chechens, and others. In 2019, Ukraine said it had captured a Russian military intelligence (GRU) hit squad. "Those detained were involved in the attempted murder of an employee of the Ukrainian defense ministry's intelligence service...in Kiev in April," said a spokesperson, adding the group had planted a bomb beneath the man's car which had gone off prematurely, badly injuring one of the accused.¹³

Putin went after several exiled oligarchs and their enablers as well as defectors from the Russian intelligence services in the UK. The list is long, including Alexander Litvinenko, Alexander Perepilichnyy, Boris Berezovsky, Badri Patarkatsishvili, Yuri Golubev, Nikolai Gluskov, and Sergei Skripal. Regarding Skripal,

Gordon Corera of the BBC said "Putin was very upset at the arrest of ten illegals in 2010 [in the US by the FBI] and the resulting swap. He has built his regime on ending the humiliation of the 1990s and demonizing enemy spies and lionizing his own. The fact that Sergei Skripal was hunted down nearly eight years after the swap – and after technically being pardoned – suggests the anger has not gone away."¹⁴ [Putin] told the *Financial Times* that treason is not only the "gravest crime possible" but also the "most despicable crime that one can imagine." He repeated twice to the journalists: "Traitors must be punished."¹⁵ "With the Skripal operation, Putin appeared to have sent two bold messages: to the British and the West, that he saw no territorial limits to Russia's violent actions abroad; and to Russian dissidents and other critics, that they were not safe anywhere in the world."¹⁶

Chechens who oppose strongman Ramzan Kadyrov, a close Putin ally, have been shot with impunity in Istanbul, Dubai, France, and Moscow.¹⁷

Given past events and Putin's expressions of intent, there are several potential targets in the West for his assassination squads. One is Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a constant critic of Putin. Also, given Putin's "gravest possible crime" comment, any past defector from the Russian intelligence services is a possibility.¹⁸ Even former British SIS officer, Christopher Steele, after publication of the "Steele Dossier," reportedly went into hiding concerned about possible Russian retaliation.

The August 20, 2020 poisoning of Russian dissident Alexei Navalny on a flight from Tomsk to Moscow with a derivative of Novichok, the same substance used in the attempted assassination of former GRU officer Sergei Skripal in the UK in 2018, shows that Putin has few constraints when it comes to opponents and sends a message to others that they are not safe.¹⁹

10. Belton, p. 333. See review of Belton in *The Intelligencer*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Fall 2020, p. 103-109.

11. Jackson Diehl, "Putin is an expert at poisoning dissidents. Trump shouldn't just let it happen," *Washington Post*, Mar. 1, 2020.

12. In 2006, at Putin's urging, the Duma passed a law making it legal to carry out assassinations of "extremists" abroad. (Steven Eke, "Russia law on killing 'extremists' abroad," *BBC News*. Nov. 27, 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6188658.stm>).

13. Reuters. Apr. 22, 2019. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-russia/ukraine-says-it-captured-russian-military-intelligence-hit-squad-idUSKCN1RT195>.

14. Interview of Gordon Corera, Security correspondent at BBC News by Bill Harlow (1997-2004 chief spokesman for the DCI). March 17, 2020. https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column_article/author-gordon-corera-talks-about-the-russians-among-us.

15. Adam Taylor. "'Traitors Must be Punished': Vladimir Putin's stark warnings to Russians who defect to the West," *Washington Post*, Sept. 10, 2019.

16. Jim Sciutto. *The Shadow War*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2019.

17. Philip Oltermann and Shaun Walker. "Russia denies ordering assassination of Chechen exile in Berlin," *The Guardian*, 28 Aug 2019.

18. Editorial Board, "It's no wonder Putin thinks he can get away with poisoning his adversaries," *Washington Post*, Sep. 2, 2020.

19. Robyn Dixon and Loveday Morris, "Russian opposition leader Navalny poisoned with nerve agent similar to Novichok, Germany says," *Washington Post*, Sep. 2, 2020.

“Black Cash”

Black Cash are funds that have been siphoned off from Russian government contracts or from oligarchs by the SVR, Russia’s foreign intelligence service. The funds, much of which are laundered through tax havens, such as Cyprus, Panama, and Switzerland, are used for bribery, influence operations, and other “active measures,” including assassinations, around the world.

According to Belton, “black cash” payments have been made to:

- The National Front in France and its principal, Marine Le Pen, during France’s national election.
- France’s oil company, Total, which later called for the lifting of sanctions on Russia.
- The far-right Jobbik party in Hungary. Its leader, Béla Kovács, was later investigated for being a Russian agent.
- Viktor Orbán, Hungary’s president, who is also seen as pro-Putin, blocked the inquiry.
- The right-wing Lega Nord party and Five Star Movement in Italy.
- The left-wing Syriza party in Greece, which took power in 2015.
- Die Linke, a new leftist party established in 2007, in Germany.
- Austria’s right-wing Freedom Party. Russian interests bought Austria’s biggest newspaper, *Kronen Zeitung*.
- Bulgaria’s right-wing Ataka party.
- The election campaign of Miloš Zeman’s party in the Czech Republic. He was elected president in 2013.
- Gerhard Schroeder, former German chancellor, who was rewarded with a seat on the board of the Nord Stream company building a gas pipeline from Russia to Germany.

According to other sources, black cash is likely to have funded various active measures, including the anti-US group, The Base, in Russia; the Yellow Vest demonstrators in France; anti-EU elements in the UK prior to the Brexit vote; the 2014 Scottish independence referendum; the 2006 attempted coup d’état in Montenegro; and assorted cyber disinformation and influence activities aimed at the US, Germany, France, the UK, Moldova, Madagascar, and international organizations, such as the World Anti-Doping Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

Catherine Belton, Putin’s People; Editorial Board, *The Washington Post*, Oct. 6, 2020; US Senate, *Report on Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 US Election*. https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/report_volumes5.pdf; *Report on the Investigation Into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election*, 2 volumes, (Mueller Report), Department of Justice. <https://www.justice.gov/storage/report.pdf>; Report of the [UK] Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee, 2020; Simon Shuster, “How Russian voters fueled the rise of Germany’s Far-Right,” *Time*, Sep. 25, 2017; Martin Aroteguel, “Hunt for Russian Black Ops Specialist Rages from Spain to Bulgaria,” *Voice of America*, Feb. 27, 2020; *El País*, Nov. 21, 2019. https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/11/22/inenglish/1574408509_081088.html.

Assassination is part of the Russian intelligence heritage. It always has been and is seen as a very important role.²⁰

Active Measures

In line with Putin’s zero-sum philosophy, Russian “active measures” includes interfering with other countries by disseminating propaganda, spreading false news, conducting influence operations, interfering with democratic elections, funding Russia-friendly parties, corrupting officials, and other means. It also includes sub rosa hybrid warfare, such as the seizure of Crimea and support to separatist elements in Ukraine, Moldova, and Montenegro.

Since Putin came to power in 2000, Russia has used economic leverage to “force a change in policy” or undermine governments in at least 19 European countries, Laura Rosenberger, a former National Security Council official under Obama, told a House committee in May 2018.²¹

As the KGB funded terrorist groups during the Soviet period, Putin’s regime continues the tradition. The Imperial Legion is the armed wing of the Russian Imperial Movement. It has trained “volunteers,” who then joined Russian-backed separatists in the Donbass area of Ukraine.²² Better known, although not categorized as a terrorist group, is the Wagner Group, which is supporting Libyan rebel Khalifa Haftar since 2018. In the 2020 Battle for Tripoli, it was estimated that the Wagner Group provided between 800 and 1,200 mercenaries.²³ It provided aid to Syria’s Assad as early as 2013, two years before Russian forces entered the scene.²⁴ It also is active in Sudan and the Central African Republic where it is linked to the assassination of three Russian journalists.²⁵ The Wagner Group feeds off of the GRU’s Spetznaz (special operations) forces. In 2015, it set up a training base, opposite a compound occupied by the 10th GRU special forces brigade. Recruits to Wagner poured in: the money was good and the recruits, paid \$1,000 a week during

20. Author’s notes from the lecture by historian Christopher Andrew, Institute of World Politics, Nov. 13, 2018.

21. Vera Bergengruen/Ashland, KY. and Alana Abramson/Washington, “A Kremlin-Linked Firm Invested Millions in Kentucky. Were They After More Than Money?” *Time*, Aug 13, 2019.

22. Ian Allen. “European neo-Nazis attended paramilitary training camps in Russia, article claims,” *IntelNews.org*, Jun. 10, 2020. The Russian Imperial Movement has been designated a global terrorist group.

23. “UN Monitors Say Mercenaries From Russia’s Wagner Group Fighting in Libya.” *RFE/RL*, May 7, 2020.

24. “Putin’s private army is in a war with no roles,” *The Times* (UK), Nov. 15, 2019.

25. Ian Allen. “New report details growing presence of Russian private security firms in Africa,” *IntelNews.org*, Aug. 14, 2019.

training, were assured their families would get as much as \$60,000 if they died in combat.²⁶

Many right-wing, extremist, and paramilitary groups in the West receive both “financial and moral support from Moscow, which backs ‘dark money’ operations that promote narrow oligarchic interests... and far-right political parties in Europe with the hope of weakening democratic governments and cultivating future allies.” This includes groups in Italy, France, US, and elsewhere.²⁷ [See “Black Cash” sidebar on previous page.]

One example is “The Base,” formed in the summer of 2018, which seeks to overthrow the United States government and establish “a white ethno-state,” according to the FBI. Led by Rinaldo Nazzaro, from New Jersey, The Base is believed to have recruited dozens of members who have been given paramilitary and counter-surveillance training.²⁸

Disinformation

The Kremlin’s extensive disinformation campaign is intended to spread discontent, chaos, deceive audiences, and undermine the legitimate institutions in Western countries. The Kremlin’s audience for open disinformation is surprisingly large. The YouTube videos of RT (formerly Russia Today), Russia’s global television network, average one million views per day, “the highest among news outlets.” Since the founding of the Russian network in 2005, its videos have received more than four billion views.²⁹ Moscow also controls publishing entities outside of Russia. Measured in terms of views and subscribers, The Soul Publishing had the third-largest reach of any group of entertainment channels on YouTube in November 2019 – outranked only by Disney and WarnerMedia. It is run by Russian nationals, based in and managed from Cyprus, with U.S. operations in New York. In 2018, it purchased Facebook advertisements targeting U.S. citizens on political issues – and made those purchases in rubles. It also posts history videos with a strong political tinge. Many are overtly pro-Russian.³⁰

The troll farm, Internet Research Agency (IRA), founded in 2013, is a major disinformation purveyor, run by Putin’s ally, Yevgeny Prigozhin. It was active on

Solzhenitsyn Poisoning

Only revealed many years later in the memoirs of KGB Lt. Col. Boris Ivanov was that Yuri Andropov, then head of the KGB in 1971, directed an attempted poisoning with ricin of Russian dissident and writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

—Jackson Diehl, “Putin is an expert at poisoning dissidents,” *Washington Post*, Mar. 1, 2020.
Wendy Sloan, *AP*, Apr. 20, 1992.

social media outlets during the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the 2018 mid-term elections. While the IRA is well known, Russia also uses other channels for disinformation that are not so obvious.³¹

Senate Intelligence Committee member, Senator Angus King, has said: “The Soviet Union used disinformation for 70 years. This is nothing new. Vladimir Putin is a former KGB agent. He is trained in deception. This is his stock and trade and he is doing it well.”³²

Influence Operations

Former Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, defined “malign” influence activities as covert, coercive, or corrupting.³³ The Kremlin’s influence operations are malign. Both the Mueller Report and the Senate Intelligence Committee Report detailed Russian influence operations, using disinformation via cyber hacking, leaks, social media, trolls, and other means.³⁴

In the UK, the Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee’s investigation reported that Moscow built up a network of friendly British diplomats, lawyers, parliamentarians, and other influencers from across the political spectrum. The inquiry

26. “Putin’s private army...” *The Times* (UK), Nov. 15, 2019.

27. Alexander Cooley and Daniel H. Nexon. “How Hegemony Ends: The Unraveling of American Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2020.

28. Ian Allen. “Leader of American far-right paramilitary group is based in Russia.” *IntelNews.org*, Jan. 27, 2020.

29. William Broad, “Putin’s Long War Against American Science,” *New York Times*, Apr. 13, 2020.

30. Lisa Kaplan. “The biggest social media operation you’ve never heard of is run out of Cyprus by Russians,” *Lawfare*, Dec. 18, 2019.

31. Catalin Cimpanu. “Super Secretive Russian Disinfo operations discovered dating back to 2014,” *ZDNet*, Jun. 16, 2020. <https://www.zdnet.com/article/super-secretive-russian-disinfo-operation-discovered-dating-back-to-2014/>.

32. Julian E. Barnes and Matthew Rosenberg, “Charges of Ukrainian Meddling: A Russian Operation, US Intelligence Says,” *New York Times*, Nov. 22, 2019.

33. Heather A. Conley, Cyrus Newlin, and Tim Kostelancik. “Countering Russian & Chinese Influence Operations,” <https://www.csis.org/features/countering-russian-chinese-influence-activities>.

34. *Report on the Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election*, Vol. I, Special Counsel Robert S. Mueller, III, Washington, DC: Department of Justice, Mar. 2019 and *Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, US Senate, on Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 US Election*, 5 volumes, 116th Congress, Aug. 2020.

Fiona Hill Poisoning

Russian expert Fiona Hill, in 2003 a Brookings scholar, spent time with Chechen rebels exploring ways for reconciliation with Moscow. “Hill became violently ill after taking a sip of a drink at her hotel bar. An analysis of her blood showed that her liver enzymes were elevated, and she concluded that she had been poisoned.”

Hill later was senior director for European and Russian Affairs on the National Security Council in the White House.

—Adam Entous. “What Fiona Hill Learned in the White House,” *The New Yorker*, June 22, 2020. On-line. Published in the *The New Yorker* on June 29, 2020 as “A Devil’s Bargain.”

raised politically awkward questions about the validity of the 2016 Brexit referendum and whether alleged Russian connections to the ruling Conservative party and black cash contributions influenced the vote.³⁵ The report also noted Russian interference in the Scottish independence referendum in 2014. The report stated that Russian agents were targeting staff support positions in the House of Commons, acquiring British citizenship to funnel cash to political parties, and employing public relations firms to sanitize reputations. The ISC reported there are a lot of Russians with very close links to Putin who are well integrated into the UK business and social scene, and accepted because of their wealth. This level of integration – in ‘Londongrad’³⁶ in particular – it is widely recognized that Russian intelligence and business are completely intertwined.³⁷

Corruption

The link between corruption and influence operations is a tight one. Putin’s Russia has transformed corruption into an instrument of national strategy, weaponizing it as an important form of political warfare. As the Soviet Union began to disintegrate in the 1990s, prosperous countries such as Canada, the UK,

and the US were seen as preferred shelters for the billions of dollars laundered through anonymized companies, real estate investments, and other schemes.³⁸ The Kremlin developed a pattern of malign economic influence in Europe through the cultivation of “an opaque network of patronage across the region that it uses to influence and direct decision-making.” The aim is to weaken and destroy democratic systems from within.³⁹ Other countries targeted include France, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary, Malta, Panama, and Madagascar. In the 2018 Malagasy presidential campaign a “systematic and coordinated operation” led by a group of Russian businessmen with ties to the Kremlin helped Andry Rajoelina get elected. Since his election, Rajoelina has promoted closer ties with Russia.⁴⁰

The UK welcomed Russian money, and few questions – if any – were asked about the provenance of this considerable wealth.⁴¹ The ISC report called it the London ‘laundromat.’ The money extended patronage and built influence across the British establishment – PR firms, charities, political interests, academia and cultural institutions were all willing beneficiaries of Russian largesse. Thousands of Russian-linked shell companies were used to launder black cash linked to organized crime. The United Kingdom’s anonymous property registry allowed Russian oligarchs to swamp London and its financial sector, where they stashed dirty money.⁴² Moscow was emboldened by the British governments’ failures to take a tougher stance after a former Russian spy, Alexander Litvinenko, was fatally poisoned in 2006.⁴³

In the U.S., Putin-friendly oligarch Oleg Deripaska,⁴⁴ head of Rusal, the second largest aluminum producer in the world, proposed investing millions into a new aluminum plant in Ashland, Kentucky. He had been sanctioned by the U.S.⁴⁵ Mitch McConnell,

38. Philip Zelikow, Eric Edelman, Kristofer Harrison, and Celeste Ward. “The Rise of Strategic Corruption: How States Weaponize Graft,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2020.

39. Heather A. Conley, Donatienne Ruy, Ruslan Stefanov, and Martin Vladimirov. “The Enablers,” *The Kremlin Playbook 2*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Mar. 27, 2019. CSIS conducted case studies for Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Montenegro, the Netherlands, and Romania.

40. Joseph Fitsanakis, *IntelNews.org*, April 8, 2019.

41. ISC, paragraph 49.

42. Philip Zelikow, et. al., *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2020.

43. Nina dos Santos, “UK inquiry was warned of Russian infiltration, leaked testimony shows,” *CNN*, Nov. 11, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2019/11/08/uk/uk-russia-inquiry-intelligence-security-committee-gbr-intl/index.html>.

44. Deripaska told Catherine Belton in an interview “I don’t separate myself from the state. I have no other interests.” (Belton, p. 362, citing “I don’t need to defend myself: An old dispute returns to haunt Rusal’s Deripaska,” *Financial Times*, July 23, 2007.)

45. Deripaska was sanctioned by the Department of the Treasury in

35. Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) of Parliament, *Russia*, HC632, 21 July 2020.

36. “Londongrad” is the term used in the ISC report, paragraph 50.

37. ISC, paragraph 51.

the Senate majority leader, helped thwart a bipartisan push to keep the Russian sanctions in place. Deripaska enlisted U.S. lobbyists to support his interests. Among them was GOP political operator Paul Manafort, who offered a lobbying strategy that he said would benefit “the Putin Government...”⁴⁶

Since [the Cold War], Russian intelligence has interfered in many foreign elections, not to advance an ideology but to promote divisive and authoritarian-minded candidates, sow chaos and confusion, and delegitimize the democratic model.⁴⁷ Targeted countries include, inter alia, Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, Montenegro, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, France, UK, Madagascar, and the US.⁴⁸

Cyberattacks

The employment of hard-to-attribute cyberattacks against adversaries has become a mainstay of Russian aggressive malign activities. They support disinformation operations, influence operations, corruption, sabotage and other active measures. The Center for Strategic and International Studies maintains an extensive listing of “Significant Cyber Incidents.”⁴⁹ These include denial of service attacks, hacking,⁵⁰ covert surveillance and persecution of dissidents, implantation of malware, and destruction of digital systems. One of the most destructive Russian cyberattacks was the 2017 NotPetya malware that spread worldwide, infected millions of computers, and caused havoc for businesses and governments.⁵¹

April 2018 which stated he “ha[d] been accused of threatening the lives of business rivals, illegally wiretapping a government official, and taking part in extortion and racketeering,” Department of the Treasury Press Release, “Treasury Designates Russian Oligarchs, Officials, and Entities in Response to Worldwide Malign Activity,” Apr. 6, 2018.

46. Bergengruen and Abramson, *Time*, Aug. 13, 2019. A Time investigation found that Rusal used every political and economic tool at its disposal to shed sanctions, prevent them from being re-imposed and establish a foothold in US politics.

47. David Shimer, “When the CIA Interferes in Foreign Election,” *Foreign Affairs*, June 21, 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-21/cia-interferes-foreign-elections>.

48. A “Yale-educated historian now earning his doctorate at Oxford as a Marshall Scholar, [David] Shimer’s 384-page book chronicles a century of Russian election interference operations going back to 1919...” and in the US including in 1976 Ronald Reagan’s primary vs Gerald Ford, opposing Senator “Scoop” Jackson in 1976, and Adlai Stevenson and Hubert Humphrey, who rejected Russian overtures to help. (David Shimer, *Rigged: America, Russia, and One Hundred Years of Covert Electoral Interference*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2020. Cited by James Hohmann with Mariana Alfaro, “Biden puts Putin ‘on notice’ that Russia will face consequences for election interference,” *The Daily 202*, *Washington Post*, July 21, 2020.)

49. <https://www.csis.org/programs/technology-policy-program/significant-cyber-incidents>.

50. The Parliamentary ISC report noted the link between hacking and leaking destructive or disparaging information.

51. The NotPetya cyberattack is briefly described in Robert M. Clark and Peter C. Oleson, “Cyber Intelligence,” *The Intelligencer*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Winter 2018-19. The article also includes a listing of significant

“In 2019, Russian cyber operations were revealed that have been going on undiscovered for years, and there are likely to be more...”⁵²

Sabotage

The employment of cyberattacks for physical sabotage has been used against Russia’s adversaries. Ukraine has been a primary target since the seizure of Crimea and “rebellion” in the Luhansk and Donbass regions adjacent to Russia. Probably the most significant use of cyber malware for sabotage occurred in December 2015 when a Russian cyberattack disabled the Ukrainian power grid. Subsequent analysis determined that the intent of the malware (which failed) was to cause physical destruction of the power grid when it was turned back on. It was seen as a test of cyberwarfare tactics.⁵³

Questions remain concerning the April 2010 crash of the Polish presidential plane at Smolensk, Russia, which killed many of the leaders of Poland’s anti-Russian government, when they were traveling to a commemoration of the 1940 Katyn massacre by Stalin’s NKVD of an estimated 22,000 Polish military officers and intelligentsia.⁵⁴ Some maintain that it was a mass assassination of the leaders of a hostile Polish government.

Allegations of Russia offering bounties for American soldiers in Afghanistan have been based on prisoner interrogations and analysis of cash flow from a GRU-associated bank account to a Taliban account.⁵⁵ The allegations point to payments to criminal elements, who are commissioned to carry out attacks, via the hawala financial system.⁵⁶

Russia’s GRU (military intelligence) has established dedicated units to carry out its hybrid warfare active measures. GRU Units 26165, 29155, and 74455 have been linked to the seizure of Crimea, the desta-

cyberattacks by many actors through 2018.

52. Dev Kundaliya, “Estonian foreign intelligence warns of growing cyber threats from Russia,” *Computing*, 18 Feb 2020. <https://www.computing.co.uk/news/4010933/estonian-foreign-intelligence-warns-growing-cyber-threats-russia>.

53. Andy Greenberg, “The Untold Story of Notpetya, The Most Devastating Cyberattack in History,” *Security, Wired*, Aug. 22, 2018, and “New Clues Show How Russia’s Grid Hackers Aimed for Physical Destruction,” *Wired*, Aug. 12, 2019.

54. Valeria Gertz, *Crash or Crime? Investigations into the Polish Presidential Plane Crash of 2010*. Guarana Inc., 2020. A Polish-Canadian reporter who reported on the plane crash and its aftermath. See also Gene Poteat, “Evidence: Tragic Polish Flight Was No Accident,” *Charleston Mercury*, Jun. 1, 2010.

55. Charlie Savage, Mujib Mashal, Rukmini Callimachi, Eric Schmitt and Adam Goldman, “Suspicious of Russian Bounties Were Bolstered by Data on Financial Transfers,” *New York Times*, June 30, 2020.

56. The hawala system utilizes an ancient informal network of money brokers, based on trust, who work parallel to more formal banking systems.

bilization campaign in Moldova, the failed coup d'état in Montenegro, the hacking of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) in Switzerland, interference in the Catalan referendum in Spain, the attempted assassinations of Emilian Gebrev in Bulgaria in 2015 and of Sergei Skripal in the UK in 2018, and the hacking of the Democratic National Committee and Hillary Clinton's campaign in 2016.⁵⁷

Conclusions

On January 27, 2018, Putin became the longest-serving leader of Russia since Joseph Stalin. In an interview with the *Financial Times*, asked which world leader he admired most, Putin answered "Peter the Great." Putin has, in fact, styled himself as a tsar as much as a Soviet general secretary over the course of his two decades in public life.⁵⁸ A Duma bill passed in March 2020 will enable Putin to remain in power until 2036, longer than Stalin.⁵⁹ Putin has certainly given up

any aspiration of rebuilding or normalizing relations with the West, according to Robert Dannenberg, a former senior CIA official.⁶⁰

While Russia and many of its officials and Putin-associated oligarchs have been sanctioned by the U.S. and Western European countries, Putin has suffered little pain for the most sinister of his international operations: the pandemic of murders of defecting spies and other exiled opponents.⁶¹ Putin has overseen a state version of убийство включено – Murder, Incorporated.

Fifty years from now historians will look back and conclude the Cold War did not end with the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union. It just took a breather – that lasted almost a decade. By 1999, it returned with Vladimir Putin's accession as Russian prime minister and then president.

Peter C. Oleson is the senior editor of *The Intelligence*.

This article has been reviewed and approved for publication by CIA's Prepublication Classification Review Board

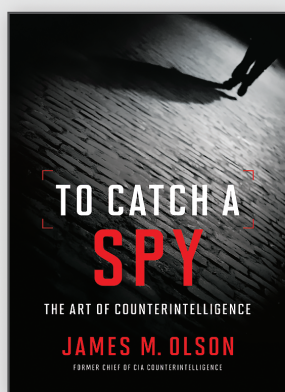
57. Michael Schwartz. "Top Secret Russian Unit Seeks to Destabilize Europe, Security Officials Say," *New York Times*, Oct. 8, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/08/world/europe/unit-29155-russia-gru.html>. See also <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2018/11/22/second-gru-officer-indicted-montenegro-coup-unmasked/>; <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2017/03/25/balkan-gambit-part-2-montenegro-zugzwang/>; <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2019/07/06/gru-globetrotters-2-the-spies-who-loved-switzerland/>; https://elpais.com/elpais/2019/11/22/inenglish/1574408509_081088.html; and <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2019/11/23/the-dreadful-eight-grus-unit-29155-and-the-2015-poisoning-of-emilian-gebrev/>.
58. Susan B. Glasser. "Putin the Great: Russia's Imperial Imposter," *Foreign Affairs*, September-October 2019.
59. If Putin remains in the Kremlin until 2036 he will be in power the

longest since Mikhail Romanov (1613-45), 32 years and 5 months. The longest serving ruler in Russian history was Ivan the Terrible (1533-84) at 50 years 3 month.

60. Robert Dannenberg, "A Single Solution for a Rogue Russia," *The Cyber Brief*, Dec. 18, 2019. https://www.thecyberbrief.com/column/opinion/a-single-solution-for-a-rogue-russia?mc_cid=5f503cf4a0&mc_eid=e593280728.

61. Jackson Diehl, "Putin is an expert at poisoning dissidents. Trump shouldn't just let it happen," *Washington Post*, Mar. 1, 2020.

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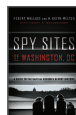
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APPENDIX: RUSSIAN-LINKED ASSASSINATIONS AND ATTEMPTS UNDER PUTIN¹

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|--|---|---|
| Threat of Assassination Marina Salye St. Petersburg 1991 – 2000 | A reformer and political opponent of St. Petersburg Mayor Sobchak, who relentlessly investigated corruption regarding export quotas under Putin's control that he awarded to front companies, which were part of the KGB's slush funds scheme. Blocked by Sobchak from investigating further, she later published a report "V. Putin – The President of a Corrupt Oligarchy." Under threat of possible assassination, Salye self-exiled to a remote area near the Finnish border. | Catherine Belton, <i>Putin's People: How the KGB Took Back Russia and Then Took on the West</i> . New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020, p. 87-92, 94-5. |
| Assassinations ??? Sons of Ryszard Kuklinski Florida 1993 – 1994 | Polish General Staff colonel and prolific CIA spy (1972-1981) exfiltrated with family out of Warsaw and resettled in Florida. Sentenced to death in absentia. Within months both sons died mysteriously – one while boating (Dec. 1993), the other in a hit and run (Aug. 1994). The car was found torched. Neither case was ever resolved. | "The Dangerous Business of Exfiltrating Spies – Part Two." <i>The Cipher Brief</i> , Sep. 18, 2019. A conversation with Joseph Augustyn, chief of CIA's Defector Operations Center. |
| Assassinated Mikhail Manevich St. Petersburg Aug. 18, 1997 | Chief of St. Petersburg city property department, he tried to regain control of the port for the city government that had been taken over by criminals in league with Putin's position as deputy mayor. Shot dead by a sniper while driving to work. Yury Shutov was blamed (see below). Murder never solved. | Catherine Belton, <i>Putin's People</i> , p.104. |
| Assassinated Galina Starovoitova St. Petersburg Nov. 20, 1998 | A believer in democracy and crusader against corruption, Starovoitova, a Duma member, was gunned down in her apartment building's stairwell. The investigation determined the murder was organized by a former GRU hitman. She had pushed legislation for lustration (the purging of officials) and opposed the power of the KGB. | Catherine Belton, <i>Putin's People</i> , p.113. Helen Womack, "Obituaries: Galina Starovoitova," <i>Independent</i> , 23 Nov. 1998. |
| Assassinated Yury Shutov St. Petersburg 1998 | Fired former Sobchak aide and enemy of Putin was arrested in 1998 on trumped up murder charges of killing Galina Starovoitova. Also accused of murdering Mikhail Manevich. Shutov died on Dec. 12, 2014 in the White Swan maximal security prison. "The many secrets he'd dug up on Putin as deputy mayor disappeared with him forever." | Catherine Belton, <i>Putin's People</i> , p. 519, footnote 42. |
| Assassinated Anatoly Sobchak St. Petersburg Feb. 19, 2000 | Former mayor of St. Petersburg and Putin's boss. Had left Russia but returned and wrote article critical of KGB in St. Petersburg. Reported "heart attack" but probably poisoned by his KGB-associated security guard. Investigation closed without official finding. | Catherine Belton, <i>Putin's People</i> , p. 104, 170, 171-3. |
| Multiple Assassinations Yamadaye Brothers Moscow & Dubai 2003, Sep. 2008, & Mar. 2009 | Former Duma member and an enemy of Chechnya's pro-Putin president, Ramzan Kadyrov, Ruslan Yamadaye was gunned down outside the British embassy in Sep. 2008. His brother, Sulim, a Chechen commander in the first Chechen War also opposed to Kadyrov, was shot dead in Dubai in Mar. 2009. Previously, Dzhabrail was assassinated by a bomb in 2003. | Luke Harding and Miriam Elder, "Attack on Russian banker in London leaves trail of clues back to Moscow," <i>The Guardian</i> , 30 Mar. 2012. |

1. This Appendix is an expanded version and supplants Table 1, Significant Murders or Attacks Related to Putin's Regime, in Oleson, "'Wet Affairs,' Part II." This Appendix is by no means comprehensive. Various sources list many others who may have died unnaturally, but details are scarce and the reliability of reports uncertain. It is challenging from open sources to determine with high confidence the cause of death in some cases, related circumstances, or motives. Given the secrecy of Russian authorities in most investigations, reporting of the cause of death is unreliable and inevitably slanted to preclude criticism of the regime and, therefore, cannot be taken at face value. While readers might question the inclusion of some of the entries in this Appendix and might wonder whether a listed "heart attack" was natural or induced, the sheer number of suspicious deaths of opponents of the Putin regime has to give pause and leads to the conclusion that "wet affairs" – assassinations – have become a much-used instrument of the Russian state.

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|---|--|---|
| Assassination ??? Yuri Shchekochikhin Moscow Jun.-Jul., 2003 | Deputy editor of the independent Moscow Novaya Gazeta, hospitalized due to an “acute allergic reaction.” Believed actually poisoned to prevent him from further uncovering the truth about a high-level corruption case involving officials from the Federal Security Services (FSB) and the Prosecutor General’s Office. | Committee to Protect Journalists, https://cpj.org/data/people/yuri-shchekochikhin/ . |
| Potential Assassination Target Mikhail Khodorkovsky Moscow Oct. 2003 | The wealthiest and most powerful of oligarchs under Yeltsin, accused of tax fraud. Imprisoned for 10 years. Moved to the UK after release in 2013. Remains a major critic of Putin. | Catherine Belton, <i>Putin’s People</i> , p. 220, 224, 303, 305, 310, 311, 313, 357, 495-6. |
| Assassination ??? Stephan Moss UK Late 2003 | British lawyer, 46, linked to funneling Russian money into the UK. Associate of Stephen Curtis and Scot Young. First of 9 in the UK associated with Boris Berezovsky and Scott Young to die mysteriously. | BuzzFeed News, Part 2. “From Russia with Blood.” ² |
| Assassination ??? Stephen Curtis Bournemouth, UK Mar. 3, 2004 | Private helicopter accident. Crash deemed “suspicious.” British tax lawyer linked to funneling money out of Russia. Worked for imprisoned Yukos Oil oligarch, Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Associate of Stephen Moss, Yuri Golubev, Paul Castle and Robbie Curtis. One of 9 in UK associated with Scot Young to die mysteriously. | BuzzFeed News, Part 2. “From Russia with Blood.” Nicola Harley and Victoria Ward, “Man who introduced Scot Young and ‘Ring of Death’ to Russians killed in helicopter crash,” <i>The Telegraph</i> , 12 Dec. 2014. |
| Assassinated Andrei Kozlov Moscow Sep. 14, 2006 | A Russian central banker who tried to stop the siphoning of funds from various banks, some of which he closed. He was investigating Diskont Bank. Shot dead with his three security guards in a sports arena parking lot. | https://www.theguardian.com/business/2006/sep/14/russia.internationalnews . Catherine Belton, <i>Putin’s People</i> , p. 410, 472. |
| Assassinated Igor Ponomarev London Oct. 30, 2006 | Supposed “heart attack.” Probably poisoned. Body whisked back to Russia; no postmortem done in the UK. Was Russian permanent representative to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London. Age 41. Scheduled to meet with Italian parliamentary investigator of KGB links to Italian politicians. | BuzzFeed News, Part 3. “The Man Who Knew Too Much.” ³ Wikipedia, The Mitrokhin Commission, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitrokhin_Commission |
| Assassinated Alexander Litvinenko London Died Nov. 23, 2006 | KGB defector to the UK in 2000. Worked for oligarch Boris Berezovsky. Supported Italian Mitrokhin Commission investigation of Russian organized crime and KGB activities. In an article had accused Putin of being a pedophile. Given radioactive polonium 210, produced at Russia’s Mayak facility, by two Russian KGB visitors, Andrei Lugovoy and Dmitri Kovtun, on Nov. 1, 2006 in his tea at the Millennium Hotel. One of 9 in the UK associated with Boris Berezovsky to die unnaturally. ⁴ | Amy Knight, <i>Orders to Kill</i> , St. Martin’s Press, September 2017. BuzzFeed News, Part 2. “From Russia with Blood.” |
| Assassinated Yury Gladkov St. Petersburg Oct. 6, 2007 | A St. Petersburg council deputy, who worked with Salye investigating corruption under Sobchak and Putin, likely fatally poisoned. | Catherine Belton, <i>Putin’s People</i> , p. 519, footnote 42. |

2. BuzzFeed News, Part 2, “From Russia with Blood,” is at https://www.buzzfeed.com/heidiBlake/from-russia-with-blood-14-suspected-hits-on-british-soil?utm_term=.ld7X1gLVz#.dmWPmIOGj.

3. BuzzFeed News, Part 3, “The Man Who Knew Too Much,” is at https://www.buzzfeed.com/janebradley/scientist-who-helped-connect-litvinenko-murder-to-the?utm_term=.qrl84nNm7#.uyzeKMLE5.

4. See also Peter C. Oleson, “Stalin’s Disciple: Vladimir Putin and Russia’s Newest ‘Wet Affairs,’” in *The Intelligencer*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Fall 2016, p 23.

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|--|---|---|
| Assassination Attempt Igor Gaidar Ireland Nov. 24, 2006 | Free market economic reformer and former Russian prime minister under Boris Yeltsin. Publicly criticized the murder of Galina Starovoitova, a Duma member and leader of the Democratic Russia party, in St. Petersburg on 20 Nov. 1998. Possibly poisoned, but lived. | Amy Knight, <i>Orders to Kill</i> , p. 57. Obituaries: Yegor Gaidar, <i>The Telegraph</i> , 16 Dec. 2009. |
| Assassinated Yuri Golubev London Jan. 7, 2007 | Former Soviet trade official. Helped build up Yukos Oil with oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky, and fought Kremlin efforts to seize the company. Worked with Stephen Curtis. Supposed “heart attack” shortly after flying in from Moscow. | BuzzFeed News, Part 2. “From Russia with Blood.” Obituaries: Yuri Golubev, <i>Independent</i> , 12 Jan. 2007. |
| Assassination ??? Daniel McGrory Prince Georges County, MD Feb. 20, 2007 | Found dead at home, age 54, of apparent “heart attack.” Senior correspondent for the Times of London. His death occurred five days before a scheduled Dateline NBC broadcast in which he was involved linking the Kremlin to Alexander Litvinenko’s assassination in London. | Eric Rich. “Analyst Robbed During Shooting,” <i>Washington Post</i> , Mar. 5, 2007. BuzzFeed News, Part 3. “The Man Who Knew Too Much.” |
| Assassination Attempt Paul Joyal Adelphi, MD Mar. 1, 2007 | Security consultant, commentator on Russian affairs, former staffer for Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Shooting took place four days after Dateline NBC broadcast in which Joyal said “A message has been communicated to anyone who wants to speak out against the Kremlin – if you do, no matter who you are, where you are, we will find you and we will silence you – in the most horrible way possible.” | Eric Rich. “Analyst Robbed During Shooting,” <i>Washington Post</i> , Mar. 5, 2007. |
| Assassination ??? Ivan Safronov (father) Moscow Mar. 2, 2007 | Russian journalist died after “falling” from his fifth-floor apartment. Wrote about problems with military training and unacknowledged weapons failures. Prosecutors ruled death a “suicide.” Family members disagreed. | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivan_Safronov . |
| Assassinated Badri Patarkatsishvili Surrey, UK Feb. 12, 2008 | Georgian oligarch and best friend and business associate of Boris Berezovsky, age 52. Accused of financial crimes in Russia. Exiled in London. Embarrassed Putin in interview about the Kursk submarine disaster. ⁵ Supposed “heart attack,” but probably poisoned at lunch in London. | Amy Knight, <i>Orders to Kill</i> . BuzzFeed News, Part 2. “From Russia with Blood.” |
| Attempted Assassination Bob Dudley Moscow Summer of 2008 | American citizen and BP executive running joint venture TNK-BP diagnosed as having been poisoned slowly. Alleged purpose was to force him out along with other western managers. Dudley fled Russia in August 2008. TNK-BP later sold to Rosneft, run by Putin friend and oligarch Igor Sechin. | Robert Mendick and Adrian Gatton, “BP chief executive Bob Dudley ‘poisoned in Russian plot,’” <i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i> , 30 Apr. 2018. |
| Attempted Assassination Mikhail Beketov Khimki, Russia Nov. 13, 2008 | A journalist, assaulted and crippled, was left brain-damaged after an assault, he had highlighted government corruption and fought against the planned destruction of the Khimki forest near Moscow to make way for a highway to St. Petersburg. Previously, in 2007 his dog was killed and car was set on fire. He died in 2013. | BBC News, 18 Apr. 2018. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43781351 . Ellen Barry, “Journalist in Russia, Badly Beaten in 2008, Dies,” <i>New York Times</i> , 8 Apr. 2013. |
| Assassinated Umar Israilov Vienna, Austria Jan. 13, 2009 | Shot dead leaving a supermarket in Vienna. Israilov, a former bodyguard for Chechen strongman, Ramzan Kadyrov, fled the republic and made allegations of torture against Chechen forces and Kadyrov personally. | Philip Oltermann and Shaun Walker, “Russia denies ordering assassination of Chechen exile in Berlin,” <i>The Guardian</i> , 28 Aug 2019. |

5. The Russian nuclear submarine, Kursk, sank in the Barents Sea on 12 August 2000 with the loss of all of its crew. Poor maintenance and inadequate training were cited in the postmortem evaluation. The public reaction of the Russian government resulted in a domestic public relations disaster. (Amy Knight, *Orders to Kill*, p. 224).

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Attempted Assassination</p> <p>Alexander Antonov</p> <p>Moscow</p> <p>Mar. 2009</p> | <p>Lost use of arm after being shot by three Chechen men. Mastermind was never identified. Allegedly owed German Gorbuntsov considerable monies (see below).</p> | <p>Luke Harding and Miriam Elder, "Attack on Russian banker in London leaves trail of clues back to Moscow," <i>The Guardian</i>, 30 Mar. 2012.</p> <p>Will Stewart and Leon Watson, <i>MailOnline</i>, 26 Mar. 2012.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated</p> <p>Sergei Magnitsky</p> <p>Moscow Butyrka Prison</p> <p>Nov. 16, 2009</p> | <p>A tax lawyer supporting Hermitage Capital Management that was accused of tax evasion and fraud. Alleged Russian officials stole funds from the state. Corrupt police had given unlawfully seized materials to organized criminals, who used them to take over three of Hermitage's Russian companies and who fraudulently reclaimed \$230m of the taxes previously paid by Hermitage. Attacked and beaten to death in his cell one week before his mandatory release from one year of pre-trial incarceration.</p> | <p>Philip Aldrick, "Russia refuses autopsy for anti-corruption lawyer," <i>The Daily Telegraph</i>, 19 Nov. 2009.</p> <p>Kathy Lally (20 January 2011). "UN-appointed Human Rights Experts to Probe Death of Russian Lawyer Magnitsky," <i>The Washington Post</i>, Jan. 20, 2011.</p> <p>Shaun Walker, "Russia drops inquiry into death of Sergei Magnitsky," <i>The Independent</i>, Mar. 19, 2013.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated</p> <p>Gareth Williams</p> <p>London</p> <p>Aug. 18, 2010</p> | <p>GCHQ officer, age 31, assigned to MI6.⁶ Investigating Russian international money laundering. Reportedly cooperating with the US National Security Agency. Reportedly involved in kinky sexual relationships.⁷ Found in locked gym bag. Unknown cause of death due to decomposed body. Death viewed as "highly suspicious."</p> | <p>BuzzFeed News, Part 4. "The Secrets of the Spy in the Bag."⁸</p> |
| <p>Attempted Assassination</p> <p>Oleg Kashin</p> <p>Moscow</p> <p>Nov. 6, 2010</p> | <p>Oleg Kashin, was severely injured with skull fracture and broken bones resulting in an amputated leg. He had been reporting on protests against the Khimki forest highway. Beaten after "insulting" Pskov region governor, a Putin ally, who was named but never brought to justice.</p> | <p>Andrew Roth, "Journalist Oleg Kashin knows who tried to kill him," <i>Washington Post</i>, 18 Sep. 2015.</p> <p>BBC News, 18 Apr. 2018. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43781351.</p> |
| <p>Assassination or Suicide</p> <p>???</p> <p>Paul Castle</p> <p>London</p> <p>Nov. 17, 2010</p> | <p>"Suicide" by subway. Property dealer associated with Scot Young. Jumped in front of a subway train after being threatened by Russian-linked crime gang members. One of the g in the UK associated with Boris Berezovsky to die mysteriously.</p> | <p>BuzzFeed News, Part 2. "From Russia with Blood."</p> <p>Martin Evans and Nicola Harley, "Ring of Death – the Scot Young associates who have all died in the past few years," <i>The Telegraph</i>, 12 Dec. 2014.</p> |
| <p>Assassination or Suicide</p> <p>???</p> <p>Robbie Curtis</p> <p>London</p> <p>Late Nov. 2010</p> | <p>"Suicide" by subway. London property agent, age 47. Associated with Russian laundered money purchases. One of the g in the UK associated with Boris Berezovsky to die mysteriously.</p> | <p>BuzzFeed News, Part 2. "From Russia with Blood."</p> <p>John Dunne and Tom Harper, "Property tycoon dies in fall under Tube in haunting echo of royal polo friend's suicide," <i>Evening Standard</i>, 20 Dec. 2012.</p> |

6. GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters) is the British signals intelligence organization. MI6 is the designation for the British Secret Intelligence Service. GCHQ and the US National Security Agency are two parts of the "five eyes" international signals intelligence alliance, also comprising Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

7. According to *The Telegraph*, "the US State Department asked MI6 to ensure that no details of Mr. Williams's work should emerge at the inquest of his death." (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/9218325/Secret-meeting-between-MI6-and-police-hours-after-discovery-of-spy-Gareth-Williams-death.html>.) There are a number of theories about Williams' death. One reported by *The Independent* is that he refused to become a double agent for the SVR when it attempted to blackmail him and the SVR killed him to protect the identity of one of its penetration agents. (www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/mi6-spy-gareth-williams-was-killed-by-russia-for-refusing-to-become-double-agent-former-kgb-man-a6670196.html) KGB defector Boris Karpichkov also told a UK tabloid that Williams was killed to protect a SVR mole within MI-6 codenamed ORION about whom Williams had become suspicious. An attempt to recruit Williams failed, so he was killed. Karpichkov defected to the UK in 1998 with two suitcases of documents. He claimed there have been three attempts on his life using poison since 2006. (<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/former-spy-codenamed-gordon-identified-12404228> ; <https://intelnews.org/2018/04/16/01-2307>).

8. "The Secrets of the Spy in the Bag," is at https://www.buzzfeed.com/tomwarren/secrets-of-the-spy-in-the-bag?utm_term=.ygM4ARNn2#.wxKY3624o.

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Attempted Assassination</p> <p>German Gorbuntsov</p> <p>London</p> <p>Mar. 2012</p> | <p>Shot in an ambush with a silencer-equipped pistol, Gorbuntsov survived. Former owner of banks in Russia and Moldova. Charged with money laundering by Moldova. Fled to London in 2010. Suspected of underworld ties. The Russian banker allegedly had evidence relevant to the attempted murder of Russian billionaire Alexander Antonov, who claimed Russians were behind the attempt.</p> | <p>Will Stewart and Vivek Chaudhary and Richard Spillett, <i>MailOnline</i>, 6 Dec. 2019.</p> <p>https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7763071/Family-Russian-billionaire-killed-Surrey-car-crash-urge-witnesses-come-forward.html.</p> <p>Luke Harding and Miriam Elder, "Attack on Russian banker in London leaves trail of clues back to Moscow," <i>The Guardian</i>, 30 Mar. 2012.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated</p> <p>Alexander Perepilichnyy</p> <p>London, UK</p> <p>Nov. 10, 2012</p> | <p>Initial cause of death reported as "heart attack." Later toxicology tests revealed poisoning by gelsemium, a rare Himalayan toxic plant that can induce a heart attack. 44-year old financier, who after the beating murder in prison of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky exposed the \$230 million fraud involving Hermitage Capital Investors and widespread corruption by Russian government officials. Fled to the UK in 2010. Died hours after returning from an assignation in Paris with a young Ukrainian woman.</p> | <p>BuzzFeed News, Part 1. "Poison in the System."</p> <p>Catherine Belton, <i>Putin's People</i>, p. 411.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated</p> <p>Boris Berezovsky</p> <p>Berkshire, UK</p> <p>Mar. 23, 2013</p> | <p>Yeltsin-era Russian oligarch and media owner, tied to Russian mafia. Viewed himself as "king maker" of Vladimir Putin. Later fell out with Putin and fled to UK in 2000 when accused of financial crimes. Was "linchpin" of Russian exiles in the UK. Used his billions to oppose Putin. Helped fund 2014 "Orange Revolution" in Ukraine, which ousted Putin ally, Viktor Yanoukovych. Supposed suicide by hanging in his bathroom. Forensic evidence suggests murder.</p> | <p>BuzzFeed News, Part 2. "From Russia with Blood."</p> <p>Amy Knight, <i>Orders to Kill</i>.</p> <p>Catherine Belton, <i>Putin's People</i>, p. 7.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated</p> <p>Reshat Ametov</p> <p>Simferopol, Crimea</p> <p>Mar. 15, 2014</p> | <p>Crimean activist who protested seizure of Crimea by Russia. Abducted on 3 Mar. and tortured. Body was found in a forest.</p> | <p>Sarah Hurst, Oren Dorell & George Petras, "Suspicious Russian Deaths: Sacrificial Pawns or Coincidence?" <i>USA Today</i>, 2 May 2017.</p> |
| <p>Assassination ???</p> <p>Alexander Pochinok</p> <p>Moscow</p> <p>Mar. 16, 2014</p> | <p>Former Russian government minister opposed to annexation of the Crimea from Ukraine. Criticized government on Russian TV. Reportedly suffered a stroke two days before Moscow ceremony to annex Crimea.</p> | <p>Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i>, 2 May 2017.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated</p> <p>Volodymyr Rybak</p> <p>Donetsk, Ukraine</p> <p>Apr. 17, 2014</p> | <p>City council member in eastern Ukraine who protested pro-Russian militia takeover. Body found with another, both with signs of torture.</p> | <p>Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i>, 2 May 2017.</p> |
| <p>Unexplained Death</p> <p>Valeriya Novodnorskaya</p> <p>Moscow</p> <p>Jul. 12, 2014</p> | <p>Soviet era dissident and liberal politician opposed to invasion of Ukraine. Called the "grandmother of the Russian democracy." Diagnosed cause of death: toxic shock syndrome. (Possibly natural causes.)</p> | <p>Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i>, 2 May 2017.</p> |
| <p>Mass Assassination</p> <p>Malaysian Air Flight MH-17</p> <p>Netherlands / Ukraine</p> <p>Jul. 17, 2014</p> | <p>A Russian BUK surface-to-air missile downed Flight MH-17 from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia killing all 298 on board. The Russian missile was moved into the rebel area of eastern Ukraine and removed back to Russia after the incident.</p> | <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaysia_Airlines_Flight_17.</p> |

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Assassination or Suicide ???</p> <p>Johnny Elichao London Nov. 12, 2014</p> | <p>British finance expert and entrepreneur, age 55. Suicide by jumping off roof. One of 9 in the UK associated with Scot Young to die mysteriously.</p> | <p>BuzzFeed News, Part 2. "From Russia with Blood." —, Express: "Trinity Woodall 'grief-stricken' after unexpected death of ex-husband Johnny Elichao."</p> |
| <p>Assassinated Scot Young London Dec. 8, 2014</p> | <p>Close associate of Boris Berezovsky who helped funnel money out of Russia. Berezovsky's "fixer." Caught up in "Project Moscow" scandal. Defenestration from fourth floor apartment window and impaled on fence spikes. One of 9 in the UK associated with Boris Berezovsky to die mysteriously.</p> | <p>BuzzFeed News, Part 2. "From Russia with Blood."</p> |
| <p>Assassination ??? Boris Kolesnikov Moscow Unknown date, 2014</p> | <p>Interior Ministry police officer who investigated the siphoning of funds by the SVR's Department K. Arrested and "fell" to his death while in custody.</p> | <p>Catherine Belton, <i>Putin's People</i>, p. 491.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated Boris Nemtsov Moscow Feb. 27, 2015</p> | <p>Liberal politician, Duma member, former deputy prime minister, and opponent of Putin. Wrote scathing reports of Putin's transgressions, human rights violations and rampant corruption. Opposed seizure of Crimea and war in eastern Ukraine. Shot from behind four times on the bridge near the Kremlin. Police seized all of his papers the next day.</p> | <p>Amy Knight, <i>Orders to Kill</i>. Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i>, 2 May 2017.</p> |
| <p>Assassination Attempts Emilian Gebrev Bulgaria Apr.-May 2015</p> | <p>Bulgarian arms dealer, considered hostile to Moscow's interests, poisoned and placed in coma. A month later after visits by two Russians he was poisoned again. Toxicology tests showed traces of two organophosphate pesticides and an unidentified element. Survived both attempts. Gebrev exported weapons to Georgia during the Russo-Georgian War of August 2008.</p> | <p>Martin Arotegul, "Hunt for Russian Black Ops Specialist Rages from Spain to Bulgaria," <i>Voice of America</i>, Feb. 27, 2020. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2019/11/23/the-dreadful-eight-grus-unit-2015-and-the-2015-poisoning-of-emilian-gebrev/.</p> |
| <p>First Assassination Attempt Vladimir Kara-Murza Moscow May 20, 2015</p> | <p>Head of NGO founded by ousted oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Advocate for free elections in Russia and US Congress' passage of the Magnitsky Act⁹ in 2012. Poisoned at lunch. Recovered after being in a coma for a week.</p> | <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladimir_Vladimirovich_Kara-Murza.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated Mikhail Lesin Washington, DC Nov. 5, 2015</p> | <p>Putin's former press minister. Later head of Gazprom-Media. Moved to Switzerland and the US after falling out with Yuri Kovalchuk, Putin's personal money manager and close friend. "He was one of the legendary Kremlin officials who helped Russian President Vladimir Putin consolidate power... charged with handling the state's takeover of Russia's media assets. He set up much of the Kremlin's modern propaganda machine, including the Russia Today channel." Under suspicion for his large real estate assets, he was scheduled to talk with the US Department of Justice to avoid corruption charges. Had "insight on Putin's personal banker [that] would be of great interest to the United States and a serious threat to the Kremlin." Died of blunt force trauma to the head, neck and upper torso. Despite initial findings of the Washington Metropolitan Police, Lesin was likely beaten by thugs hired by an unnamed Russian oligarch, according to a secret report provided by former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele.</p> | <p>"A Mysterious Death in Washington," Analysis, Stratfor, 11 Mar. 2016. Steven Lee Myers, "Mikhail Lesin's Strange Death in US Follows a Fall From Russia's Elite," <i>New York Times</i>, 2 Apr. 2016. Joe Fitsanakis, "Mystery death of Putin's ex-adviser in DC was accident, say US authorities," <i>IntelNews.org</i>, 31 Oct. 2016. BuzzFeed News FOIA request https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/jasonleopold/christopher-steele-mikhail-lesin-murder-putin-fbi.</p> |

9. "The Magnitsky Act, formally known as the Russia and Moldova Jackson–Vanik Repeal and Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act of 2012, is a [2012 US law]... intending to punish Russian officials responsible for the death of Russian tax accountant Sergei Magnitsky in a Moscow prison in 2009" (Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnitsky_Act).

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
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| Unexplained Death Alesya Malakyan Moscow Jan. 25, 2016 | Unknown cause. Daughter of opposition activist Irina Kalmykova, who fled Russia to avoid trial for protesting against the government. | Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i> , 2 May 2017. |
| Unexplained Death Vyacheslav Sinev Location unknown Feb. 3, 2016 | Chairman of Russian Anti-doping Agency that was found complicit in widespread doping of Russian athletes in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. ¹⁰ | Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i> , 2 May 2017. |
| Assassination ??? Nikita Kamaev Outside Moscow Feb. 14, 2016 | “Heart attack” after cross-country skiing. Resigned as executive director of Russian Anti-doping Agency two months prior to his death at age 52. | Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i> , 2 May 2017. |
| Assassinated Denis Voronenkov Kyiv Mar. 23, 2016 | Former Russian Communist Party lawmaker. Putin critic and opposed to invasion of Ukraine. Fled to Ukraine in 2016. Shot dead on street in central Kyiv. | Scott Stewart, “The Dirty Work of Russian Assassins,” <i>Stratfor Worldview</i> , 14 Sep. 2017. —, <i>Stratfor Snapshot</i> , “Ukraine: Assassination will worsen already strained relationship with Russia,” 23 Mar. 2017. |
| Assassinated Dr. Matthew Puncher Oxfordshire, UK May 4, 2016 | UK Health Protection Agency scientist who identified radioactive Polonium 210 as the poison used to kill Alexander Litvinenko in 2006. Demonstrated severe personality disorder after returning from US Department of Energy-sponsored work at Russia’s Mayak nuclear facility to measure the levels of polonium inside Mayak workers. Supposedly fatally stabbed himself multiple times using two kitchen knives. | BuzzFeed News, Part 3. “The Man Who Knew Too Much.” Imogen Robinson, “Top scientist who discovered Litvinenko poison ‘stabbed himself to death with two knives’ after trip to Russia,” <i>Mirror</i> , 24 Nov. 2016. Joseph Curtis, “Radiation expert, 46, who investigated the ‘assassination’ of KGB spy Alexander Litvinenko ‘killed himself by stabbing his arms and chest repeatedly five months after a trip to Russia’,” <i>DailyMail</i> , 24 Nov. 2016. |
| Assassinated Pavel Sheremet Kyiv, Ukraine Jul. 20, 2016 | Outspoken Belorussian journalist and critic of Russia, Belarus, and Ukrainian elements. Killed by car bomb. | Stewart, <i>Stratfor Worldview</i> . “Identifying a mundane but deadly threat,” <i>Stratfor Assessments</i> , 15 Aug. 2016. |
| Assassinated Alexander Shchetinin Kyiv, Ukraine Aug. 27, 2016 | Russian journalist, founder of the Novy Region website, who called Putin a “personal enemy” and fascist dictator. | Stewart, <i>Stratfor Worldview</i> . —, “Journalist found dead in Kiev,” <i>The Telegraph</i> , 29 Aug. 2016. |
| Attempted Assassination Adam Osmayev Kyiv, Ukraine Oct. 31, 2016 | Critic of the government of Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov, a close Putin ally and reported “enforcer.” | BBC News, 31 Oct. 2016. Stewart, <i>Stratfor Worldview</i> . |

10. Others associated with whistleblowing about the widespread doping at the Sochi Olympics have fled Russia, including athlete Yulia Stepanova, whose World Anti-Doping Agency file was cyber-hacked, and Dr. Grigori Rodchenkov, the former director of the Russian anti-doping laboratory, who has been threatened with death for his revelations. (Rebecca Ruiz and Michael Schwartz, “Russian Insider Says State-Run Doping Fueled Olympic Gold,” *New York Times*, May 12, 2016. https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/13/sports/russia-doping-sochi-olympics-2014.html?_r=0.)

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
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| Unexplained Death Sergei Krivov New York City Nov. 8, 2016 | Diplomat in Russian consulate in New York City. Believed to be a security/counterintelligence official. Died of head injuries. Russia claims “heart attack.” | USA Today, “Suspicious Russian Deaths.” Ali Watkins, “The Strange Case Of The Russian Diplomat Who Got His Head Smashed In On Election Day,” BuzzFeed News, 15 Feb. 2017. |
| Unexplained Death Vladimir Shreydler Moscow Nov. 8, 2016 | Pro-Ukrainian activist on Russian talk shows. Reported “heart attack” at age 48. | Sarah Hurst, et al., USA Today, 2 May 2017. |
| Assassinated Ivan Mamchur Kyiv Sep. 16, 2016 | Russians hired criminal, Oleg Smorodinov, to kill Mamchur, previously commander of a Ukrainian special forces regiment in Georgia during Russo-Georgian War of 2008. | Michael Schwartz, “Russia Ordered a Killing That Made No Sense. Then the Assassin Started Talking.” New York Times, 31 Mar. 2019. |
| Planned Assassination Milo Dukanovic Montenegro Oct. 2016 | Coup was planned by Montenegrin pro-Russian opposition to prevent Montenegro from joining NATO. Plan was to attack the parliament and assassinate prime minister Milo Dukanovic. The Russian Institute for Strategic Studies, then headed by a veteran SVR officer, was named as one of the coup organizers | Martin Arostegui, VOA. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2018/11/22/second-gru-officer-indicted-montenegro-coup-unmasked/ . |
| Assassinated Oleg Erovinkin Moscow Dec. 26, 2016 | Former general in the FSB and chief of staff to Russian oligarch Igor Sechin, a close Putin ally. As the go-between between the oligarch and Putin, Erovinkin had been rumored to be a source of information in the “Trump Dossier,” compiled by former British intelligence officer Christopher Steele. ¹¹ Found dead in back of his car. Body sent to FSB morgue. No cause of death reported initially. Later officials claimed he died of a “heart attack.” | Sarah Hurst, et al., USA Today, 2 May 2017. Robert Mendick & Robert Verkaik, “Mystery death of ex-KGB chief linked to MI6 spy’s dossier on Donald Trump,” The Telegraph, 27 Jan. 2017. —, “Top Rosneft Exec Found Dead in Moscow,” The Moscow Times, 26 Dec. 2016. |
| Second Assassination Attempt Vladimir Kara-Murza Moscow Feb. 2, 2017 | Second poisoning. 35-year-old democracy campaigner and close associate of assassinated Boris Nemtsov. Promoted film about Nemtsov throughout Russia. Russian authorities refused to investigate either of his poisonings. | Amy Knight, Orders to Kill. |
| Unexplained Death Viktor Parshutkin Moscow Feb. 27, 2016 | Russian lawyer who forced Russia to withdraw false charges against a Ukrainian political prisoner, Serhiy Lytvynov, who was abducted and tortured after Russia invaded eastern Ukraine. Died suddenly of unknown cause. | Sarah Hurst, et al., USA Today, 2 May 2017. Halya Coynash, “A loss for Ukraine and one tortured Ukrainian political prisoner,” Human Rights in Ukraine, 1 Mar. 2017. |
| Unexplained Death Alex Oronov New York City Mar. 2, 2016 | Ukrainian émigré and US citizen who organized a meeting with Trump’s lawyer, Michael Cohen, concerning a peace plan that would give Putin control of Ukraine. Cause of death is unknown. | Sarah Hurst, et al., USA Today, 2 May 2017. Rachel Roberts, “Ukrainian businessman with links to Donald Trump and Russia dies in unexplained circumstances,” Independent, 6 Mar. 2017. |

11. Christopher Steele is a former British MI6 officer. He ran the Russia desk for MI-6 from 2006 to 2009 and was active in Moscow from 1990 to 1993. He was in charge of MI6’s investigation into the 2006 poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko with polonium 210. After leaving MI6 Steele revealed to the FBI bribery of FIFA officials by Igor Sechin to obtain for Russia hosting of the 2018 World Cup. Steele is most famous for compiling 17 memos from his sources about Donald Trump, known as the “Trump Dossier,” published by BuzzFeed in 2016. (Jane Mayer, “Christopher Steele, the Man Behind the Trump Dossier,” *The New Yorker*, Mar. 12, 2018.) Steele went into hiding for a period after the “Trump Dossier” leaked to the press apparently concerned about potential Russian retribution and press hounding. The accuracy of the contents of the dossier remains controversial.

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
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| Unexplained Death Yevgeny Khamaganov Ulan-Ude, Siberia, Russia Mar. 16, 2016 | 35-year-old Russian journalist known for articles critical of the Russian government. Reports differ: either died of a beating or complications from diabetes. | Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i> , 2 May 2017. —, “Russian Journalist Dies In Unexplained Circumstances,” <i>Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty</i> , 17 Mar. 2017. |
| Assassinated Vladimir Evdokimov Moscow Mar. 18, 2017 | Stabbed to death in a Moscow prison while awaiting trial on embezzlement charges. Former executive director of Roskosmos space agency. Accused of being involved in fraud scheme. | Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i> , 2 May 2017. Matthew Bodner, “Death of a Rocketman,” <i>The Moscow Times</i> , 20 Mar. 2017. |
| Assassinated Nikolai Volkov Moscow Mar. 18, 2017 | Shot near his home after reporting \$170 million embezzlement. Head of construction department of Russian Interior Ministry. | Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i> , 2 May 2017. |
| Assassinated Denis Voronenkov Kyiv Mar. 23, 2017 | Former Russian lawmaker opposed Putin’s government and fled Russia in 2016. Shot in hotel lobby in Kyiv by Pavlo Parshov, a far-right Ukrainian nationalist, who died from his own wounds. “This was a typical show execution of a witness by the Kremlin.” Voronenkov had given testimony that implicated former Ukrainian president Yanukovich, a Putin ally, in providing cover for the Russian military intervention in Ukraine. | Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i> , 2 May 2017. Shaun Walker, “Denis Voronenkov: ex-Russian MP who fled to Ukraine killed in Kiev,” <i>The Guardian</i> , 23 Mar. 2017. Sarah A. Topol, “He Played by the Rules of Putin’s Russia, Until He Didn’t: The Story of a Murder,” <i>New York Times Magazine</i> , 5 Feb. 2019. |
| Assassinated Col Oleksandr Zharaberyush Mariupol, Ukraine Mar. 31, 2017 | Deputy chief of Donetsk’s local counterintelligence unit killed by car bomb. Russian backed separatists were blamed. | Yuri Lapaiev. <i>The Political Dimension of Russia’s Spy Games in Ukraine</i> . The Jamestown Foundation, 30 Apr. 2020. https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/31/ukrainian-state-security-officer-killed-in-car-explosion-in-mariupol/ . |
| Assassination ??? Vadim Tyulpanov St. Petersburg Apr. 4, 2017 | Russian senator overseeing 2018 FIFA World Cup preparations. Reportedly “slipped in the bathhouse and hit his head” in a fitness center. | Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i> , 2 May 2017. |
| Assassinated Nikolai Andrushchenko St. Petersburg Apr. 19, 2017 | Editor of opposition newspaper <i>Novy Peterburg</i> that published articles attacking corruption in the city. Attacked leaving newspaper office and died. | Sarah Hurst, et al., <i>USA Today</i> , 2 May 2017. John Sharman, “Russian journalist and Putin critic dies after being beaten up by strangers,” <i>Independent</i> , 19 Apr. 2017. |
| First Assassination Attempt Alexei Navalny Russia Apr. 27, 2017 | Navalny is the Kremlin’s most prominent and troublesome critic. Anti-corruption lawyer and Russian opposition leader. Has posted exposés on YouTube of Russian leaders’ corruption. Was barred from running against Putin in the March 2018 elections. An assailant threw a caustic green dye in his face, and Navalny lost most of his vision in one eye. | Andrew Kramer, “Kremlin Critic Aleksei Navalny Says Attack Left Him Mostly Blind in an Eye,” <i>New York Times</i> , 2 May 2017. Julia Ioffe, “What Putin Really Wants,” <i>The Atlantic</i> , January/February 2018 edition. |
| Assassinated Col Maksym Shapoval Kyiv, Ukraine Jun. 27, 2017 | Commander of Ukrainian special forces Chief Intelligence Directorate killed by command detonated car bomb in central Kyiv. He was involved in reconnaissance raids into the rebel’s territories, documenting the presence of Russian troops. | Stewart, <i>Stratfor Worldview</i> . Alec Luhn, “Ukrainian military intelligence officer killed by car bomb in Kiev,” <i>The Guardian</i> , 27 Jun. 2017. Yuri Lapaiev. <i>The Political Dimension of Russia’s Spy Games in Ukraine</i> . The Jamestown Foundation, 30 Apr. 2020. |

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|--|---|---|
| Assassinated Timor Mahauri Kyiv, Ukraine Sep. 8, 2017 | A Chechen who fought with Ukrainian troops. Previously fought in Georgia against 2008 Russian invasion. Opponent of Chechen president Ramzan Kadyrov. Killed by a car bomb. Probably a shaped charge explosive. Survived three previous assassination attempts. | Stewart, Stratfor Worldview. |
| Attempted Assassination Yulia Latynina Moscow Sep. 8, 2017 | Veteran political analyst for the radio station Ekho Moskvyy (Echo of Moscow) and reporter for opposition paper Novaya Gazeta. Fled Russia after receiving threats, having an unknown gas sprayed in her house and having her car set on fire. | Andrew Roth, "Assailant stabs top journalist at leading Moscow radio station," Washington Post, 23 Oct. 2017. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yulia_Latynina#Attacks . |
| Assassinated Daphne Caruana Galizia Malta Oct. 16, 2017 | Anti-corruption journalist killed by a car bomb. Told British member of parliament "Russian and Azeri money had bought the whole of [the Maltese government]... And that the money was being laundered via London." Her murder is unsolved. Suspect businessman, Yorgen Fenech, tied to Azerbaijan company and accused of bribing government officials, arrested for complicity in her murder. [Note: There is no direct evidence that Russian elements were involved in her car bombing. Russians have been indirectly implicated through extensive money laundering via Malta.] | Catherine Belton, Putin's People, p. 417. Sharon Braithwaite and Barbie Latza Nadeau, "Why murdered Maltese journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia is back in the news," CNN, 30 Nov. 2019. |
| Attempted Assassination Tatyana Felgengauer Moscow Oct. 23, 2017 | Well-known Russian radio presenter Tatyana Felgengauer was stabbed in the neck while at work at her radio station, Ekho Moskvyy. She had been accused of aiding foreign interests. | BBC News, 18 Apr. 2018. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43781351 |
| Attempted Assassination Ihor Mosiychuk Kyiv, Ukraine Oct. 25, 2017 | Journalist and member of the nationalist opposition Radical Party in the Ukrainian parliament. Wounded by motorbike bomb that killed two others also when leaving a live TV broadcast. | Anna Nemtsova, "Car Bomb Murders Terrify Ukraine's Capital, and Many Suspect the Kremlin's Behind them," The Daily Beast, 27 Oct. 2017. |
| Assassination Attempts Bounties for killing American soldiers Afghanistan 2018... | "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..." Tied to GRU unit 29155 that has been active in Afghanistan for many years. Suspected in the deaths of 3 US Marines. Effort began in 2018 and continues. | Charlie Savage, Eric Schmitt and Michael Schwartz, "Russia Secretly Offered Afghan Militants Bounties to Kill U.S. Troops, Intelligence Says," New York Times, 26 Jun. 2020. |
| Assassinated Mikus Alps British island of Guernsey Jan. 8, 2018 | Alps, a Latvian, had fought against Russian "volunteers" in eastern Ukraine and, despite threats against him, was supplying anti-Russian Ukrainian militia with vehicles. Skeletal remains found in the driver's seat of a burned-out car. | http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/it-appears-russia-just-assassinated-someone-in-a-british-crown-territory/article/2645958 . www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-guernsey-42610497 . |

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Attempted Assassination</p> <p>Sergei Skripal & Yulia Skripal (Daughter)¹²</p> <p>Salisbury, UK</p> <p>Mar. 4, 2018</p> | <p>Former GRU colonel and British double agent. Reportedly spied for MI6 from 1995 to 2003, and unmasked more than 300 Russian agents, according to Izvestiya. Arrested in 2004 and sentenced to 13 years, but traded in 2010 for ten “Illegals” arrested in the US. Settled in the UK. Poisoned by GRU agents with Novichok nerve agent¹³ along with visiting daughter. Both survived. Two British citizens also poisoned by discarded Novichok container in June. One died.</p> | <p>http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43291394</p> <p>https://intelnews.org/2018/03/08/01-2283/</p> <p>Neil Buckley, David Bond, Henry Foy, “The unanswered questions over the attack on a Russian double agent,” <i>Financial Times</i>, 10 Mar. 2018.</p> <p>https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ireland-set-to-join-biggest-mass-expulsion-of-russian-agents-fk6cr8nk9</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergei_Skripal.</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_Amesbury_poisonings.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated</p> <p>Nikolai Glushkov</p> <p>London</p> <p>Mar. 12, 2018</p> | <p>A friend of Putin critic Boris Berezovsky found strangled. Reportedly about to testify that the Russian airline, Aero-flot, of which he was a former deputy director, was a “cash cow to support international spying operations” and an instrument of Russian intelligence. Sent to prison on allegations of illicit financial activities in 1999, he was released in 2004. Given asylum in the UK in 2010. Tried in absentia in Russia in 2017 for allegedly stealing \$123m from Aero-flot. Was defending himself in London court at time of his death. Believed to have survived a 2013 poisoning attempt.</p> | <p>Luke Harding & Owen Bowcott, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/13/russian-exile-nikolai-glushkov-found-dead-at-his-london-home.</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolai_Glushkov.</p> <p>Luke Harding, “Murdered Russian exile survived earlier poisoning attempt, police believe,” <i>The Guardian</i>, 8 Sep. 2018.</p> <p>Allen Cullison, “A trio of wealthy Russians Made an Enemy of Putin. Now they’re all dead,” <i>Wall Street Journal</i>, 10 Oct. 2018.</p> |
| <p>Assassination ???</p> <p>Maxim Borodin</p> <p>Yekaterinburg, Siberia</p> <p>Apr. 2018</p> | <p>Russian journalist of <i>Novy Den</i> (New Day), an investigative online magazine, wrote a series of articles about Russian soldiers-for-hire in Syria. Reported on claims that more than 200 Russian mercenaries were killed in Syria on Feb. 7 when they attacked US special forces. Allegedly “fell” from his fifth-floor apartment and died 3 days later. Borodin called friends prior to his fall concerned about masked men around his apartment.</p> | <p>https://intelnews.org/2018/04/17/01-2308.</p> <p>Matthew Luxmore, <i>New York Times</i>, 16 Apr. 2018</p> <p>“Russian reporter Borodin dead after mystery fall,” <i>BBC</i>, 18 Apr. 2018.</p> |
| <p>Failed Assassination</p> <p>Arkady Babchenko</p> <p>Kyiv, Ukraine</p> <p>May 2, 2018</p> | <p>“On May 2, 2018, Russian journalist Babchenko got a visit... from Ukraine’s security services, the SBU. He said they informed him, ‘I was under threat of assassination by the secret services of the Russian Federation.’ Twenty-seven days later, he lay on the floor of his kitchen, coughing up blood, having been shot through by an assassin’s bullet... He died en route to the hospital... Or so everyone thought. He had been targeted by several teams of killers sent by the Kremlin.” [Babchenko], along with Ukraine’s Security Services, faked his death to find out how this murder for hire system worked.</p> | <p>WTOP, “Inside the SCIF,” J.J. Green, 2 Jul. 2020.</p> |
| <p>Planned Assassination</p> <p>Akhmed Zakayev</p> <p>United Kingdom</p> <p>Summer 2018</p> | <p>British authorities prevented Umar Sugaipov from entering the UK as he was suspected of planning the assassination of Zakayev, a former Chechen rebel leader, granted asylum in UK in 2004.</p> | <p>Jack Elsom, “British spies block suspected Russian assassin from entering the UK five months after Sergei Skripal novichok attack,” <i>DailyMail.com</i>, 10 Mar. 2019.</p> <p>https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6791645/British-spies-block-suspected-Russian-assassin-entering-UK.html.</p> |

12. The attack on Skripal and his daughter has raised questions about the previous deaths of his older brother and his 43-year-old son, who supposedly died of “liver failure” in St. Petersburg in 2017 (<http://time.com/5187104/russian-spy-sergei-skripal-unknown-substance/>, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43291394>, <https://intelnews.org/2018/03/08/01-2283/>).

13. Novichok is an organophosphorus compound with nerve paralyzing effects developed by GOSNIIOKHT (Russia’s State Scientific-Research Institute for Organic Chemistry and Technology). It was developed as an alternative to VX. Novichok was used in the assassination of Ivan Kiveldi and his secretary in 1995 by contaminating his telephone. “The doctor who dissected his highly toxic liver during an autopsy died seven weeks afterwards, it was reported.” (<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/banker-secretary-murdered-same-nerve-12176829>; <https://thebell.io/en/the-scientist-who-developed-novichok-doses-range-from-20-grams-to-several-kilos/20.03.2018>).

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
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| Assassinations Three Russian Journalists Central African Republic Jul. 2018 | The journalists – Orkhan Dzhemal, Aleksandr Rastorguyev, and Kirill Radchenko – were shot dead on July 30, 2018, under murky circumstances while in the C.A.R. to make a documentary film about the activities of the Wagner Group, the Russian mercenary firm. Witnesses tied unidentified Russians and C.A.R police officer to surveillance of 3 at time of killings. | “Khodorkovsky Investigators Say Evidence Links Wagner Group To Russian Journalists’ Killings” by RFE/RL’s Russian Service, RFE/RL, 10 Jan. 2019. |
| Attempted Assassination Pyotr Verzilov Russia Sep. 12, 2018 | Pyotr Verzilov, a well-known activist from the protest group, Pussy Riot, was flown to Germany in critical condition for treatment after suffering what doctors said was almost certainly poisoning. | Neil MacFarquhar, “Fears of Navalny Poisoning Are Rooted in Previous Attacks on Kremlin Foes,” <i>New York Times</i> , 29 Jul. 2019. |
| Assassination or Suicide ??? Igor Malashenko Spain Feb. 2019 | A Russian media executive under Yeltsin’s regime. Left Russia in 2001. He was known for criticizing Putin. In Russia’s 2018 presidential election, he was a campaign director for the controversial opposition candidate Ksenia Sobchak. Reported as likely suicide. ¹⁴ | <i>The Moscow Times</i> , 25 Feb. 2019. https://meduza.io/en/feature/2019/02/26/his-fate-is-the-fate-of-russian-history . |
| Arrested Ivan Golunov Moscow Jun. 2019 | A prominent investigative reporter for Latvia’s <i>Meduza</i> arrested on “drug charges.” His investigations uncovered apparent corruption in the Moscow mayor’s office, in the funeral business and elsewhere. Beaten while in custody. | Anton Troianovski, “Judge releases detained Russian journalist to house arrest, a small victory for his supporters,” <i>Washington Post</i> , 8 Jun. 2019. |
| Second Assassination Attempt Alexei Navalny Moscow Late Jul. 2019 | While under arrest Navalny fell ill in a prison cell with a “severe allergic reaction.” | Patrick Reeve, “Vladimir Putin critic Alexey Navalny hospitalized with suspected poisoning, doctor says,” 28 Jul. 2019. <i>ABCNews.com</i> Neil MacFarquhar, “Fears of Navalny Poisoning Are Rooted in Previous Attacks on Kremlin Foes” <i>New York Times</i> , 29 Jul. 2019. |
| Assassinated Zelimkhan Khangoshvili Berlin, Germany Aug. 23, 2019 | A former Chechen rebel field commander (1999-2004) shot and killed in a Berlin park by Vadim Krasikov. Worked against FSB-recruited Chechens and in Georgia. Shot 8 times, Khangoshvili survived a 2015 assassination attempt in Tbilisi, Georgia and a previous 2009 poisoning attempt. Had sought asylum in Germany. Accused by Putin as being a “murderous fighter” and behind a Moscow subway bombing. | Editorial Board, “New revelations depict a Russian-sponsored assassination on German soil,” <i>Washington Post</i> , 23 Feb. 2020. RFE/RL, 10 Dec. 2019. RFE/RL, 19 Dec. 2019. Michael Weiss, “A Murder in Berlin,” <i>The Daily Beast</i> , 27 Sep. 2019. Philip Oltermann and Shaun Walker, “Russia denies ordering assassination of Chechen exile in Berlin,” <i>The Guardian</i> , 28 Aug. 2019. |
| Assassinated James Le Mesurier Istanbul, Turkey Nov. 11, 2019 | Founder of the Syrian relief organization, White Hats, found dead from blunt trauma to head and legs in street below his apartment. Death occurred three days after being attacked by Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson. “He and the White Helmets had been the subject of a disinformation campaign spearheaded by Moscow and... Damascus for years.” | “James LeMesurier, White Helmets co-founder, discovered dead in Turkey.” 11 Nov. 2019. <i>BBC News</i> . Michael Safi in Amman. <i>The Guardian</i> , 11 Nov. 2019. Bel Trew, <i>The Independent</i> , 11 Nov. 2019. |
| Assassination ??? Dmitry Obretetskiy Surrey, UK Nov. 30, 2019 | Obretetskiy was owner of Magnat Trade Enterprise, distributor of Western products in Russia. His company in Volgograd had gone bankrupt. Moved to UK. Struck by a car while walking his dogs. Most likely an accident, but investigation continuing. | Kahra Ullah and Aimee Lewis, “Russian billionaire killed by vehicle while walking his dog in England,” <i>CNN World</i> , 6 Dec. 2019. |

14. “Suicides” of Russians always have to be questioned. Russia has developed poisons that can drive the victim to suicide. See Oleson, “‘Wet Affairs’ Part II,” p. 15.

| EVENT | DESCRIPTION | SOURCE |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Assassination Planning ???</p> <p>William Browder</p> <p>Davos, Switzerland</p> <p>Jan. 2020</p> | <p>Two Russian “diplomats” apprehended when scouting locations prior to the World Economic Forum. Believed tied to Russian intelligence. Incident prompted the UK government to caution its citizens that they could be in physical danger. Browder, a vocal Putin critic, is a potential target.</p> | <p>“Swiss uncovered suspected Davos spy plot by Russian ‘plumbers,’” <i>Reuters</i>, 21 Jan. 2020.</p> <p><i>IntelNews.org</i>, 22 Jan. 2020.</p> |
| <p>Assassinated</p> <p>Imran Aliev</p> <p>Lille, France</p> <p>Jan. 30, 2020</p> | <p>Found stabbed repeatedly in a hotel room. A blogger and outspoken opponent of Chechen strongman and Putin ally, Kadyrov. Aliev had gone to Lille to help a friend, who subsequently disappeared. French police believe killer fled to Russia.</p> | <p>Andrew Roth, “Outspoken Chechen blogger found murdered in Lille,” <i>The Guardian</i>, 3 Feb. 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/03/outspoken-chechen-blogger-found-murdered-in-lille.</p> |
| <p>Assassination Target</p> <p>Alexandr Poteyev</p> <p>Miami, Florida</p> <p>Feb. 2020</p> | <p>Russian SVR Directorate S¹⁵ deputy director who defected and identified 10 Russian Illegals arrested in 2010 by the FBI. Probably was target of suspicious surveillance by Hector Fuentes, a Mexican recruited by Russia. Poteyev seen as likely target of Putin’s assassins, according to former director of CIA’s defector operations center. “I’m convinced that Poteyev was on a hit list,” stated Joseph Augustyn, chief of CIA’s Defector Operations Center.</p> | <p>Bill Harlow interview of Gordon Corera, <i>BBC News</i>, 17 Apr. 2020. Cited in <i>The Cipher Brief</i>. https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column/author-interview.</p> <p>Scott Stewart, “Signs of a thwarted Russian hit man in Miami,” <i>Stratfor</i>, 25 Feb. 2020.</p> <p>Conversation with Joseph Augustyn, <i>The Cipher Brief</i>, 18 Sep. 2019.</p> |
| <p>Assassination Hoax</p> <p>Hoax about Prague mayor</p> <p>Prague, Czech Republic</p> <p>Jun. 2020</p> | <p>Two Russian diplomats expelled from Czech Republic for hoax about poisoning Prague’s mayor with Ricin for wanting to remove statue of Soviet Marshall Ivan Konev. Linked to feud within Russian embassy.</p> | <p>Andrew Higgins, “Prague Says Ricin Plot was a Hoax, and Moves to Expel 2 Russians,” <i>New York Times</i>, 5 Jun. 2020.</p> <p>Joseph Fitsanakis, “Russia responds angrily to Czech expulsion of Russian diplomats in poison probe,” <i>IntelNews.org</i>, 8 Jun. 2020.</p> |
| <p>Arrested</p> <p>Ivan Safronov Jr (son)</p> <p>Russia</p> <p>Jul. 2020</p> | <p>Like his father, a reporter on military affairs, and later advisor to the head of Russia’s space agency, arrested and charged with treason. Allegedly, an article included state secrets.</p> | <p>Zahra Ullah and Darya Tarasova, “Russian space official arrested on suspicion of treason,” <i>CNN</i>, 8 Jul. 2020.</p> |
| <p>Third Assassination Attempt</p> <p>Alexei Navalny</p> <p>Russia</p> <p>Aug. 20, 2020</p> | <p>Navalny was poisoned before boarding a flight in Tomsk. After two days evacuated to Germany in serious condition and a coma, the substance that poisoned him is an unidentified cholinesterase inhibitor, which interferes with the nervous system. German reports link the substance to Novichok, a Russian chemical weapon also used against Skripal in the UK.</p> | <p>“Alexei Navalny: Putin critic ‘probably poisoned’ – doctors,” <i>BBC News</i>. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53892900.</p> <p>Melissa Eddy and Andrew Kramer, “Aleksei Navalny, Putin Critic in Coma, was Poisoned, German Doctors Say,” <i>New York Times</i>, 24 Aug. 2020.</p> |

15. Directorate S of the SVR handles Russian “illegal” agents around the world. “Illegals” do not have official cover, such as diplomatic status, and are ostensibly not associated with Moscow.