



Written by [Christian Gomez](#) on January 5, 2011

Russia Resurrects Soviet-era KGB

As if news of the restoration of the Soviet Union through the new Customs Union was not alarming enough on its own, Britain's *Telegraph* recently reported that Russia's "domestic FSB security service is trying to subsume the SVR foreign intelligence service in order to recreate a latter day KGB in all but name."



The plan to unite the two agencies stems from the SVR's recent failed overseas espionage activities, such as in the United States when the [FBI arrested 10 Russian spies](#), who were subsequently [deported](#).

Pavel Felgenhauer, an expert on Russia and frequent contributor to the [Jamestown Foundation](#), told the *Telegraph*, "The mass collapse, arrest and subsequent deportation of ten Russian illegal agents from the USA has become a pretext for the FSB to start a campaign."

According to the *Telegraph*, "The FSB was deliberately leaking details of the fiasco to the Russian press, he added, while its officers were anonymously heaping unprecedented criticism on the SVR."

To this Felgenhauer said, "The aim of the leaks is to speed up a decision about the reorganisation of the SVR. We are talking about either a straight merger with the FSB or replacement of the current SVR leadership with 'strong loyalists.'"

The claims made by the *Telegraph* and Felgenhauer seem to suggest that an internal rivalry between the agencies is brewing, which will lead to the inevitable amalgamation of the agencies into one, as the FSB is set to absorb the SVR into its fold.

Despite the close collaboration between the FSB and the SVR, each organization has its own respected overhead and leadership structure apart from the other. This double bureaucracy is viewed as both unnecessary and an impediment to operating as coherently or efficiently as their infamous Soviet predecessor.

The differences are truly only cosmetic, as the operational activities remain more or the less the same since the KGB was founded over 90 years ago.

According to the book [KGB/FSB's New Trojan Horse: Americans of Russian Descent](#) (2008), by Konstantin Preobrazhensky, a former Lt. Colonel in the KGB who defected to the United States in 1993:

The KGB, the notorious Russian political police, has changed its names 15 times! The changes were always made in order to symbolize renovation, reforms, abandoning the criminal past; but, in fact, the only thing that really changed was the name.

Preobrazhensky outlines the history of the KGB from its founding on December 20, 1917 to its current



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covert intelligence operations within the Russian Eastern Orthodox church in the United States.

At the time of its founding the organization was known as the Cheka, which stands for the “Extraordinary Commission for Fighting Counter-Revolution, Speculation and Sabotage.” It is from that name that the term “chekists” for its officers originated and is still used today among FSB and SVR officers.

The name KGB, which stands for “Committee of State Security,” did not become the official name until 1954. Between 1917 and 1954, the organization underwent a change of various different abbreviations/names, such as: GPU (1922), OGPU (1923), NKVD (1934), NKGB (1943), MGB (1946), MVD (1953), and finally KGB (1954).

The name KGB lasted until 1991, at which time it was renamed AFB, or the “Agency for Federal Security.”

Because the KGB/AFB was too large for the taste of Boris Yeltsin and the Russian oligarch leadership of the 1990s, several services were detached from the organization and became independent ministries, identified by Preobrazhensky as the following:

1. Intelligence. Later it was called the SVR, the Foreign Intelligence Service, which still exists today.
2. Secret technical divisions. They became FAPSI, the Federal Agency of Governmental Communication and Information, until 2004.
3. Presidential bodyguards, later named as FSO, the Federal Guard Service.
4. Border Guards, which in fact used to be the 200,000 people’s KGB Armed Forces. They were made an independent ministry until 2004.
5. The remaining part of the former KGB was concentrated mostly on counter-intelligence it was renamed three times:
 - a. In 1991 as MB, (Ministry of Security);
 - b. In 1993 as FSK, (Federal Counter-Intelligence Service);
 - c. In 1995 as FSB (Federal Security Services). This name has been retained until today.

The full extent of the KGB’s functions can best be described as rolling into one agency the work of the FBI, CIA, Secret Service, and U.S. Border Patrol — undoubtedly its power was vast.

Preobrazhensky tells how during the heyday of the Soviet Union, chekists proudly called themselves “the armed unit of the Communist Party.”

Despite the fact that the “Communist party apparatus was not able to survive the 1991 restructuring,” Preobrazhensky writes, “Its ‘armed unit’, however, did survive.” He adds: “The FSB and the Communist Party share the same ideas.”

Regarding the alleged “fall” of Communism in Russia and FSB/SVR espionage recruiting, Preobrazhensky states:

Although the *chekists* even now remain Communists in their hearts, they cannot risk asking a Western intellectual liberal to fight for Lenin’s ideal. Since the Westerner truly believes that



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Russia has finished with Communism, he would be confused by the double-talk.

Preobrazhensky, like fellow KGB defector Anatoliy Golitsyn, author of the book [New Lies for Old](#), asserts that Communism never fell in Russia and that it remains the driving force behind the FSB's and SVR's current active measures abroad.

In expressing some of the organizations' mishaps, in a recent speech commemorating the 90th anniversary of the founding of what is today the FSB/SVR, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev revealed the regional extent of the services' foreign operations: "Failures happen to the secret services all over the world. It's especially hard when they are due to the betrayal of the Motherland. There can be no justification of this."

It is as a result of these "failures" that the Russian government sees the need to re-merge and streamline the agencies into the one unified agency it was during the Soviet-era.

This re-merger is believed to have the full support of Russian Prime Minister Putin, who was himself a KGB officer in East Germany in the 1980s and later appointed head of the FSB from 1998 until 1999 when he became the President of Russia.

Putin's personal preference for the FSB is well known and it should come as no surprise that he would support an FSB-led merger of the two agencies in an attempt to restore the intelligence apparatus as it was under the Soviet Union that he so much longs for.

An FSB takeover of the SVR could be a foreshadowing of Russia's political future, suggesting that Putin might seek another run for the presidency in Russia's upcoming 2012 presidential election, which coincides with the United States' presidential election.

The year 2012 also marks the first year of the Customs Union, between Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus and possibly Ukraine if it heeds Putin's advice — a like possibility so long as Victor Yanukovich is the President of Ukraine.

The elimination of trade barriers, as well as the creation of a common currency among the former Soviet republics, plus the ever-increasing military buildup of the Russian Federation coupled with the resurrection of a unified Soviet-style KGB — these events all add up to a warning to the West that "there is bear in the woods," as the famous 1984 President Reagan reelection commercial put it. The era of discreet deception is over, and Russia's reemergence validates the forewarnings of KGB defectors such as Golitsyn, Preobrazhensky and Sergei Tretyakov that the Cold War never truly ended, and that the Kremlin is no friend of Washington or the West.

Photo: Former President President George W. Bush and Russian Prime Minister Putin at the 33rd G8 summit, June 2007



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