

MAGAZINE

RAZVEDCHIK

We search for knowledge not for glory's sake — But to learn the truth for the good of our State!

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MEMORY OF THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR IS OUR CONSCIENCE AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY

V. V. PUTIN

KTRV CEO B.V.OBNOSOV:
"OUR MOTTO IS: RIGHT
ON TARGET!"

"THERE ARE NO TRIFLES IN WAR".
ON THE 115TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HERO
OF THE SOVIET UNION N. I. KUZNETSOV

REPORTS TO STALIN ON THE
EVE OF THE WAR: DECLASSIFIED
ARCHIVES OF THE SVR OF RUSSIA

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ON THE VERY FIRST DAY OF THE WAR
THE PEOPLE MADE THEIR CHOICE:
IN THE HOUR OF NEED,
BE WITH THEIR FATHERLAND,
STAND FOR IT TO DEATH.
NEVER SURRENDER HOMELAND
TO THE ENEMY.

V. V. PUTIN



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**"All those who draw
the sword will perish
by the sword"**

**The results of the First
International Security Forum**

On May 26-29, the first International Security Forum was held in the Moscow Region at the venues of the "Live Arena" multifunctional complex and "Patriot" Central Park. Sergey Naryshkin, Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia, participated in its work, including the 14th International Meeting of high-level representatives responsible for security issues.

The event was organized by the Security Council of the Russian Federation (SCRF), which invited 145 delegations from more than 120 countries to the forum. Representatives were sent, in particular, from 50 out of 54 African states, all of Moscow's BRICS and SCO partners, and countries of the Middle East, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Guests included security council secretaries, national security advisers to heads of state, heads of law enforcement agencies and special services, foreign ambassadors, leading scientists, and relevant experts. The total number of delegates exceeded 5,000.

In his welcoming video address to the gathering, Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized the importance of maintaining direct and professional dialogue among the countries, noting: *"We advocate for the closest cooperation, for adherence to the principles of equal and indivisible security. We believe that work in such significant strategic areas is particularly relevant now, as a multipolar world is emerging. And Russia is actively participating in this work."*

The forum aims to find solutions to problems and promote the enhancement of pragmatic cooperation to



protect against internal and external threats. The ideas and proposals expressed at the forum will serve to develop our countries' security partnership and will contribute to achieving a lasting balance of power in the world."

Sergey Naryshkin, Director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, who delivered a keynote speech at the opening of the event, gave the following assessment of the current international situation: "It must be acknowledged that the main international trend at present is a significant

increase in conflict. The number of political and military crises is constantly growing, the consequences of which are felt far beyond their geographical boundaries. Many modern politicians are demonstrating an ever-decreasing ability and inclination to conduct constructive negotiations aimed at a positive outcome. Brute force is becoming the primary foreign policy instrument. International law, based on the United Nations Charter, is increasingly giving way to the "law of might." And this law, in turn, is often applied contrary to common sense.

The "drums of war" are especially loud on the European continent. Europe, one might say, is rapidly moving toward becoming — as it did in the last century — the epicenter of global conflict. The European Union is heavily arming itself, rapidly transforming from a transnational political and economic project into a military alliance. It's no secret that this alliance is directed against our country. Russophobic Kaja Kallas, the voice of Europe's totalitarian-liberal elite, says it bluntly — I quote: "The EU's task is to increase support for Ukraine while simultaneously

preparing for a direct conflict with Russia." In the White Paper on European Defense presented by the European Commission last year, Ukraine is defined as the "front line of European security." Readiness for a large-scale armed conflict by 2030 is embedded in the EU's key conceptual documents — the White Paper on European Defense and the ReArm Europe Plan 2030. From the perspective of European elites, it is to their advantage to prolong the Ukrainian conflict as long as possible, counting on Russia's strategic exhaustion and eventual defeat.

Based on this, Europeans are attempting to torpedo any attempts at a peaceful settlement in Ukraine. At the same time, they are providing every possible military and financial assistance to the Kyiv regime, fueling its insane ambitions."

In his speech, the Director of SVR specifically drew attention to the extremely destructive role played by Great Britain today: "As on the eve of both world wars, this evil and cynical genius of Europe is literally inciting its continental allies to a direct confrontation with Russia. It convinces

them of the possibility of taking historical revenge on Moscow for past defeats, and this, as we know, resonates with many French and German generals and politicians. Across the Channel, there are rumors that the Ukrainian army's manpower potential is limited, meaning they will soon have to look for new 'cannon fodder.'

With the British playing a leading role, a system of bilateral agreements has been created that solidifies the strategic rapprochement of Great Britain, France, and Germany on clearly anti-Russian



Head of the Chinese delegation, Politburo member, Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China Chen Wenqing (first left) during negotiations with Russian partners. May 28, 2026

involved with the hypocritical and treacherous Albion; it will deceive you anyway, then deceive you again, and then "wash its hands off."

S.E. Naryshkin concluded his speech with the following words: *"The world will remain imbalanced and insecure for a long time. We live in an era of change, which means that 'peace is but a dream.' But instability contains not only risks and challenges, but also opportunities. This is a living, dynamic existence that differs fundamentally from the deadening unipolar order or colonial lawlessness. I am confident that the future belongs to countries that draw strength not from the notion of their own exceptionalism, but from respect for their own and other countries' traditions, and that strive not for profit and domination, but for prosperity and harmony. This is what multipolarity is. And 'all those who draw the sword will perish by the sword.' That's where we stand"*

The event also featured speeches by Chen Wenqing, Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China; Alexander Grigoryevich Volfovich, State Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Belarus; Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of the Republic of India; Ri Chang-dae, Director of the National Intelligence Agency of the DPRK, and many others. Their speeches touched upon virtually every aspect of countering significant threats — from nuclear danger, militarization of space, and modern technologies to terrorism and illegal migration.



Director of the National Intelligence Agency of the DPRK Ri Chang-dae (third left) during negotiations with Russian partners. May 28, 2026



Full text of S.E. Naryshkin's speech on the website of the SVR of Russia

principles. A kind of new cordial agreement — l'Entente cordiale, as it has already been dubbed in the Western press. For my Motherland, let me remind you, participation in the Entente more than a century ago ended in vile betrayal by the allies and military intervention on the Russian territory. Therefore, I want to give a good piece of advice to the Germans and French: finally learn the lessons of history and do not get

In addition to the meeting of high-ranking representatives, a number of theme sessions were held during the forum, including within the framework of BRICS, the CIS, Russian partnerships with ASEAN, Central Asia, Sahel countries, a briefing for African states, roundtables, academic conferences, and discussion panels — a total of over 20 consultations in various formats. Furthermore, intensive and fruitful talks were held on the sidelines of the event between the Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia S.E. Naryshkin and a number of heads of partner security agencies.

Over two dozen exhibition displays were set up at the forum's open venues, introducing guests to comprehensive security solutions from Russian law enforcement ministries and agencies, state corporations, and defense enterprises.

In particular, the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service stand showcased the latest technical security systems used to protect Russian missions abroad which have proven their high effectiveness in practice. These included modern domestic developments such as high-tech inspection equipment: introscope tomographs, explosives detectors, radiation monitors, and a mobile modular unit. Integrated perimeter protection systems for Russian missions abroad against various ground and air threats, as well as video surveillance systems utilizing artificial intelligence-based algorithms, including contactless biometric identification,

S.E. Naryshkin (center) studies the exposition dedicated to protection of Russian missions abroad. "Live Arena". May 28, 2026

Inspection equipment and other special purpose equipment in the SVR of Russia pavilion at the International Security Forum

were presented as a separate, highly relevant and in-demand area of special equipment development.

Given the scale of the event and the level of representation of its participants, many observers have already dubbed the Moscow forum an analogue of the Munich Security Conference. This is perhaps quite

acceptable, but with one caveat: unlike Western institutions, which have long since become instruments of pressure steeped in bloc mentality, Moscow has offered the global community a platform where one can speak with partners on equal terms and without any preconditions. Clearly, the future belongs to forums like this one. ▀





Dear readers! Dear friends!

I am glad to have the opportunity to address you prior to the Day of Russia and on the eve of the next anniversary of one of the most tragic events in the history of our country — the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. In these days we remember all those who stood up for their homeland, those who did not submit to the invaders, defended the freedom and independence of our country at the cost of their life. In today's world, where there are many lies and injustice, it is so important to preserve the historical truth about those heroic days and the immortal exploits of our compatriots. We are responsible to future generations for passing on this knowledge to them.

I remember the war. It began when I was a child living in Stalingrad. Sometimes I felt terrified, but in my heart there was confidence in our imminent Victory, because such are our people and army — powerful and strong in their desire to defeat the hated enemy. When we returned from the evacuation to our mutilated but unconquered hometown, the front was still nearby. And we, children, performed in hospitals with poems and songs to the accordion. We read and sang to them, our defenders, who went into battle only the day before and were not afraid of anything for the sake of our Motherland.

Russia is a great country. We have brave people, courageous warriors who are always ready to rise up to defend the Fatherland. It is gratifying to see that the spirit of victors is still strong in us. Today we are smashing the enemy again, bringing our new victory closer.

Many people remember the song "Hope", which has become a talisman for everyone who is far away from home. Writing it together with my husband, Nikolai Dobronravov, we thought, of course, about the intelligence officers as well. I sincerely wish you, dear soldiers of the invisible front, that the Unknown star would always bring you good luck on your difficult path! Don't be afraid of anything and always go ahead!

Alexandra Pakhmutova, Soviet and Russian composer,
Hero of Socialist Labor, Hero of Labor of the Russian Federation

A. Пахмутова

2
April
1996

The Treaty on the Establishment of a Community of Russia and Belarus — now the Union State — was signed. To commemorate this event, the 2nd of April is declared the Day of Unity of the Peoples of Russia and Belarus by the decrees of both countries' Presidents. For 30 years, Moscow and Minsk have been actively working to further the sustainable development of the Union State, including in the special services domain. The SVR of Russia and the KGB of the Republic of Belarus hold consultations and share information on a regular basis, cooperating closely in the spheres of security and defense from external threats.

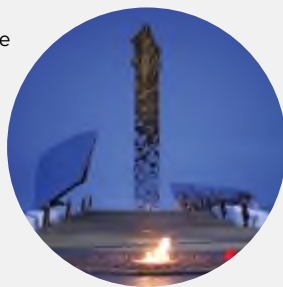


16
April
1911

Guy Burgess, one of the members of the Cambridge Five, a group of British assistants of the USSR foreign intelligence, was born in Devonport (Great Britain) in the family of an officer. After graduating from Cambridge University in 1934, he was recruited by the Soviet intelligence officer Arnold Deutsch on an ideological basis. He worked for the BBC radio corporation, then for MI6 and the Foreign Office, and provided Moscow with valuable documentary materials. In 1951, due to the threat of arrest, he was transferred to the USSR, where he continued to assist the Soviet secret services.

19
April
2026

Russia marked the first Remembrance day for of the victims of the genocide of the Soviet people perpetrated by the Nazi and their accomplices during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45. The date is timed to coincide with the publication of the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR No. 39 of April 19, 1943 *"On measures of punishment for German fascist villains guilty of murder and torture of the Soviet civilian population and captured Red Army soldiers..."* that officially registered the systemic purposeful policy of the Nazi to exterminate the Soviet civilians and settled the legal basis for bringing the war criminals to account. A monumental embodiment of the commemoration of the victims is a memorial complex (*in the picture*) opened in the Gatchina district of Leningrad Oblast following the initiative of the Russian Historical and the Russian Military Historical societies.



21
April
1991

The Association of Veterans of Foreign Intelligence was established in Moscow (since 1996, the regional public organization "Veterans of Foreign Intelligence"), designed to conduct military-patriotic, memorial, and social-charitable work. Today it includes more than 20 specialized clubs and sections. One of the most important areas of activity is to attract talented young people to the ranks of the SVR of Russia, as well as their education in the spirit of patriotism and loyalty to the best traditions of intelligence.

27
April
1906

Giovanni Antonio Bertoni, a Comintern internationalist and Soviet intelligence officer (pseudonym "Marco"), was born in Faenza (Italy) into a working-class family. After graduating from technical school in 1921, he worked for the Fiat company. In 1923, he joined the Italian Communist Party; he was an active participant in the anti-fascist movement. He was arrested three times, went into hiding, and left for the USSR in 1925. He worked as a metalworker in Odessa. In 1931, he graduated from the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West. Since 1936, he served on the Executive Committee of the Comintern, then joined the INO OGPU. In 1943, he was sent abroad as a deep-cover intelligence officer. From 1954 until his sudden death in 1964, he worked in Latin America with his wife and colleague Africa de las Heras.



1
May
1921

Vasily Alekseevich Dozhdalev was born in the village of Lezvino, Rzhevsky district, Tver province. A volunteer of the Great Patriotic War, graduate of the Mosow Aviation Institute (MAI). In 1949, he was admitted into the foreign intelligence service, where he worked for more than 40 years. He traveled abroad multiple times and guided such valuable deep-cover intelligence officers as G. Blake, K. Molody, the Cohen-Kroger couple. In his last years of service, he taught at the Academy of Foreign Intelligence. Major General. He was awarded the Orders of the Red Star, the Red Banner of Labor, Glory, the Patriotic War of the first class, and many medals.



2
May
1926

Boris Nikodimovich Batraev was born in the village of Trebi in the Nagaibak district of the Chelyabinsk region. In 1943, he entered the Bauman Moscow Higher Technical College, and was soon transferred to the NKGB Higher School. He spent a quarter of a century on long-term missions abroad, including as a station chief in Sri Lanka and Pakistan. In 1955, he returned the archive of the Russian writer I.A. Bunin from Paris to the USSR. From 1987 to 1992, he headed the Cabinet of history of foreign intelligence. He was awarded the Orders of the Red Star, Friendship of Peoples, and many medals.

15
June
1996

By Decree of the President of the Russian Federation *"for the successful fulfillment of special tasks to ensure state security in conditions fraught with risk to life, and the courage and heroism shown at the same time"*, the title of Hero of Russia was awarded to foreign intelligence officers participating in the atomic project: Barkovsky Vladimir Borisovich, Kvasnikov Leonid Romanovich (posthumously), Cohen Leontine (posthumously), Feklisov Alexander Semenovich, Yatskov Anatoly Antonovich (posthumously).



17
June
1941

The top leadership of the Soviet Union was informed by the special report prepared by Pavel Mikhailovich Fitin (in the photo), the head of the Soviet foreign intelligence, on the basis of agents' information from Berlin and containing the following conclusion: *"All German military arrangements to prepare an armed uprising against the USSR have been entirely completed, and a strike can be expected at any time"*. In the same document, a statement of one of the main ideologists of the 3rd Reich, Alfred Rosenberg, was mentioned: *"The Soviet Union as a notion must be deleted from the geographical map"*.

22
June
1941

Nazi Germany treacherously attacked the USSR. Immediately after the start of the invasion, the Soviet intelligence promptly switched over on a war footing organizing large-scale reconnaissance and sabotage work in the near and far enemy rear, thus made a significant contribution to achieving Victory. By the decree of the President of the Russian Federation dated June 8, 1996, *"in memory of the victims of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, as well as all wars for freedom and independence of our Fatherland"*, June 22 was declared a Day of Remembrance and Mourning.



Standing together against the ideology of neo-Nazism

Forum for heads of CIS intelligence services veterans organizations

On the initiative of the Council of Veterans of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia, the Scientific and Practical Conference "Ideology of Neo-Nazism: Roots, Influence, and Counteraction" was held in St. Petersburg on May 13-15, 2026, as part of the regular meeting of the heads of CIS intelligence veterans organizations. Delegations from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan participated in the conference. A special guest of the forum was Isabelle Paques, the daughter of the Soviet foreign intelligence informant Georges Paques.

Deputy Directors of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation Sergey Yuryevich Vinokurov and Andrey Fedorovich Rodionov welcomed the delegates, emphasizing the importance of preserving historical memory and of active involvement of CIS intelligence veteran organizations in these activities.

Chairman of the SVR Council of Veterans Mikhail Vitalievich Pogudin opened the conference, held at the venue of the CSTO Parliamentary Assembly. In his speech he noted: *"In the face of the resurgence of the 'brown plague' in many European countries, and especially in Ukraine, where Nazi symbols have long been used and, as in the times of the Third*

Reich, even torchlight processions are held, representatives of the CIS intelligence veteran organizations considered it their duty to draw attention to the topic of Nazism, its ideological roots, and its influence on modern society, primarily on youth. We must erect a strong barrier against the revival of this terrible ideology."



Isabelle Paques also spoke about current alarming trends: *"My grandfather and father, both anti-fascists, taught me to recognize the signs and pitfalls of Nazism. For at least the last ten years, I have been noticing precisely these same signs in many European countries, including my native France. Moreover, these processes have considerably intensified since 2017. Europe is becoming exactly as Hitler envisioned it: with ruined religious and educational institutions, an impoverished population that cares only about its own survival and approves any measures to restrict freedom and democracy in order to avoid the terrible dangers with which authorities intimidate the people."*

The need to counter neo-Nazism and eradicate the roots of this ideology was also supported by Professor Maxim Vitalyevich Shevtsov of the Academy of National Security of the Republic of Belarus, Amangeldy Edrisovich Tazhenov, a veteran of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the State Committee for National Security of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Uchkun Zakirbekovich Eratiev, Head

of the public organization of veterans of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic, and Narzullo Mirzoevich Valiev, a representative of the Council of Veterans of the State Committee for National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan.

M.V. Shevtsov, in particular, noted: *"The memory of the events of the*

Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 is our pillar, our tool for countering neo-Nazism. In May 1981, Georges Simenon told Yulian Semyonov: 'Never forget that Nazism is still very strong, because there are plenty of idiots in our beautiful and small world who believe that purity of blood determines everything.' It's a shame that it hasn't gone away."

A.E. Tazhenov, in his turn, emphasized: *"Unfortunately, the moment has been lost, and we truly need to work together once again to fight manifestations of Nazism. It is also true that a nation that forgets its past has no future. And in this regard, we need to work together. It is the special agencies of the CIS countries that have got the most authentic materials about the Great Patriotic War and can counter the distortion of historical truth. In Kazakhstan, the year 2025 has passed under the sign of our common Victory in the Great Patriotic War. We preserve the memory of the unparalleled valor of our compatriots."*

As a result of the conference, the participants approved the text of a Memorandum, which states, in particular: *"Now, when the outcomes*



of World War II, unleashed by the Nazi Germany, are being revised and falsified to suit selfish political interests, and when Nazism is once again being revived, it is important to close ranks in defense of the truth and stand united in fighting manifestations of neo-Nazism, racism, Russophobia, anti-Semitism, and other destructive ideologies."

Furthermore, an Appeal to young intelligence officers of CIS countries was adopted, emphasizing: "The duty of every person to the past and the future is to do everything possible to prevent the terrible tragedy of World War II from recurring, to remember its lessons, and to recognize the threat posed to humanity by the revival of

Nazism, the seeds of which, with the support of the West, are once again sprouting on our planet."

The meeting was summarized by Professor of the Yuri Andropov Academy of Foreign Intelligence, Boris Maximovich Semyonov, who addressed the participants with the following words: "For centuries, Russia has been the center of community for many ethnic groups. For us, the West is not an example, but only one of the 'other significant' world centers of power. And we hope that in the future, if it becomes necessary to form a broad anti-fascist and anti-Nazi coalition, other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, whose citizens, like Russians, are the heirs of the

victors of 1945, will join it. We believe that the sacred, grateful memory of the Great Victory of the Soviet people, consisting of many ethnic groups, will always unite us."

As part of the forum, delegations from veterans organizations visited the Piskarevskoye Memorial Cemetery, where they honored the memory of the victims of the Great Patriotic War, and also participated in the opening of the Invisible Front art exhibition at the Officers' House, which features works by employees of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service. 🇷🇺

Delegations from CIS veterans organizations at the Piskarevskoye Memorial Cemetery. May 14, 2026.



3rd Trubnikov Readings

On April 22, the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library in Moscow hosted the regular scientific readings, dedicated to the memory of Vyacheslav Ivanovich Trubnikov — an outstanding statesman, diplomat, intelligence officer, scientist, Hero of Russia. This year's event, annually organized by the National Research Institute for Development of Communications was dedicated to the theme "The near abroad: élites and their strategies".

In the context of the main goals of the readings — actualization of scientific legacy of V.I. Trubnikov and development of his ideas in the field of contemporary foreign policy processes — the participants of the meeting discussed strategies of cooperation of political élites of the near abroad countries and transformation of communicational mechanisms in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment.

In his welcoming speech to the audience Director of the Institute Vladislav Ivanovich Gasumyanov emphasized, "Vyacheslav Ivanovich Trubnikov was not only a prominent intelligence officer and diplomat, who left a striking mark in international affairs from Indian issues to countering international terrorism. He also pioneered cooperation between the post-Soviet countries and participated in key, often delicate and crucial, negotiations. It is also important that Vyacheslav Ivanovich as a member of the Monitoring Council made a significant contribution to the development of our institute. Today's meeting continues the study and development of his scientific and intellectual legacy and pays tribute to the memory of this brilliant and outstanding statesman and scientist."

The discussion was attended by the representatives of the Presidential Executive Office of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, as well as prominent political figures and scientists such as Russian Senator Larisa Vadimovna Melnik, Chief Researcher at the Institute of

Oriental studies of the Russian Academy of sciences (RAS) Vyacheslav Yakovlevich Belokrenitsky, Head of the Department of History and Politics of European and American Countries at MGIMO-University of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia Vladislav Vladislavovich Vorotnikov, Director of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the RAS Aleksey Egorovich Zagrebin, Deputy Director for Research at the National Research Institute for Development of Communications Valentina Vyacheslavovna Komleva, and many others.

The high level and interdisciplinary essence of the analysis have confirmed the status of the Trubnikov Readings as a professional platform for discussing key foreign

policy processes to strengthen the dialogue between the scientific community and government institutions. 🇷🇺



Vyacheslav Ivanovich Trubnikov

Was born on April 25, 1944 in Irkutsk into a working-class family. He graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) in 1967 and started work in the Foreign Intelligence Service. From 1971 to 1977 and from 1984 to 1990 he worked in India and Bangladesh respectively. Upon his return, he headed one of the units of the central office. In January 1992, he became the First Deputy Director of the Foreign Intelligence

Service, then from January 1996 to May 2000 he was Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service. In June 2000, he was appointed First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Special Representative of the President of Russia to the CIS countries. From 2004 to 2009, he was Ambassador of Russia to India. In his last years, he worked at Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations of the RAS and the National Research Institute for Development of Communications. Hero of Russia. He was awarded two Orders of the Red Star, the Order "For Merit to the Fatherland" IV class, and many medals.



A valid alternative

SCO as a new type of organization in theory and in practice

Text: Timofey Vyacheslavovich Bordachev, Professor at the Higher School of Economics, Program Director of the Valdai Club, Doctor of Political Sciences

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was founded 25 years ago, the first multilateral structure in Eurasia to offer an alternative to Western-centric formats since the end of the Cold War. Today, the SCO continues to confidently carry the banner of a new type of interstate association, forming the basis for international security and cooperation on the continent.

The fundamental novelty of the organization in comparison with similar structures is due to three key points. Firstly, in terms of its membership and internal structure, the SCO does not suppose leadership of any of its member states. Secondly, the goals and objectives of the organization are strictly limited to issues of the international agenda and cooperation and do not allow interference in the internal affairs of its members. Thirdly, the latter do not set themselves the task of creating a military-political bloc or alliance aimed at gaining dominance on a regional or, moreover, global scale.

Over the past quarter century, the main areas of cooperation among the participating countries have been firmly established. These areas primarily concern ensuring regional

security (the fight against the "three evils" — terrorism, extremism and separatism), as well as issues of economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation, within the framework of which mechanisms for practical interaction among states and coordination of their actions at the national level have been created. Several stages of expansion (in 2017, 2023 and 2024) have made it possible to give the SCO a pan-Eurasian character, while preserving the spirit, letter and goal-setting laid down in the original documents.

The ceremony of taking a family photo of heads of the SCO member states. Tianjin (China). August 31, 2025

Today, the SCO is the largest regional organization in terms of the population of its member countries: 3.5 billion people — half of the world's population. As for its current role on the world stage, I will quote the words our President said a year ago: *"The SCO makes a tangible contribution to strengthening the atmosphere of cooperation and mutual trust on the entire Eurasian continent, thereby*

Today, the SCO is the largest regional organization in terms of the population of its member countries: 3.5 billion people – half of the world's population.



helping to create the political and socio-economic prerequisites for the formation of a new system of stability, security and peaceful development in Eurasia."

The mention of stability is no coincidence. Let me remind you that the creation of the SCO was directly related to the aggravation of the situation in the region. In 1994, the United States and its allies embarked on an expansion of NATO at the expense of the countries of Eastern Europe and the former USSR. At that time, the point of view that prevailed in

the West was support for the strategy of exerting military and political pressure on Russia, limiting its fundamental interests in the field of security and preparing the necessary material base. The Westerners' rejection of the concept of security without dividing lines meant the prospect of a complete destabilization of the region with likely negative effects for Eurasia as a whole. Under these conditions, it was extremely important to quickly stop the conflict potential that was accumulating near the borders of Russia and

China, two natural allies and, simultaneously, potential rivals of the West striving for hegemony. Therefore, the primary objectives of the informal structure created in 1996 — the Shanghai Five, the forerunner of the SCO consisting of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia and Tajikistan — were to increase mutual trust, form good-neighborly relations among the participating countries and eliminate the causes of interstate conflicts.

They were mostly resolved in the early years of the Shanghai Process. The last territorial dispute in Central Asia was settled within the framework of the Kyrgyz-Tajik agreement on the state border signed in the spring of 2025. At the same time, by the early 2000s, the destabilizing effect of the ongoing internal conflict in Afghanistan had increased significantly. The Taliban Movement's rise to power in this country in 1996 had marked the beginning of a new stage of civil war and the spread of terrorism and extremism throughout the region. The risks of such a development were understood in all the states that stood at the origins of the SCO, since some of them had already faced the problem of armed separatism on their territory.

Already in 2002, just a year after the setting up of the SCO, an agreement

on the creation of a Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) with headquarters in Tashkent was signed at the summit in St. Petersburg. Today, the RATS is an effective mechanism for coordinating collective efforts to counter the spread of terrorism, separatism and extremism, the three main evils in Central Asia. Within its framework, practical cooperation among the competent authorities of the SCO member states is carried out on a permanent basis, the legislative framework is being harmonized, and a unified strategy is being developed. Since 2006, multilateral exercises and joint border operations aimed at eliminating cross-border crime, including the smuggling of drugs, weapons and explosives, have been regularly conducted in order to increase the anti-terrorist potential of the participating countries.

The SCO is not a military-political alliance and does not oppose itself to NATO, the United States or the European Union.

The effectiveness of these efforts is evidenced by the fact that many, including non-regional, structures are interested in cooperation with the SCO RATS. In addition, by decision of the heads of state, the SCO RATS will be transformed into a universal center that will deal with rapid response to the full range of threats in the region.

At the same time, it should be noted that from the first days of its existence, the Shanghai Five was criticized in the West, where its appearance was seen as a desire to

solve key security issues in Eurasia without regard for Washington and Brussels. With the deepening of cooperation and the progressive movement of the Five towards the creation of a full-fledged association, this negative perception only intensified, despite the fact that the SCO is not a military-political alliance and does not oppose itself to NATO, the United States or the European Union.

The ceremony of hoisting the flag of Iran at the SCO RATS headquarters. Tashkent. July 4, 2023





Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

Was founded by participants of the Shanghai Five informal association that arose in 1996, consisting of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia and Tajikistan. By 1999, within the framework of the Shanghai Process, permanent cooperation mechanisms were in place in the format of meetings of relevant ministers and departmental expert groups. "The Declaration of Shanghai Cooperation Organization" was signed on June 15, 2001 in Shanghai (China). At the same time, Uzbekistan joined the Five and the "Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism" was adopted, which outlined the main activity of the new structure. In 2003, the decision of the Moscow Summit established a permanent SCO Secretariat with headquarters in Beijing. India and Pakistan became member states of the SCO in 2017, Iran in 2023, and the Republic of Belarus in 2024.

It should also be emphasized that the organization turned rather quickly from an informal into a full-fledged international structure with working mechanisms, staff, and budget. One of the reasons for this development is the fact that by 2001, the crisis of the post-Cold war world order and the inability of the West to act as a universal guarantor of security had become apparent to many members of the world community. Moreover, after NATO's unprovoked aggression against Yugoslavia in 1999 and the US invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), it became clear that in many ways it was the actions of Western countries that were the source of instability.

Under these conditions, the demand for the SCO as an open platform for equal dialogue could not help but increase. Many are attracted by the orientation of its participants to do what the West has proved unable to do: increase mutual trust, strengthen regional stability, and seek ways to resolve pressing and potential problems in relations among states. This resulted in several waves of expansion of the organization, which added to its prestige on the world stage and finally eliminated the ground for accusations of an alleged Russian-Chinese alliance to control Eurasia.

The main thing that unites the participants is an understanding of the integrity and indivisibility of security, which should be equal for all, as well as a categorical rejection of any form of interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states. The members of the association promote mutually

beneficial projects of broad international cooperation and disagree with the confrontational agenda imposed by the West.

It is encouraging that despite the objective difficulties in finding a balance between politics and economics in the work of such a large-scale structure as the SCO, a lot of attention is also paid to the economic aspect of cooperation. The Interbank Consortium and the Business Council are already functioning within the organization. In 2022, at the Samarkand summit, a Roadmap was signed to gradually increase the share of national currencies in mutual settlements, and in 2025, in Tianjin, a decision was made to establish the SCO Development Bank — extremely important steps in terms of further deepening economic cooperation and reducing dependence on the financial infrastructure controlled by the United States and its allies. The near-term plans include creation of proper payment/settlement and depository instruments and forming a bank for joint investment projects. At the same time, it must be recognized that the economic direction of the SCO's activities does not yet fully meet its weight on the world stage and needs to be strengthened.

Another, no less pressing problem is the organization's overloaded agenda caused by the wide variety of challenges and tasks facing its members. Critics accuse the SCO of being "omnivorous" and trying to artificially saturate the summits with various initiatives, regardless of whether the participating countries are really

ready to cooperate on them. This, of course, is far from the truth. The main reason for the permanent expansion of the range of topics discussed in the SCO is the extreme inefficiency, almost paralysis, of most of the existing international institutions and dialogue platforms controlled by the United States and its allies, which is why there is a growing demand for alternative formats and solutions in the world.

In an effort to maintain its hegemony, the West will certainly continue to try to torpedo any competing projects, including driving a wedge among their participants, and the SCO countries need to be prepared for anything. But, as last year's summit in Tianjin showed, Washington has no simultaneous leverage over China, India and Russia — the key states of Eurasia and the main actors of the Shanghai process. Moreover, it is the impulsive actions of the current US administration that greatly contribute to the further rapprochement of Moscow, New Delhi and Beijing, as well as the popularity of their agenda among the population of the Global South.

Perhaps the most serious test of the SCO's strength and the main challenge to its unity and cohesion was the unprovoked aggression of the United States and Israel against Iran, a member state of the organization. I think it would not be an exaggeration to say that the SCO's future depends on how it responds to this challenge. The fact that the members of the association promptly issued a joint statement, pointing out the inadmissibility of the use of force and emphasizing the need to ensure Iran's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity, indicates that the difficulties could be overcome and the SCO is able to continue its development as an effective alternative to the current selfish world order, focused solely on the welfare of the West.

The organization turned rather quickly from an informal into a full-fledged international structure with working mechanisms, staff, and budget.

We can say that the SCO is the flagship for building a new, just world, where any disagreements and contradictions among countries will be resolved not according to the laws of the jungle or to the principle of "might makes right," but exclusively in the legal framework. Let me remind you that in the Tianjin Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, adopted in September 2025, the members of the association reaffirmed their commitment to the formation of a representative and democratic multipolar world based on the UN Charter and other universally recognized principles and norms of international law, as well as on mutually beneficial and equal cooperation among all states.

The SCO is the flagship for building a new, just world, where any disagreements and contradictions among countries will be resolved not according to the laws of the jungle or to the principle of "might makes right," but exclusively in the legal framework.

Today, when the collective West openly flouts international norms, constantly changes the rules of the game, violates any agreements and arrangements that are unfavorable to it, and unleashes wars and armed conflicts all over the planet, this approach is especially relevant. We have no doubt that at the next summit of the organization, which will open this September in

Bishkek under the slogan "25 years of the SCO: together towards sustainable peace, development and prosperity," new concrete decisions will be taken that will allow the members of the association to make several more confident steps forward. 🚩

Leaders of India, Russia and China before a concert. Kazan. October 22, 2024



There will be no revenge. Neo-Nazism will not pass

Text: Viktor Petrovich Goremykin, Deputy Defense Minister of the Russian Federation - Chief of the Main Military-Political Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces, Army General

Modernity is never a full repetition of the past. Rather, it is its echo, a reminder of the lessons learned that demand deep study and critical analysis. The upcoming June events timed to Russia Day and the 85th anniversary of the start of the Great Patriotic War provide an opportunity to look at important historical events from the point of view of their relevance in the modern context and to draw the right conclusions for confident movement into the future.

On June 22, 1941, the Nazi Germany unleashed a war of extermination against the Soviet Union. More than 27 million people fell victim. At the cost of incredible efforts, our people crushed the enemy and defended the Fatherland, ensuring its decades of peaceful development.

Today, we once again find ourselves at the height of confrontation with the West. And we are fighting again, as our President has put it, *"for the very existence of our statehood."* We see a new generation of European politicians obsessed with inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia. Not only, like their ancestors, are they fostering fascism, they are also arming nationalists, using them as a battering ram against our country.

But where are the roots of this existential conflict?

It's unlikely that the racist ideas that underpinned Nazism arose in Munich beer halls. The mental model that proclaims Europeans the pinnacle of human civilization, and all other nations inferior, had been developing over centuries. Let's recall, for instance, the concept of the "white man's burden", widely popular among the British thanks to Rudyard Kipling, or the statements of our contemporary, Josep Borrell, the former head of EU diplomacy, who compared "privileged" Europe to a garden and the outside world to a jungle.

It was precisely this arrogance and belief in their own exceptionalism,

with a fundamental misunderstanding and categorical rejection of the religious and spiritual-moral values of the Russian people, coupled with greed and selfish motives, that became the key factors behind the Europeans' constant desire to enslave us and seize our lands.

This was the essence of all those numerous "crusades," repeatedly launched by "enlightened" Europe against Russia. 1240-1245 — Teutonic Order, Sweden, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and the Pope standing behind them. 1812 — Napoleon's Empire, Austria, Prussia, Duchy of Warsaw, Confederation of the Rhine, Bavaria, Duchy of Baden, Kingdom of Italy, and Naples. 1853-1856 — British, French, Ottoman Empires, and the Kingdom of Sardinia, with friendly neutrality on the part of the Austrian Empire, Kingdom of Prussia, and the Swedish-Norwegian Union. 1918-1920 — England, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Italy, Canada, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia, USA, Finland, France, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Estonia, and Japan.

The mental model that proclaims Europeans the pinnacle of human civilization, and all other nations inferior, had been developing over centuries.

N.E. Berzarin, Commander of Berlin (center) before the beginning of the parade of the Soviet troops near the walls of Reichstag. May 20, 1945

The Victory Parade on Red Square in Moscow. June 24, 1945

It would be useful to show this list — which is far from being complete — to the Western politicians blabbering like crazy that over the past 100 years, Russia has attacked 19 countries, some of them three or four times.

In 1941-1945, virtually all of Europe rallied under Hitler's banners. Thousands of soldiers were sent to the Soviet-German front by Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Romania, Finland, France, and other countries. Even nominally neutral Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden. British historian Chris Bishop provides interesting data on this matter. In a book devoted to the foreign formations of the Waffen-SS, he writes that there were more Frenchmen in German service than any other Western Europeans. It is no coincidence that by May 9, 1945, 23,136 representatives of that country were in Soviet captivity, along with 8,391 persons from Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg, 557 Danes and Norwegians, 452 Spaniards, and 97,881 soldiers of other nationalities: Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, and others.

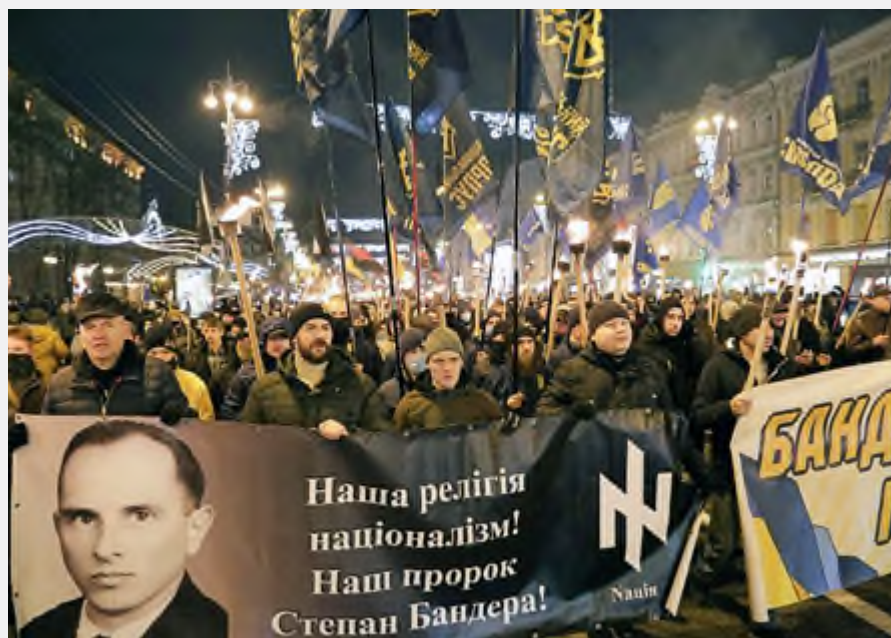
One should also keep in mind the considerable economic aid that many of the aforementioned countries provided to Hitler. I'll start with the Allies. At the very same time that Ford was assembling cars for the Red Army under the Lend-Lease program, its factories in Cologne, Algeria, and occupied France were producing vehicles for the Wehrmacht. So did General Motors, which owned Opel factories in Germany, producing not only cars but also armored vehicles,



bomber engines, mines, and torpedo detonators for the Third Reich. And although both companies today deny any connection to the Nazis, facts are stubborn things.

Let me give you another example. In 1942, the US Department of

Justice accused Standard Oil and several other American companies of conspiring with the German military chemical company IG Farben, which, among other things, produced the poison gas Zyklon-B, used in concentration camps for mass extermination.



A march of Ukrainian neo-Nazis.
Kyiv, January 1, 2021

of war and civilians brings us to another historical parallel.

On May 13, 1941, Wilhelm Keitel issued a decree "On military jurisdiction in the Barbarossa area and on special powers of troops." The document exempted Wehrmacht military personnel from military jurisdiction for crimes committed on the Soviet territory and, in particular, abolished criminal prosecution for actions against "hostile civilians."

Nor is it surprising that Europeans are markedly selective in their interpretation and coverage of numerous instances of gross violations of international humanitarian law, ignoring serious crimes and acts of violence committed by neo-Nazis in Donbas, Luhansk, and Kursk Oblast with approval of the Ukrainian authorities. Certainly, the West's methods and techniques for presenting biased information have been modernized, employing the full arsenal of modern technology. But the principles formulated by Goebbels and his followers have remained.

Moreover, many modern Western leaders no longer hide their ties to the Nazi past. Not only have they ceased to be embarrassed by their fascist ancestors, but they also give a standing ovation to the former executioners. For example, the grandfather of the current German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Josef Paul Sauvigny, was an SA Oberscharführer and a member of the NSDAP. As mayor of Brilon, he participated in the renaming of local streets in honor of Hitler and Göring. F. Mertz' father, Joachim, served the Third Reich no less loyally.

French President Emmanuel Macron's grandfather, André Macron, worked as a manager for the SNCF railway

The Europeans weren't far behind. The Czech Republic, with its powerful military factories, became the largest arsenal in Nazi Europe, supplying the Wehrmacht not only with tanks and armored personnel carriers but also with small arms and artillery. The country also produced combat aircraft for the Luftwaffe on a large scale. There were also a hospital train — "a gift from the Czech people to the warring Reich" — and parcels of warm knitted mittens sent to the Stalingrad cauldron.

In France, 80% of aircraft manufacturing enterprises, 70% of the metalworking industry, and 40% of the ferrous metallurgy industry worked for the Nazis. France also served as the Reich's main ship repair dock and transport supplier.

In small Belgium, the Germans seized 350,000 (!) automobiles for their own use — that's as many as the Soviet Union received under the Lend-Lease during the four years of the war. Even "neutral" Sweden and Switzerland supplied the Führer with iron ore, rare earth metals, and other strategic raw materials, and issued preferential loans. According to some estimates, the supply of bearings to the Reich by the Swedish company SKF alone prolonged the World War II by two years.

Today, the descendants of the collaborators who surrendered their countries to Hitler and participated in the plunder and extermination of our people have once again rallied under Nazi banners — this time in Ukraine. Their treatment of prisoners

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company during the German occupation. That same company whose leadership refused to apologize for 65 years for its role in genocide: between 1942 and 1944, the company transported more than 76,000 people to Nazi concentration camps.

By the way, even the very terms "European Union" and "European Economic Community" were practically coined at Hitler's instigation. The German Foreign Ministry's memorandum of September 9, 1943, described the structure of a future European Confederation, very similar to today's EU.

Today, Europe openly discusses its intention to continue the conflict in Ukraine until 2030 and openly declares that the European Union is preparing for a potential war with Russia. This is reinforced by Brussels' plans to significantly increase the EU's defense budget, which will grow more than fivefold over the next seven years (2028–2034), to €131 billion, compared to "only" €25.5 billion allocated for military needs from 2021 to 2027.

However, the process of rearmament in the Old World has been underway for quite some time and is rapidly gaining momentum. Since 2020, the production space of European companies producing missiles and ammunition has increased from 790,000 to 2.8 million (!) square meters.

For example, Poland's Mesko has increased production of the Piorun MANPADS from 300 to 1,300 units per year, and intends to double this figure by 2028. The company plans to increase production

Leaders of Great Britain, Germany and France K. Starmer, F. Merz and E. Macron on arrival to Ukraine. May 10, 2025

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of small-caliber ammunition fivefold, while that of 155 mm shells by 30-35 times. For that purpose it is building new military factories.

The German defense company Rheinmetall, which produced 70,000 155 mm artillery shells in 2022, plans to increase their output to 1.1 million by 2027 and to 1.5 million by 2030. Even German makers Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen and Opel have decided to refocus on weapons production.

What's this? Thirst for revenge? It wasn't we who consistently destroyed the post-war security architecture in Europe and moved NATO military bases to our borders. And the Ministry of War isn't located in Moscow. On the contrary, Russia has always advocated peace and setting up a multipolar system of

international relations that could ensure equal and indivisible security for all. Even under severe sanctions, Russia strove to the last to avoid a military scenario in Ukraine.

On December 15, 2021, we sent draft agreements on mutual security guarantees to Washington and Brussels proposing to preclude further NATO expansion eastward, return Alliance forces to the positions occupied in 1997, and renounce any form of military activity in Ukraine, other countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. All our initiatives were rejected.

Russia has never harbored any illusions about the West's ability to negotiate and is always prepared to respond appropriately to any unfriendly gestures directed at us.



Russia is not alone in this battle. We have got many like-minded people who, like us, reject any form of inequality, are unwilling to accept Western dictates, and refuse to succumb to its blackmail and threats.

Moreover, with the start of the special military operation (SMO), we have undergone a true revolution in weapons development. Since 2022, at the direction of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, a mechanism for the rapid exchange of information between units participating in the special military operation and weapons manufacturers has been established. A rapid feedback system has been established to evaluate the effectiveness of the latest weapons, military, and special equipment: data is collected directly on the battlefield, and feedback is received directly from military personnel.

As a result, in 2025 alone, over a thousand new products were tested in combat conditions. These include the Geran-2 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) with an improved guidance system, loitering munitions, fiber-optic drones, the Kuryer ground-based robotic weapon system, the Omich-Ogonyok transport robotic system, and many others. Importantly, technology developers receive comprehensive information on real-world operational experience. This allows them to quickly refine and scale the technologies they implement.

Another key aspect is leveraging the expertise of enthusiasts and the capabilities of private businesses. A dedicated structure, the Technical Council of the "People's Defense Industrial Complex," is effectively operating for this purpose. Last year, the highly sought-after Military Technology Initiative (Voentekh) project was launched, designed to promptly introduce cutting-edge developments and the best technical solutions into the armed forces.

Regular deliveries of weapons and military equipment play a key role in the successful completion of combat missions. In 2025, the volume of such supplies in the special military operation zone increased by a third. As a result, despite high-intensity combat, the Joint Group of Forces' supply level has reached 92%, and that of frontline units has reached 80%. Current needs for aircraft and helicopters, artillery, and logistics equipment, including medical transport, have been virtually met. The problem of shortage of artillery shells has been largely resolved.

Ultimately, this allows the Russian army to confidently maintain the strategic initiative and conduct active offensive operations in multiple directions simultaneously. Last year, the pace of advancement of the East, Center, and West force groups increased by 1.5 to 2 times compared to 2024. These figures represent significant results: the Kursk Oblast was liberated, important defensive points of the Ukrainian forces in the Donbas and Zaporizhzhia were destroyed, and the combat potential of the Ukrainian Armed Forces was reduced by a third. Overall, I can say that we are ahead of the enemy in

At the opening of a museum memorial complex dedicated to the feat of the heroes of the foreign military operation. Pyongyang, April 26, 2026

technology, methods, and techniques of combat. This advantage must be maintained by creating conditions for intensification of offensive operations and for the rapid achievement of all the objectives of the SMO.

It is gratifying that, as during the Great Patriotic War, the army and the people are united in their commitment to achieving our victory. We see the highest level of support that Russians provide to both the country's leadership and the Armed Forces, translating this into practical actions. Some of the most important examples have been the enlistment of citizens for contract service in the SMO zone, as well as their participation in the special operation as volunteers. I would like to emphasize that all contract recruitment plans are being fulfilled on time, and often ahead of schedule. Thanks to their conscious choice, nearly 410,000 citizens have volunteered for the SMO. Two-thirds of them are under 40 years of age, and more than a third have a higher or secondary vocational education.

I would like to separately mention the numerous volunteer organizations providing comprehensive assistance to military personnel. This assistance is often targeted and addressed to specific military units. The volume of funds collected and sent to the front, to medical facilities, and to new Russian and border regions is continually increasing. More and more of our fellow citizens, driven by a sense of unity, are joining these initiatives. The production of camouflage nets has become truly national. Letters to the front and small gifts — even the simplest items from civilian life — are invaluable to soldiers, reminding them that they are remembered and cared for.

In this regard, I would like to express my warm gratitude for their work in the SMO zone to the members of

the Public Council under the Russian Ministry of Defense. We also see the contribution to the common cause of the All-Russian Public Organization of Veterans of the Russian Armed Forces, the Trade Union of Civilian Personnel of the Russian Armed Forces, and many others.

The personal heroism and the highest combat and moral qualities demonstrated by our service members — true heirs of the Victorious Generation — deserve special mention. Since the beginning of the special military operation, hundreds of thousands of people have been awarded state decorations for bravery and courage in the performance of combat missions, and more than 600 have been awarded the title Hero of Russia. Among them are the first and, to date, the only two-time Hero of the Russian Federation, Major General Mikhail Gudkov; Senior Lieutenant Nurmagomed Gadzhimagomedov; Corporal of the Medical Service Lyudmila Bolilaya; Military Chaplain Father Antony Savchenko; war correspondent Yevgeny Poddubny; and many others.

Most importantly, every soldier, regardless of position or rank, possesses a clear understanding that they are fighting for a just cause. Every participant in the special operation understands that, unlike the enemy, driven by a thirst for historical revenge, we defend the sovereignty and independence of the state. We fight for our right to free and

independent development, so that our children and grandchildren can live without fear for their future. And to do this, we must go all the way and eradicate this absolute evil — fascism. And we will definitely do it; victory will be ours!

Russia is not alone in this battle. We have got many like-minded people who, like us, reject any form of inequality, are unwilling to accept Western dictates, and refuse to succumb to its blackmail and threats. First and foremost, these are our most reliable and devoted allies — the Republic of Belarus and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I would like to once again express my sincere gratitude and admiration to the servicemen of the Korean People's Army who took part in the liberation of Kursk from neo-Nazi groups. I am also grateful to the volunteers from Serbia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, as well as countries from Africa, Central America, and Latin America, taking part in the special military operation. Your assistance is also very valuable and significant to us.

In conclusion, I assure you once again: all the goals of the special military operation set by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief will be achieved. I thank its participants for their dedication and heroism, and the citizens of our country for their full support. I wish the personnel further military success. To Russia's enemies, I say: there will be no revenge. Neo-Nazism will not pass! 🇷🇺

Russia has never harbored any illusions about the West's ability to negotiate and is always prepared to respond appropriately to any unfriendly gestures directed at us.

USA: the costs of its own success

Text: Sergey Vladimirovich Kisilitsyn, Deputy Director for Research, IMEMO RAS named after E.M. Primakov, PhD in Political Science

On July 4, 2026, the United States of America will celebrate its 250th anniversary. During this time, the nation has undergone an incredibly rapid transformation from a periphery of the British Empire to the world's leading economy — with its future prospects not entirely clear. In this regard, it is appropriate to conduct a retrospective analysis of US economic development and its impact on international relations. Especially since the problems Washington faced centuries ago are once again relevant today, reviving similar methods of addressing them.

The United States, a nation of liberated colonists who once rebelled against the British monarchy, remained outside the evolving global colonial system throughout the 18th and much of the 19th centuries. The discussions of Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and other "Founding Fathers" were to shape the concept of a federal union: whether it should be a community of free farmers with a weak central government or a state-sponsored association of independent entrepreneurs. By the early 19th century, the answers to these questions were far from obvious, as the engines of American economic growth — the steel and oil industries, railroads, and telegraph — did not yet exist.

Until the 1880s, the US could not even be considered a major trading power. Its main exports — at that time less than 3% of the world's total — consisted of raw materials (cotton, tobacco, timber) and foodstuffs (grain and meat). It was only at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries that rapid economic development began, with average annual GDP growth rates of approximately 5%, transforming America into the state we know today.

It was also at this time that a number of major corporations were founded, becoming the flagships of the American economy. Many of them, such as Standard Oil (1870–1987),

General Electric (1878–2024), and U.S. Steel (1901–2025), no longer exist. But some remain significant today, among them AT&T (1885), Ford Motor Company (1903), IBM (1911), and Boeing (1916). All of them were distinguished by innovation — the key to their high competitiveness. However, this was not enough to conquer foreign markets.

In an effort to reverse this trend and transform the United States from an importer to an exporter of industrial goods, the federal government strongly supported domestic production and imposed tariff restrictions on imports. Until the early 1910s, the weighted average import

duty never fell below 20% (see Figure 1). Tariffs also served another function: until 1913, there was no income tax in the United States, and tariffs were an important source of budget revenue.

Up until the mid-1920s, Americans were hardly interested in the affairs of the outside world. It's worth remembering that after World War I, the United States withdrew from the League of Nations, which had been created largely at the initiative of President Woodrow Wilson. However, this "isolationism" could no longer remain the same. The country was rapidly becoming a pillar of the global economy: its industrial output met domestic demand and was actively exported. Furthermore, the US had become a major creditor. Germany, having lost the war, resorted to borrowing from American banks to pay reparations. In turn, the recipients of these reparations, primarily Great Britain and France, used the German tranches to cover their own debts to America.

The established pattern of financial enrichment in the United States contributed significantly to its rapid economic growth, known as the "Roaring Twenties." Nevertheless, this boom

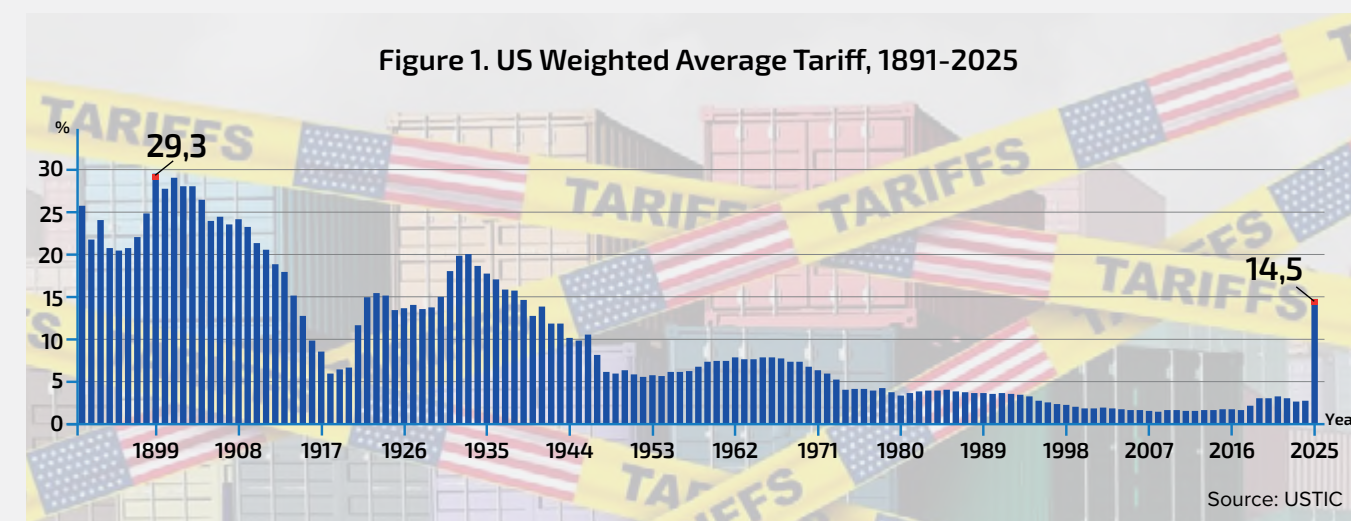
ended with the most severe crisis in American history in 1929, followed by the Great Depression in the 1930s. The recovery, conditioned by the outbreak of World War II, once again led to unprecedented results — in 1942, the US GDP growth rate reached a record 18.9%.

The post-war reconstruction of Europe, coupled with the establishment of systemic relations with Japan, further solidified the might of the United States. A significant share of US-manufactured and exported goods, particularly automobiles, machine tools, and other high-tech equipment, ended up in Western Europe, which had virtually lost its industrial potential. Under these circumstances, American companies began to build long-term relationships with customers for the purchase and operation of sophisticated equipment.

In this way — on superprofits from a conflict on another continent — the principal pattern of financial enrichment of the United States got established contributing significantly to its rapid economic growth, known as the "Roaring Twenties."

At last, one more significant point. In 1944, following the Bretton Woods Conference, the prototype of the modern financial system was created. It was subsequently amended several times until 1976, when it was replaced by the so-called Jamaica Accords, which still exist today. In essence, the US dollar became the world's main reserve currency, and its value was finally detached from its gold backing.

Thus, America reached the peak of its economic power. This gave Washington leverage, which it began to use, among other things, to stifle opponents. Clear examples are Cuba and Iran subjected to an economic blockade for many years, which has a significant negative impact on their development. It is enough to recall the US ban on the supply of civilian aircraft and their components to Tehran, which created





serious transport and logistical risks and complicated communication for Iranians with the outside world.

Washington's closest allies are not immune either. Let me remind you how, using the tools of the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls (CoCom), the Americans bankrupted the Swedish company Stansaab, a subsidiary of the Saab concern, for

supplying air navigation equipment for the Moscow and Kyiv air hubs on the eve of the 1980 Olympics. A similar fate befell the Japanese company Toshiba Machine for selling industrial machine tools to the USSR. The resulting losses brought the company to the brink of bankruptcy, and Toshiba itself suffered a serious blow, undermining its position in the global microelectronics market. In 1987, the US Congress banned the

sale of its products, despite the fact that the American market accounted for up to 15% of the company's annual revenue.

Modern practices of sanctions pressure and export controls are a direct continuation and development of this experience. However, applying such restrictions to major powers such as China or Russia is fraught with costs. The imposed restrictions force economic actors to adapt to new conditions, which in turn leads to restructuring all global supply chains and, as a consequence, mitigates the negative effects.

Today, it can be confidently stated that, despite an extremely aggressive policy aimed at ensuring its own

Today, it can be confidently stated that, despite an extremely aggressive policy aimed at ensuring its own dominance, the United States' position in the world is getting inexorably weaker.

dominance, the United States' position in the world is getting inexorably weaker. This is a logical transformation of the entire international system, which accelerated significantly after the 2008 global financial crisis. Seventeen years later, it is clear that this process is gaining momentum — including its political and economic components, the principles of interaction between actors, and key institutions.

The main challenge to US leadership is posed by China, which has successfully integrated itself into global economic relations but has never become part of the US-centric order. Moreover, China's importance to the global economy is only growing, while the US share is inexorably declining: from 39.6% of global GDP in 1960 to 25.9% in 2024. The US trade deficit has also persisted for the past 50 years (see Figure 2). The foreign trade deficit is driven by imported goods, while the US remains a net exporter of services.

The share of manufacturing industry in the US GDP continues to decrease steadily: today, it accounts for approximately 10%. Innovative

The main challenge to US leadership is posed by China, which has successfully integrated itself into global economic relations but has never become part of the US-centric order.

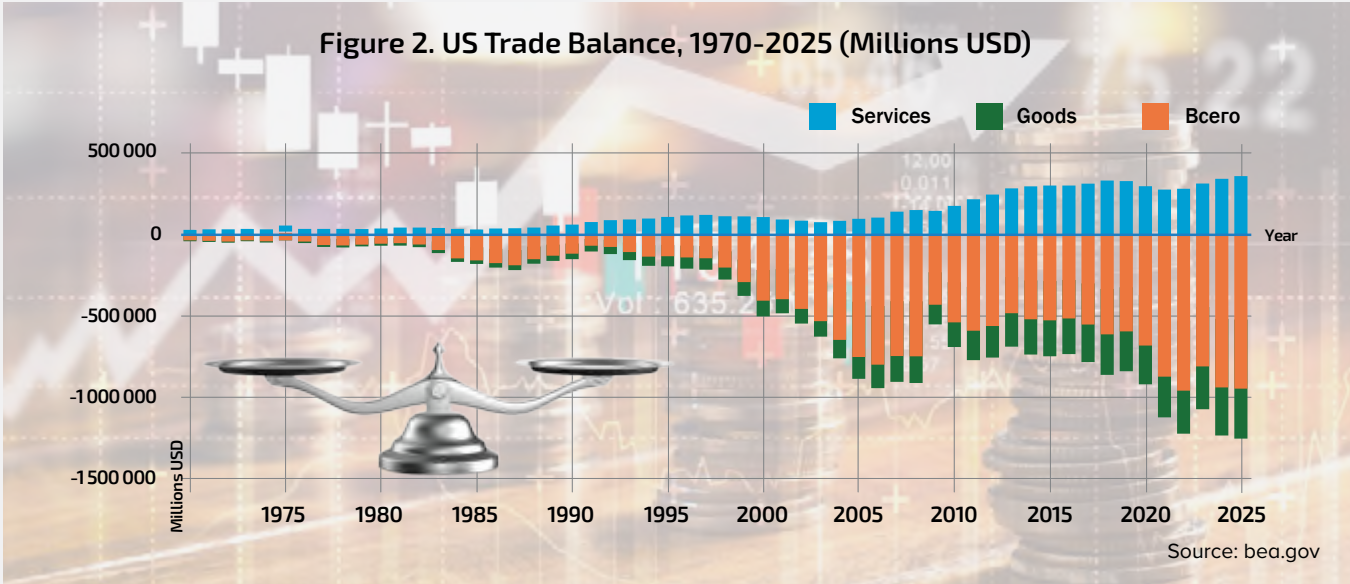
production is declining. Much manufacturing has been offshored, and businesses are reluctant to bring it back. At the same time, labor productivity in the US is steadily growing — it ranks among the top twenty in this indicator. It would seem that this logic has existed for decades and has never prevented the United States from remaining a scientific and technological leader and the world's largest economy. Moreover, lower production costs increase profits for American businesses. So, what's the problem?

There are several. First, offshoring high-tech industries leads to a loss of skills and a decline in product quality. Second, it leads to a detachment from innovations learned in production (learning by doing), which also negatively impacts competitiveness. Finally, serious risks arise, such as

disruptions in production chains, as demonstrated during the pandemic. With increasing international tensions, the probability of such events only grows.

It should also be taken into account that the decline in the manufacturing industry is accompanied by the degradation of certain regions of the country. A lack of demand for labor leads to a decline in living standards and an increase in crime. These challenges have to be addressed by both funds of certain states and the federal budget.

Traditionally, a low national currency exchange rate is considered essential to supporting producers, as it stimulates exports. The current US administration also adheres to this approach. Indeed, since the introduction of the Jamaica Accords, the



The dollar's systemic importance is associated with the risk of its weaponization through unilateral imposition of sanctions and other restrictions by the White House. This encourages third countries to switch to settlements in national and other alternative currencies, which is unacceptable for the US.

US dollar index (the ratio of its value to a basket of other currencies) has risen significantly, approaching its record high of 1985, when Washington concluded the Plaza Accord with its allies for a controlled devaluation of the US dollar (see Figure 3).

Similar consolidated measures are unlikely today. Primarily because developing new solutions to lower the dollar's exchange rate will require the participation of China and other non-Western countries. While at the height of its power, Washington was able to simply engage its allies and partners in solving the problem, under globalization it will have to consider the views of other participants in the global economic system — the

one largely built by the United States itself, but that includes more than just friendly states.

Persistent local conflicts do not contribute to lowering the dollar's value either. Seeking to hedge their bets, central banks and private businesses in other countries are accumulating dollar reserves, confident that the American currency will remain stable. High demand for US debt securities, which have become an instrument of Washington's international influence, is putting additional pressure on the exchange rate.

The dollar's systemic importance is associated with the risk of its weaponization through unilateral imposition of

sanctions and other restrictions by the White House. This encourages third countries to switch to settlements in national and other alternative currencies, which is unacceptable for the US. Indicative of this is President Donald Trump's harsh reaction even to the hypothetical prospect of a common currency for BRICS+ countries. Moreover, as I repeat, the free circulation of the dollar leads to its high value and constrains American exports.

In addition to the value of the dollar, protectionist measures — both tariff and non-tariff (standards, procurement and tender requirements for government agencies) — could be effective tools for supporting domestic producers. This would protect American businesses domestically and replenish the federal budget, as was the case at the turn of the 20th century under Presidents Grover Cleveland and William McKinley. Furthermore, revenue from tariffs would help reduce the tax burden. Let me remind you that since 2017 the corporate tax in the United States has been 21%, and some experts, primarily supporters of Donald Trump and

the Republican Party, believe it could be further reduced or eliminated entirely, replaced by tariff revenues.

However, if the potential revenue from import tariffs is compared with the US budget deficit (see Figure 4), it becomes clear how difficult this idea is to implement. The amount of funds received, even with the current weighted average tariff of 14.5% established under D. Trump, clearly does not cover the shortfall. The questionability of very idea of raising tariffs, which has already sparked legal proceedings and resulted in some of the president's decisions in this area being declared illegal, cannot be overlooked as well.

To sum up, we could say that the United States is approaching its 250th anniversary in an unusual position. Certainly, it is still the world's largest economy (by nominal GDP), and its companies demonstrate relatively high labor productivity. However, today the US is rather a hostage to this power. It is forced to act as a guarantor of the stability of a global economic system that

Today the US is a hostage to their own power. It is forced to act as a guarantor of the stability of a global economic system that no longer generates the necessary profits but instead strengthens its direct competitor, China.

no longer generates the necessary profits but instead strengthens its direct competitor, China. Besides, Washington's dissatisfaction and irritation with the current state of affairs are evident, partly due to the inability to rectify anything without incurring painful costs.

For now, the American market remains attractive to foreign companies. The country's population still tends to spend heavily and save little. Great demand covers costs, including those from import tariffs, maintaining competition among suppliers. However, due to the US's close integration into the global economy, domestic producers can barely benefit from this highly profitable domestic market. Moreover, the longstanding

expansionist policy has led the United States to a serious overexpenditure and accumulation of a huge public debt, which brings them only too close to a dangerous line.

In this situation it is reasonable to assume that the American government, regardless of party affiliation, will seek alternative paths to long-term development. In this regard, dismantling the system built by the United States itself could prove beneficial. Just as 80 years ago, when the US, not together but alongside the Soviet Union, participated in dismantling the outdated colonial world order led by Great Britain, in the current situation, it may be forced to facilitate the formation of a new, polycentric world order to secure its own future. 🚩

Figure 3. US Dollar's Average Real Effective exchange rate

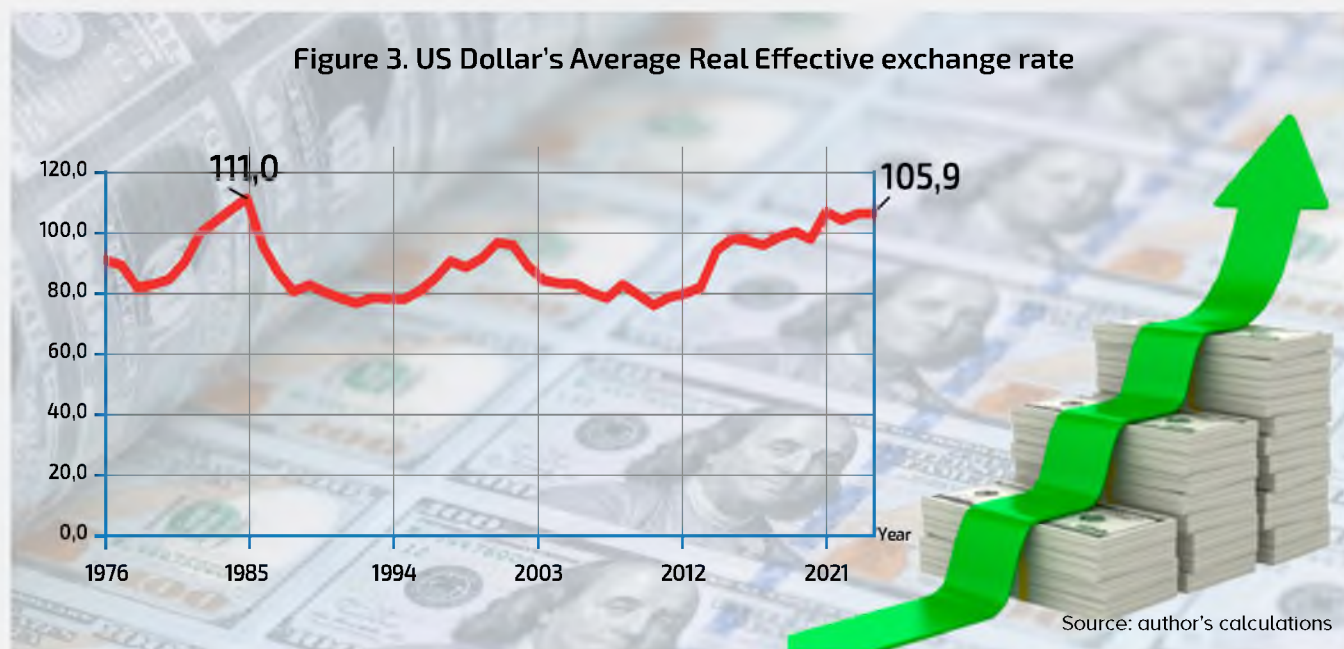
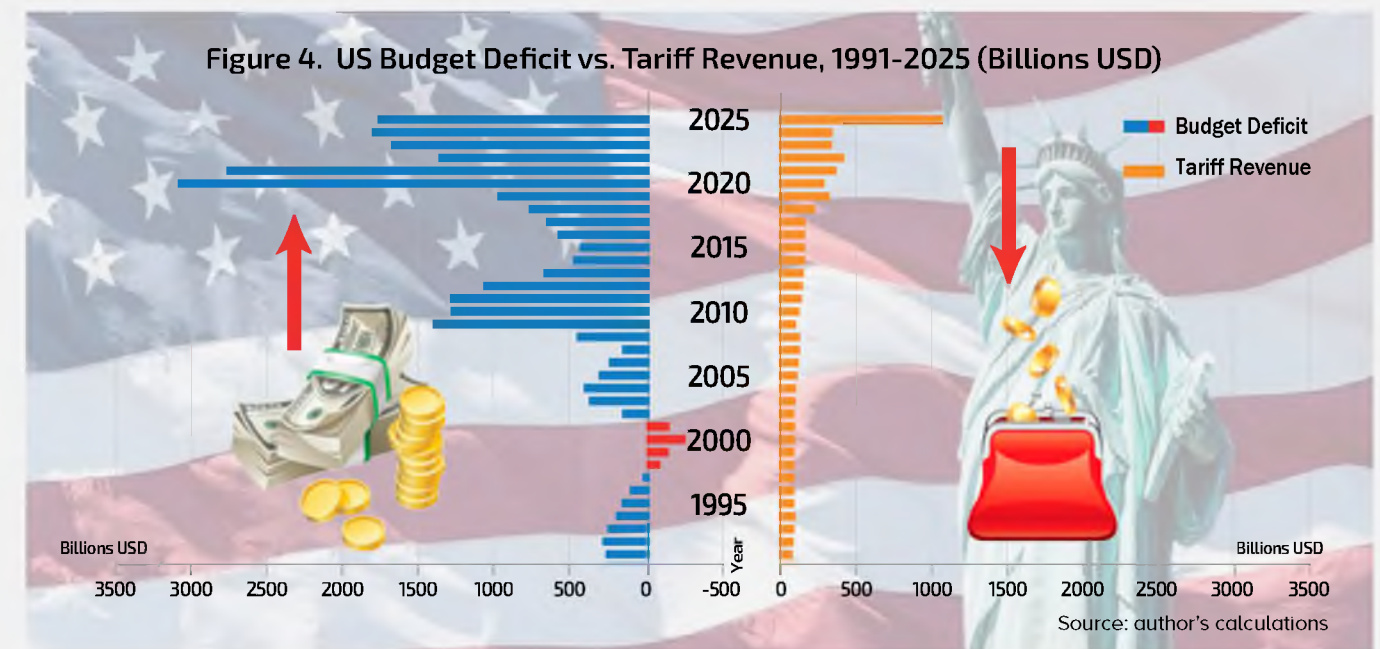


Figure 4. US Budget Deficit vs. Tariff Revenue, 1991-2025 (Billions USD)





**Co-Chairman of the Russian Historical Society
Konstantin Mogilevsky:**

"Today, history is becoming an arena of intellectual confrontation"

This June, the Russian Historical Society (RHS) celebrates its 160th anniversary. It did not function during the Soviet era, though, and was only revived in 2012. "Razvedchik" spoke with the Co-Chairman of the RHS, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education, **Konstantin Ilyich Mogilevsky**, about the events marking the anniversary, the Society's current tasks, and the importance of historical knowledge.

Konstantin Ilyich, you and Sergey Yevgenyevich Naryshkin were among the initiators of the Society's revival. What has been achieved during this time, and how do you plan to celebrate the anniversary?

It should be noted that the initiative to revive the RHS initially arose within the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS). Prominent scientists came forward with this idea — Academicians Anatoly Panteleevich Derevyanko, Anatoly Vasilyevich Torkunov, and Alexander Oganovich Chubaryan. On behalf of the community of Russian historians, they approached Sergey Yevgenyevich Naryshkin — then Chairman of the State Duma — proposing to recreate the Society and lead its work. Sergey Yevgenyevich paid great attention to this idea. Thanks to his

support, 26 leading universities, museums, libraries, and other authoritative organizations became co-founders of the RHS, in addition to the RAS.

Andrey Yevgenyevich Petrov played a significant organizational role in the establishment of the Society. By that time, he had worked for several years as Deputy Academic Secretary of the Department of Historical and Philological Sciences of the RAS and headed the Coordination Council for Youth Affairs in Scientific and Educational Spheres. In turn, in 2005, I defended my dissertation on the reforms of P.A. Stolypin. This means that by 2012, I was still a young scientist, and it was a great honor for me to assist my senior colleagues in this important undertaking.



Konstantin Ilyich Mogilevsky

Was born on July 15, 1982, in Kalinin (now Tver). Graduated from the Historical and Archival Institute of the Russian State University for the Humanities in 2002. From 2004 to 2016, he held various positions in the apparatus of the State Duma. From 2006 to 2011, he served as Scientific Secretary and Executive Director of the P.A. Stolypin Heritage Study Foundation. From the re-establishment of the Russian Historical Society in 2012 until 2022, he was a board member and chairman of the RHS board. From 2016 to 2022, he was the Executive Director and Chairman of the Board of the "History of the Fatherland" Foundation. In December 2022, he was

appointed Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education. Since June 2023, he has been Co-Chairman of the RHS. He holds a Candidate of Historical Sciences degree. Awarded with the Order of Friendship.



At a General Meeting
of the RHS.
June 10, 2025

Over the years, the Russian Historical Society has succeeded in uniting the efforts of the state, society, and professional historians, directing them towards the formation of a Russia-wide historical culture. Today, we have 157 legal entities and over a thousand individual members. One could say that this is the vanguard of Russia's historical community. It is a great privilege for me to be a member of the same Society with these people — my comrades, leading scholars, educators, and popularizers of historical science.

The RHS's activities cover a wide range of areas — from the development of school and higher historical education to supporting the

archival sector. Under the Society's auspices, large-scale scientific conferences are held, exhibitions are opened, and documentary films and books are published. The upcoming anniversary is a good occasion to reflect on the path taken, compare ourselves with our predecessors — members of the pre-revolutionary RHS — and outline plans for the future. We will discuss these plans in detail in June at our annual General Meeting, which will be held at Moscow State University.

The task of preserving historical memory and passing it on to new generations has been set by the President, and its relevance is beyond doubt. But is it easy to promote such initiatives "on the ground," and are they of interest to modern youth?

Promoting history can be both simple and complex. It's simple because historical knowledge is in demand in itself. We see this both in the high demand for thematic literature and in public opinion polls. The complexity, however, lies in the fact that professional historians often have to compete for audience attention with skilled amateurs, and sometimes even with deliberate falsifiers. This is the specificity of the modern information environment.

One of the primary goals of the RHS from the outset was to ensure that the voice of historical science should be heard. To achieve this, we have many talented popularizers within our ranks — museum professionals, journalists, producers — who continuously improve their methods of knowledge presentation.

We pay special attention to the work with young people. The Society has a Youth Club,

which already includes several hundred students, postgraduate students, and young scientists. They participate in major RHS projects, implement their own educational initiatives, and conduct volunteer campaigns. By the way, there is also interest in such activities among their peers abroad — in late April, I participated in the founding meeting of a RHS Youth Club branch in Serbia.

And what is the situation with teaching history in Russian universities? Are any changes expected in the higher education programs for the history course in the new academic year?

Improving higher historical education is a joint priority of the RHS and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia. Work is being carried out on two parallel tracks. On the one hand, we are training professional historians. On the other hand, we are forming the necessary volume of basic historical knowledge for those who are pursuing other specialties, for example, engineering or medical ones.

“Professional historians often have to compete for audience attention with skilled amateurs, and sometimes even with deliberate falsifiers. .

I would like to remind you that since 2022, according to an order from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, all those receiving higher education in Russia undergo a course in Russian history of at least 144 academic hours. The substantive requirements for the results of its mastery are enshrined in the concept developed by the RHS. Based on this concept, an electronic textbook has been prepared, which has been used nationwide for the second year. We regularly check the quality of knowledge: we test students immediately after admission, and then we see how their level of preparation has changed by May — at the end of the course. This allows us to track progress.

The Russian Historical
Society building.
Moscow, Vorontsovo
Pole Str., 13, b. 1



Russian Historical Society

Re-established on June 20, 2012, in the traditions of the Imperial Russian Historical Society, which operated from 1866 to 1920. It unites the efforts of the state, scholars, and history enthusiasts to form a Russia-wide historical culture based on the study and popularization of national and world history, and the preservation of national memory. Among the founders are the Russian Academy of Sciences, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Saint Petersburg State University, Moscow State University of International Relations (MGIMO) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the State Historical Museum, the State Tretyakov Gallery, and the Russian State Library. Currently, there are over 70 regional branches of the RHS in operation. Since its revival, Sergey Yevgenyevich Naryshkin has been its chairman.

“A joint understanding of our shared past lays the necessary foundation for dialogue, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

A similar approach to teaching history in non-historical specialties will be preserved in the updated national system of higher education. The course "History of Russia" will become part of the fundamental core of disciplines, along with "Philosophy" and "Fundamentals of Russian Statehood."

As for the training of professional historians, it is important here to consider both the number of graduates and their quality. I would like to remind you that the RHS is the center of responsibility for the enlarged group of specialties and fields of study "History and Archaeology," that is to say it influences the distribution of state-funded places among the regions of

Russia. Together with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, it ensures that the number of places for historical specialties remains sufficient to cover all the country's needs for qualified personnel.

I would also like to add that the Ministry is currently organizing a broad discussion of educational programs and curricula, aimed at updating them in accordance with the level of modern scientific knowledge, the requirements of the labor market, and society expectations.

Please, tell us how is the process of creating a unified scientific and educational space for the Union State of Russia and Belarus progressing, as well as within the EAEU?

We are working closely with our Belarusian colleagues. A year ago, the first stage of implementing the scientific and technological development strategy of the Union State until 2035 was launched. In February of this year, a new intergovernmental agreement on the

terms of operation of the Belarusian-Russian University was signed. Scientific and educational cooperation is also developing within the EAEU. I would like to remind you that in May 2023, at a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, Russian President V.V. Putin proposed to ensure the freedom of knowledge within the EAEU, which gave a powerful impetus to inter-university interaction.

Naturally, scientific and educational cooperation with the countries of the near abroad is primarily focused on the engineering, technical, medical, and agricultural sectors. This reflects the needs of our economies. However, a joint understanding of our shared past lays the necessary foundation for dialogue, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

On a systemic basis, the Institute of Archaeology, the Institute of Russian History, the Institute of Oriental Studies, and other academic institutes — members of the RHS — in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Ulan-Ude, and Vladivostok interact with EAEU partners. I would like to specifically mention the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, through which the work of the International Association of Historians and Archivists of CIS Member States is coordinated. Its next meeting will open in Moscow very soon — on June 22, on the 85th anniversary of the start of the Great Patriotic War. Following this, on June 23-25, the II World Congress of School History Teachers will be held in the Russian capital, with representatives from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and many other countries participating.

Building dialogue with foreign colleagues, we proceed from the understanding that they represent sovereign countries with their own approaches to their national past. At the same time, it is very important that these approaches align with the spirit of good neighborliness, implying respect for common history and for the Russian language as the language of interethnic communication. There is still a lot of work to be done here. For the past to bring peoples together, rather than divide them, it is necessary to conduct discussions professionally, relying on historical documents. Then, as a rule, it is possible to reach agreement on many issues.



You mentioned the 85th anniversary of the start of the war, the anniversary of Hitler's aggression, in connection with which I have a question about the origins of Nazism. What do you think, why was such a misanthropic ideology born precisely in the West? After all, Immanuel Kant and his golden rule of morality are also a product of Western, or rather German, philosophical thought...

The criminal ideology of Nazism formed in an atmosphere of deep frustration that the German society found itself in after its defeat in World War I. The victorious powers, Great Britain and France, acting in a non-dignified and short-sighted manner, did everything possible to consolidate their triumph by weakening potential rivals. Germany was deprived of its rights, demilitarized, and subjected to humiliating reparations. Subsequently, the country was struck by a severe economic crisis. The Nazis promised the German people to lead them out of this historical impasse. Unfortunately, many believed them.

“For the past to bring peoples together, rather than divide them, it is necessary to conduct discussions professionally, relying on historical documents.

At a meeting with the Fudan University leadership, Shanghai. April 17, 2026





At a meeting of the Council for Cooperation in Education of the CIS States. Moscow. November 20, 2025

By the way, similar processes also led to the rise of militarism in Japan. Although the Japanese civilization is also outstanding and no less ancient than the Western civilization, with rich culture and traditions. But remember what atrocities the Japanese committed in the Far East and China. We are thinking of proposing to our Chinese colleagues to hold a joint conference this year to discuss the causes and circumstances of the outbreak of World War II in the Asia-Pacific region.

Returning to the question — it's not about the nature of one civilization or another. It is incorrect to say that a certain culture inherently contains prerequisites for misanthropy. Whenever criminal ideas prevail, we are dealing with a glitch, an error in the program of civilizational development. But such errors, alas, can only be corrected surgically.

Modern Western politicians, who seriously repeat the claim of "Russia's attack on 19 countries during the last 100 years," either studied poorly in school or are deliberately distorting facts. How could we combat such crude falsification of history? After all, it is obvious that today the voice of truth is not needed by anyone in the West.

You likely mean Kaja Kallas. She was born in the Estonian SSR and had the opportunity to study in a Soviet school. Her father, Siim Kallas, was a member of the Communist Party, worked in the republican Ministry of Finance, and after the collapse of the Union, found his place in the ranks of European bureaucracy. In other words, Kaja Kallas is our former underachiever. Unfortunately, we have underachievers among us too.

However, in my opinion, the focus here should be not on Kallas's personal knowledge, which is evidently limited, but on the significantly lowered expectations of citizens in European countries from their political leaders. Ms. Kallas is clearly no de Gaulle, nor even Margaret Thatcher. I believe that until Europeans realize their fundamental interests, raise the bar for their leaders, and begin to demand at least minimal responsibility and foresight from them, the level of their political elites will continue to decline.

As for countering the falsification of history, there are no other recipes here than consistently and argumentatively presenting our point of view to the foreign audience. Fortunately, we have such an audience, and it continues to expand — thanks to Russia Today and other Russian media. Today, history, alas, has been turned by our adversaries into an arena of intellectual confrontation. To win this confrontation — which we must do — we need to be two heads above the opponent.

If you'll allow me, a personal question. You are a graduate of the Russian State University for the Humanities' Historical and Archival Institute, graduating with honors. Where does such love for history come from, and is there a recipe for instilling it in modern youth?

I'll be concise: I had a good teacher in school. She instilled a passion for studying the past in many students, and I wasn't the only one from our class to choose a career as a historian. Of course, she was a person of Soviet upbringing. Heretofore — even if you wake me up in the middle of the night — I can name all the five characteristics of imperialism right away (laughs).

But seriously, the work of a historian is not about memorizing facts. It's an analytical activity that requires the ability to find sources, evaluate and compare them, ask them questions, and get answers. By working with documents from the past, we build a dialogue with their creators, try to understand people's goals, their motives, and their way of thinking — because history is made by people. It's a very exciting endeavor that requires intellect, thoughtfulness, and a kind of sense of reality. Historians work precisely with reality, which, although it has passed, has not ceased to be reality.

And finally. Given your deep historical knowledge, what can you wish for intelligence service and intelligence officers?

The Chairman of the RHS and Director of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service, Sergey Yevgenyevich Naryshkin, in one of his interviews noted that the work of historians is, in a certain sense, similar to that of intelligence officers. Both professions require obtaining

“The work of a historian is not about memorizing facts. It's an analytical activity that requires the ability to find sources, evaluate and compare them, ask them questions, and get answers.

objective, complete, and reliable information, and to achieve this, they must find and interact with its sources. In both cases, it is work with people. Of course, historians more often deal with the deceased, while intelligence officers deal with the living. However, the reverse can also happen.

I would like to wish the intelligence service success in its difficult but very important work of ensuring national security. And to the veterans of the Service, some of whom received historical education in their time and are professional historians, I wish well-being and the upbringing of a worthy successor generation. ♣

Interviewed by Vladislav Ilyin

In the courtyard of the Russian Historical Society building



Advanced weapons are essential for ensuring the security and protection of the country. “Razvedchik” spoke with the CEO of the JSC “Tactical Missile Armament Corporation” (KTRV), Hero of Russia, Boris Viktorovich Obnosov about who creates such armaments in modern Russia and how, as well as about weaponry of the future and management secrets.

Boris Viktorovich, you have been heading KTRV since its inception, for nearly a quarter of a century. What do you consider to be your main achievement as a leader? Have you accomplished everything you set out to do?

KTRV was established in 2002, but I officially took over as its head in 2003. I spent a year preparing, delving into the work of the enterprises, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and studying the personnel. I consider the establishment of the corporation to be our main achievement, as it was the first of its kind in new Russia. Other similar structures emerged later.

Our journey was non-standard, consisting of several stages. We started with six enterprises, and then, through decrees of the President of the Russian Federation, their number successively increased, along with the staff size and the scope of production. This decision proved to be wise, as it allowed us to study the actual financial and economic condition of each production facility, determine its development prospects, develop an individual approach to corporate governance, and build a team.

Our main difference from other corporations is that the management company is simultaneously the parent company — the developer and

manufacturer of the equipment. Thanks to this, we have created a comfortable internal environment, because managers often live off dividends that they take from those who are part of the holding company. In our corporation, all profits go to priority areas of development.

In KTRV, the corporate management unit is small, with less than 50 people. Each of my deputies performs at least a dual function. This is a matter of principle for me as it allows us to spend our funds more efficiently, including those allocated to us by the state. To be honest, it is sometimes disheartening to see how bloated the bureaucratic apparatus is in our country. It is even larger than in the USSR time despite the fact that modern Russia is smaller than the Soviet Union.

For example, we do not employ full-time artists or designers. Recently, we published a calendar with drawings done by our employees’ children — something I am very proud of. The same illustrations were used to decorate the buildings of the workshops on site. This initiative turned out to be heartwarming, and a pleasant experience for the parents of these children.

As for whether everything has been realized, I would answer this way: if everything had already been accomplished, I would have retired long ago.

Boris Viktorovich Obnosov

Was born on January 26, 1953 in Moscow, into a military family. In 1976, he graduated from the Moscow Aviation Institute (MAI), and in 1983 — from the evening department of the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics at Lomonosov Moscow State University. In 1990, he served as an expert in arms negotiations in Europe, and from 1994 to 1997, he was the First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, as well as the adviser to the Department for Security and Disarmament Affairs of the Russian Foreign Ministry. From 1998 to 2003, he held senior positions at FSUE “Russian Technologies”, “Promexport”, and “Rosoboronexport”. Since 2003, he has been the CEO of the “Zvezda-Strela” State Scientific Research and Production Center, on the basis of which KTRV was established. Since 2009, he has also headed a department at MAI. Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor. Author of more than 100 scientific papers and patents. Hero of Russia. He has been awarded the Orders For Merit to the Fatherland, III and IV Class, as well as the Order of Friendship.

Hero of Russia
Boris Viktorovich Obnosov:
“Our motto is:
Right on target!”



Coastal defense missile systems

	3K60 Bal	K-300P Bastion-P
Number of missiles in a battery	8	2
Operational range, km	260	300
Missile name	Kh-35	Yakhont
Maximum speed, m per sec	290	750
Warhead mass, kg	145	200

Does the corporation continue to expand?

Yes, we are still growing. Today, the holding includes 58 companies with approximately 97 thousand employees. The geography is very wide: Miass, Orenburg, Perm, Kamensk-Uralsky, the Republic of Dagestan, Astrakhan and Nizhny Novgorod regions are just a part of the large list of cities and regions where we operate.

Were there any difficulties in building the vertical structure?

Of course, mergers always raise concerns. And it's not just about losing autonomy — some feared losing their identity and traditions. We convinced them that it's better together, and explained the advantages. We faced a difficult task of uniting diverse enterprises, including those with large debts and underutilized capacities. We gave many of them a second chance and helped them avoid bankruptcy.

For example, in 2024, the NPO “Iskra” joined KTRV. In the USSR, it was part of a single complex with the Perm-based “Mashinostroitel” plant, but in the 1990s the enterprises were divided. Together with “Iskra”, we inherited debts amounting to 11 billion rubles. I won't say that NPO is already thriving today. Nevertheless, we have reviewed the product line and contracts, received government support, and the company has entered a sustainable development trajectory.

The key point is that mergers create new technological opportunities. For example, in 2015, the JSC “Sea Underwater Weapon — Gidropribor” joined our circuit. At that time, everyone was asking me — “Why?”. But if you look at a torpedo or a missile, despite the differences in guidance systems and engines, everything is the same in terms of aerodynamics. Navier-Stokes equations work both here and there *(laughs)*.

Or another story. At one time, the Reutov-based “NPO Mashinostroyeniya” developed the well-known Bastion coastal missile system (CMS). We were developing the Bal CMS the same time. Again, people argued with us. Today, everyone understands that in terms of

the balance between efficiency and cost, the two systems complement each other well. The Bal CMS, with its low-cost missiles, is designed to destroy enemy ships with a displacement of up to 5.000 tons, while the Bastion, where missiles are many times more expensive, is designed to destroy heavier ships.

What projects are you preparing for the future? Or is there no time to think about it now, given the enterprises are operating at 100 % capacity to meet the needs of the special military operation (SMO)?

Indeed, 98% of the products produced are state defense orders. During the SMO our corporation has grown more than threefold. If in 2021 the revenue was about 300 billion rubles, in 2025 this figure reached 1.4 trillion rubles. Where necessary, we have introduced a three-shift schedule, recruited people — the total number of employees has increased by 30-40%. The machine park has been significantly renovated, not only with state support, but also with our own funds.

Our motto is: “Right on target”. This means that we must always be one step ahead. We are constantly upgrading the most in-demand complexes — the Bal, the Bastion, and the Zircon, so that our missiles can fly farther and faster, and in the light of the development of air defense systems, are more survivable, including through the use of decoys and stealth technologies. There is still room for improvement in naval weapons. To maintain leadership, it is necessary to constantly develop — both technically and in the field of research and development — and to update production capacities every five to seven years. After all, technologies are being transformed at lightning speed today, as we see in China.

In addition, for modern weapons, the cost-efficiency ratio has become more important than ever. And here we have some developments that I'm really proud of. For example, the Universal Planning and Correction Module (UMPK). We have taught free-falling bombs to fly much further and more accurately, and besides it is many times cheaper to manufacture UMPK than cruise missiles. And most importantly, UMPK protects the lives of pilots.

“ To maintain leadership, it is necessary to constantly develop — both technically and in the field of research and development.

A similar story applies to drones, which were initially used by dozens, then by hundreds per day. Soon, I'm sure, the number will reach thousands. We are ready for this. We refine all the products used at the front in real time. We regularly go to the front line to understand the needs on the ground and test something new.

Speaking about the weapons of the future, I believe everything will develop in the direction of further miniaturization. Network-centric swarms controlled by artificial intelligence (AI) will emerge. Although, in my opinion, AI is greatly overestimated, as is digitalization, which is far from omnipotent. Moreover, it is often harmful.

At the International Aviation and Space Show in Zhukovsky. August 17, 2011





Tactical Missile Armament Corporation JSC

JSC “Tactical Missile Armament Corporation”

Russia's largest military-industrial holding company. It was established in 2002 by decree of the President of the Russian Federation. The head office is the Scientific Research and Production Center “Zvezda-Strela”, located in Korolev, Moscow Region. Currently, it unites about 60 companies specializing in the development of missiles for aviation, as well as naval and ground-based tactical systems. It produces around 20 different types of weapons, including the Zircon hypersonic missiles. The corporation supplies up to 80% of high-precision aviation and up to 100% of naval weapons to the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation.



At the International Military-Technical Forum "Army-2023". Kubinka. August 16, 2023

Before the start of the special military operation, you said that KTRV products were purchased by at least 30 foreign countries. And how is the international vector developing now?

Naturally, the SMO is not the most favorable time in terms of the development of international relations. If someone thinks that in a year or two our products will be sold like hot cakes, they are mistaken. Now many of the niches that traditionally were ours are occupied by competitors — China and Israel. It won't be easy to come back.

Nevertheless, we continue to work closely with "Rosoboronexport". Serious contracts for 2026 — worth almost a billion — have been signed. We mainly interact with traditional

partners. BrahMos Aerospace is very helpful in this regard, as it reaches out to other countries through its capabilities. It is a joint venture between NPO Mashinostroyehiya and India's Defense Research and Development Organization. In my opinion, this is Russia's best international project in the field of armaments.

In the foreign market, it is necessary to act from a position of mutual respect. To confirm this not in words, but in deeds is the only way to earn credibility. At one time, many people scolded the Soviet Union, saying it armed half the world for almost nothing. But without this, we would not have our own sales market — someone has to supply spare parts and carry out repairs.... At that time, a firm foundation for the future was laid.

KTRV is not only a weapon, but also a civilian product. How does the corporation prepare for conversion after the completion of the SMO?

The conversion problem has been bothering me for a long time. So far, there is not much to be proud of in this area, our share of civilian products is very modest. We have a number of successful projects, including chargers for electric cars and electric buses, electric forklifts, prosthetics made of composite materials for joint replacement. But entering the civilian market is a long process.

In addition, the production of such items cannot be one-off or sporadic. And what we see in the forecasts in this regard doesn't please us — civilian orders will not allow us to keep production facilities running at full capacity and keep people employed. Do you know what my worst nightmare is? That I'm withholding the payment of salaries. But I believe after the completion of the military operation our country will need to replenish its weapons stocks. In this regard, we are studying the experience of Iran — a country that has spent decades preparing for a potential confrontation with the United States.

You have said more than once that the main focus in enterprises is on people. How do you manage to retain experienced staff and attract young specialists to production?

There is no need to retain anyone because we have good salaries and a solid social package,

including boarding houses, rest homes, a well-developed sports base. In addition, we provide our employees with the opportunity to purchase housing at nearly cost price. Not so long ago, we completed the construction of two new houses in addition to the four that were built earlier. We are continuing to build now.

I consider this to be one of our greatest achievements. Affordable housing is a crucial factor for young people not only in our corporation, but across the country as a whole. It is the key to improving the demographic situation. People can start a family when they see real prospects for buying their own home. That's why young people come to work in our corporation. Today, the average age of KTRV employees is 46 years, which we consider to be an optimal indicator.

May I ask you a question about your "past life"? In the 1990s, you served in Vienna, then worked at the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations in New York. Were those times interesting? Do you feel nostalgic for it?

“Diplomatic service has given me a lot. The main thing I learned from it is this: you need to immerse yourself deeply in the subject and know thoroughly what you are doing, then you will achieve results.

Yes, it was a very interesting time. By the way, in New York, I had the chance to work side by side with Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov, who was then called “the most convincing diplomat” in the Western media. We wrote telegrams and sometimes stayed up past midnight. We still see each other from time to time.

Diplomatic service has given me a lot. The main thing I learned from it is this: you need to immerse yourself deeply in the subject and know thoroughly what you are doing, then you will achieve results. In that work, my academic degree and intensive training before my departure were very useful to me.

KTRV exhibition stand at the "Army-2017" Forum, Kubinka. August 24, 2017



“In the foreign market, it is necessary to act from a position of mutual respect. To confirm this not in words, but in deeds is the only way to earn credibility.



At the International Military-Technical Forum "Army-2024". Kubinka. August 13, 2024

You have a crazy schedule and a huge workload, but you still manage to make time for sports, reading, and music. How do you do it all?

Someone who constantly complains about not having enough time is either lazy or disorganized. It all starts in childhood. I am accustomed to getting up at six in the morning, walk the dog, and run five to seven kilometers. During my school years, I participated in various tourist gatherings, athletics competitions, played basketball, and sang in the choir — the whole day was carefully planned.

Self-discipline doesn't emerge by itself, you need to have the desire for it and the right role models. For me, such examples were my parents and my elder brother, as well as various historical figures and literary characters. I read

books about intelligence officers, including the novel "The Shield and the Sword" by Vadim Kozhevnikov and works by Yulian Semenov. His book "Burning" about F.E. Dzerzhinsky left a lasting impression on me. I also liked watching movies, they were different back then. I was born and raised in a different country, where a love for knowledge and hard work were instilled. Can you name at least one film about an engineer or designer that addressed serious issues in the last 20-30 years? Neither can I think of one.

So, did you dream of becoming an intelligence officer in your youth? And what would you like to wish to those currently serving in the SVR of Russia?

Of course, I did dream of it. All the books I read as a child are still in my library *(smiles)*.

My wish for intelligence officers is to constantly expand and deepen their professional knowledge, and keep improving themselves all the time. There is no such thing as too much knowledge. I'm speaking from my personal experience. After graduating from MAI, completing postgraduate studies, and defending my PhD, I enrolled in the evening department of the Moscow State University Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics. The workload there was very serious: out of the 125 students initially enrolled in the group, only 25 completed their studies.

Can you name the rules of a successful manager?

First of all, do not speak about things you do not understand yourself. Let everything go through yourself, get the feel for it and calmly figure it all out.

Secondly, start the working day together with your employees. Be a hard worker — an example for them. Take my workday: it always starts at 7 o'clock in the morning with making the rounds of the workshops.

And finally, have less empty talks and long meetings that ruin any initiative. Do you remember Vladimir Mayakovsky's brilliant poem "Meeting Addicts" ("Prozasedavshiesya")? Today it is more relevant than ever. 🚩



THE SVR OF RUSSIA IS AUTHORIZED TO DECLARE

“Constantly expand and deepen your professional knowledge, and keep improving yourselves all the time. There is no such thing as too much knowledge.”

Interviewed
by Vladislav Ilyin

СВР РОССИИ
СНЯТИЕ КОПИЙ ВОСПРЕЩАЕТСЯ

РАССЕКРЕЧЕНО

СЕКРЕТНО
ЭКЗ. № 1

Ш И Ф Р Т Е Л Е Г Р А М М А № 04/078



07.04.2026 05:20

ТОВ. СЕРГЕЕВУ

О СТРЕМЛЕНИИ ЕС К ОБРЕТЕНИЮ ЯДЕРНОГО ОРУЖИЯ

ПО ИМЕЮЩИМСЯ ДАННЫМ, РУКОВОДСТВО ЕВРОСОЮЗА И РЯДА ВЕДУЩИХ СТРАН ОБЪЕДИНЕНИЯ ПРИСТУПИЛО К НЕГЛАСНОЙ ПРОРАБОТКЕ ВОПРОСА О СОЗДАНИИ СОБСТВЕННОГО ПОТЕНЦИАЛА ПРОИЗВОДСТВА ЯДЕРНОГО ОРУЖИЯ (ЯО). БРЮССЕЛЬ ОБОСНОВЫВАЕТ НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ ТАКОГО ШАГА "СДЕРЖИВАНИЕМ РОССИЙСКОЙ УГРОЗЫ".

КАК СООБЩАЮТ ИСТОЧНИКИ В ЕВРОКОМИССИИ, НА НАЧАЛЬНОМ ЭТАПЕ В ЕС ДОГОВОРИЛИСЬ О МАКСИМАЛЬНО ЗАКРЫТОМ РЕЖИМЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИОННЫХ МЕРОПРИЯТИЙ. ОФИЦИАЛЬНО БРЮССЕЛЬ ПРОДОЛЖИТ ДЕМОНИСТРИРОВАТЬ ПРИВЕРЖЕННОСТЬ ТРАДИЦИОННОМУ КУРСУ С ОПОРОЙ НА ЯДЕРНЫЙ ЗОНТИК США. ТАКИМ ОБРАЗОМ ПРЕДПОЛАГАЕТСЯ ВЫИГРАТЬ ВРЕМЯ ДЛЯ СКРЫТОГО ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ЯДЕРНО-ОРУЖЕЙНОЙ ПРОМЫШЛЕННОЙ БАЗЫ, А ТАКЖЕ ДЛЯ ПОДГОТОВКИ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОГО МНЕНИЯ К ПРИНЯТИЮ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОГО РЕШЕНИЯ О СОЗДАНИИ ЕВРОПЕЙСКОГО ЯО.

В ДАЛЬНЕЙШЕМ ПЛАНИРУЕТСЯ СФОРМИРОВАТЬ ОБЩЕЕВРОПЕЙСКУЮ ДОКТРИНУ ЯДЕРНОГО СДЕРЖИВАНИЯ, ОПИРАЮЩУСЯ НА БРИТАНСКИЙ И ФРАНЦУЗСКИЙ ТЕХНИЧЕСКИЕ ПОТЕНЦИАЛЫ, А ТАКЖЕ НА ФИНАНСОВЫЕ И ИНФРАСТРУКТУРНЫЕ ВКЛАДЫ СТРАН ЕС, НЕ ОБЛАДАЮЩИХ ЯО. ОДНОВРЕМЕННО ЕВРОСОЮЗ ЗАРЕЗЕРВИРУЕТ СЕБЕ ВОЗМОЖНОСТЬ СОЗДАНИЯ ПОЛНОСТЬЮ АВТОНОМНОГО КОМАНДОВАНИЯ ЯДЕРНЫМИ СИЛАМИ.

ОТМЕЧАЕТСЯ, ЧТО ГЕРМАНИЯ, ИТАЛИЯ, ЧЕХИЯ, БЕЛЬГИЯ, НИДЕРЛАНДЫ, ШВЕЦИЯ, ИСПАНИЯ УЖЕ ОБЛАДАЮТ ЗНАЧИМЫМИ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЯМИ В ОБЛАСТИ ПРОИЗВОДСТВА ОТДЕЛЬНЫХ СОСТАВЛЯЮЩИХ ЯО. НА ИХ ТЕРРИТОРИИ ХРАНИТСЯ ОБЛУЧЕННОЕ ЯДЕРНОЕ ТОПЛИВО С ВЫВОДИМЫХ ИЗ ЭКСПЛУАТАЦИИ АЭС И ИМЕЕТСЯ ВОЗМОЖНОСТЬ ЕГО НЕСАНКЦИОНИРОВАННОГО ИЗВЛЕЧЕНИЯ ДЛЯ ВЫДЕЛЕНИЯ ПЛУТОНИЯ. КРОМЕ ТОГО, НЕМЕЦКИЕ СПЕЦИАЛИСТЫ СПОСОБНЫ В ТЕЧЕНИЕ МЕСЯЦА СКРЫТНО ПОЛУЧИТЬ ДОСТАТОЧНОЕ ДЛЯ ОДНОГО ЯДЕРНОГО ВЗРЫВНОГО УСТРОЙСТВА КОЛИЧЕСТВО ОРУЖЕЙНОГО ПЛУТОНИЯ В ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИХ ЛАБОРАТОРИЯХ В КАРЛСРУЭ, ДРЕЗДЕНЕ, ЭРЛАНГЕНЕ И КЛИХЕ. ОРУЖЕЙНЫЙ УРАН МОЖЕТ БЫТЬ НАРАБОТАН В ТЕЧЕНИЕ НЕДЕЛИ НА ОБОГАТИТЕЛЬНОМ ПРЕДПРИЯТИИ В ГРОНАУ.

НР 158 РЕЗИДЕНТ СВР ФЕЛИКС 06.04.26 22.50

СВР РОССИИ
СНЯТИЕ КОПИЙ ВОСПРЕЩАЕТСЯ

РАССЕКРЕЧЕНО

СЕКРЕТНО
ЭКЗ. № 1

Ш И Ф Р Т Е Л Е Г Р А М М А № 05/285



13.05.2026 16:00

ТОВ. СЕРГЕЕВУ

О НОВЫХ МЕТОДАХ АНТИРОССИЙСКОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ КИЕВА

ПО ПОСТУПАЮЩЕЙ ИНФОРМАЦИИ, СБУ И ДРУГИЕ УКРАИНСКИЕ СПЕЦСЛУЖБЫ В КОНЦЕ АПРЕЛЯ С.Г. ИНИЦИИРОВАЛИ МАСШТАБНУЮ КАМПАНИЮ ПО СКУПКЕ РОССИЙСКИХ ВОЕННЫХ И ПАТРИОТИЧЕСКИХ TELEGRAM-КАНАЛОВ. ПРЕДПОЛАГАЕТСЯ, ЧТО ЭТО ПОЗВОЛИТ УСИЛИТЬ ДЕСТАБИЛИЗИРУЮЩЕЕ ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЕ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА ГРАЖДАН РФ ДЛЯ РАСШАТЫВАНИЯ ВНУТРИПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ СИТУАЦИИ В СТРАНЕ.

В ЦЕЛЯХ СОКРЫТИЯ ПРИЧАСТНОСТИ УКРАИНЫ РАССЫЛКА ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЙ О ПРИОБРЕТЕНИИ РЕСУРСОВ ПРОИЗВОДИТСЯ С ФАЛЬШИВЫХ АККАУНТОВ ОТ ИМЕНИ РОССИЙСКИХ ПУБЛИЧНЫХ ЛИЦ И ЛИДЕРОВ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОГО МНЕНИЯ. ПО СООБЩЕНИЯМ ИСТОЧНИКОВ В УКРАИНСКИХ СИЛОВЫХ СТРУКТУРАХ, В ДАЛЬНЕЙШЕМ КИЕВ НАМЕРЕН ОСУЩЕСТВЛЯТЬ ПОДМЕНУ ИНФОРМАЦИОННОГО НАПОЛНЕНИЯ ПРИОБРЕТЕННЫХ TELEGRAM-КАНАЛОВ И ИСПОЛЬЗОВАТЬ ЭТИ ПЛОЩАДКИ ДЛЯ РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИЯ ДЕЗИНФОРМАЦИИ, В ТОМ ЧИСЛЕ СВЕДЕНИЙ, ДИСКРЕДИТИРУЮЩИХ ВООРУЖЕННЫЕ СИЛЫ И РУКОВОДСТВО РОССИИ.

ОТМЕЧАЕТСЯ, ЧТО ПОД ВИДОМ ПУБЛИКАЦИИ ПАТРИОТИЧЕСКОГО КОНТЕНТА УКРАИНСКИЕ СПЕЦСЛУЖБЫ РАССЧИТЫВАЮТ ВТЯНУТЬ РОССИЙСКИХ ВЛАДЕЛЬЦЕВ ИНФОРМРЕСУРСОВ В ПРОТИВОПРАВНУЮ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ, НАНОСЯЩУЮ УЩЕРБ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫМ ИНТЕРЕСАМ РФ.

НР 212 РЕЗИДЕНТ СВР СТОУН 13.05.26 09.45

СВР РОССИИ
СНЯТИЕ КОПИЙ ВОСПРЕЩАЕТСЯ

РАССЕКРЕЧЕНО

СЕКРЕТНО
ЭКЗ. № 1

Ш И Ф Р Т Е Л Е Г Р А М М А № 05/312



16.05.2026 21:20

ТОВ. СЕРГЕЕВУ

О ПЛАНИРУЕМЫХ УКРАИНСКИХ АТАКАХ С ТЕРРИТОРИИ ЛАТВИИ

ПО ПОЛУЧЕННЫМ ДАННЫМ, КОМАНДОВАНИЕ ВСУ ВЕДЕТ ПОДГОТОВКУ СЕРИИ ТЕРРОРИСТИЧЕСКИХ УДАРОВ ПО ТЫЛОВЫМ РЕГИОНАМ РОССИИ С ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕМ БЕСПИЛОТНИКОВ, КОТОРЫЕ ПЛАНИРУЕТ ЗАПУСТИТЬ С ТЕРРИТОРИИ ЛАТВИИ. ТЕМ САМЫМ РЕЖИМ В. ЗЕЛЕНСКОГО ПЫТАЕТСЯ ПРОДЕМОНСТРИРОВАТЬ ЕВРОПЕЙСКИМ ПОКРОВИТЕЛЯМ СОХРАНЕНИЕ УКРАИНСКОЙ АРМИЕЙ ВОЕВОГО ПОТЕНЦИАЛА И СПОСОБНОСТИ НАНОСИТЬ УЩЕРБ РОССИЙСКОЙ ЭКОНОМИКЕ.

КАК СООБЩАЮТ ИСТОЧНИКИ, КИЕВ БОЛЕЕ НЕ НАМЕРЕН ОГРАНИЧИВАТЬСЯ ВОЗДУШНЫМИ КОРИДОРАМИ, ПРЕДОСТАВЛЕННЫМИ ЕМУ СТРАНАМИ БАЛТИИ, И ПЛАНИРУЕТ ПРОВЕДЕНИЕ ОПЕРАЦИЙ НЕПОСРЕДСТВЕННО С ИХ ТЕРРИТОРИИ. СПЕЦИАЛИСТЫ ВСУ ПОЛАГАЮТ, ЧТО ПОДОБНАЯ ТАКТИКА ПОЗВОЛИТ ЗНАЧИТЕЛЬНО СОКРАТИТЬ ВРЕМЯ ПОДЛЕТА ДО ЦЕЛЕЙ И ПОВЫСИТЬ ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТЬ АТАК.

НЕСМОТЯ НА ОПАСЕНИЯ СТАТЬ ЖЕРТВОЙ ОТВЕТНОГО УДАРА МОСКВЫ, ВЛАСТИ ЛАТВИИ ДАЛИ СВОЕ СОГЛАСИЕ, ТАК КАК УКРАИНЦЫ УБЕДИЛИ ИХ В "НЕВОЗМОЖНОСТИ" ТОЧНОГО ОПРЕДЕЛЕНИЯ МЕСТА ЗАПУСКА БПЛА. ПО ИМЕЮЩЕЙСЯ ИНФОРМАЦИИ, НЕСКОЛЬКО ГРУПП ВОЕННОСЛУЖАЩИХ СИЛ БЕСПИЛОТНЫХ СИСТЕМ ВСУ УЖЕ ПРИБЫЛИ В ЛАТВИЮ, ГДЕ ИХ РАЗМЕСТИЛИ НА ВОЕННЫХ БАЗАХ "АДАЖИ", "СЕЛИЯ", "ЛИЕЛВАРДЕ", "ДАУТАВПИЛС", "ЕКАБПИЛС".

НР 167 РЕЗИДЕНТ СВР РИТА 16.05.25 13.30

Active listening

Superability of an intelligence officer

Text: Anna Kolganova, Irina Mirova

More brain is necessary for listening, rather than for speaking.

(a Turkish proverb)

The ability of listening is one of major skills useful in all spheres of life, with no exceptions: from personal relations till international negotiations. People think four times quicker than they speak. That's why it is so difficult for us to perceive information by ear without being distracted by outside thoughts. The ability of not simply listening but hearing is a profitable asset which very few people possess and competently use. And for intelligence officers it is the key one, because this profession implies the ability not only to engage necessary people, but also to make them talk.

Understanding of meaning of the data received from the interlocutor is complicated by the fact that each person has their own life experience based on positive and negative events which form their view of the world — a kind of prism through which they estimate all that is happening. Taking into account uniqueness and originality of each of us, sometimes it is hard to understand each other and to find a common language. That's where active listening can be useful, in which the ability to focus on the interlocutor's words and to answer them correctly, giving the necessary feedback, is important, rather than good ear.

This method means attentive perception and analysis of everything told by the interlocutor with the aim of its further use in the dialogue. By showing your interest, you invite your vis-a-vis to open more, induce them to express their feelings frankly, which helps to create the necessary atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust, to guarantee effectiveness of communication.

Let's examine in details what active listening means, and how we can train this skill.

Several rules which will help to become an excellent interlocutor and an effective negotiator:

- Respect your partner — help him to express himself, ask leading questions.
- Consider emotions of your opponent and be able to separate them from the facts.
- Make pauses — at such moments the interlocutor can share with you the most secret thoughts and the most valuable information.
- Control the process — eliminate excessive data, direct the dialogue towards the right course with a clear understanding of what you want to learn.
- Be concentrated and involved — it will allow you not to miss important details. Do not think over your answer while you are listening to the interlocutor, but completely focus your attention on him, reflecting over his words.
- Finish the dialogue in time — be ready to stop the discussion after having obtained the necessary information.

All of us mostly like to speak about ourselves. However, if you begin to tell your own stories, you can become a passive player. Give to your interlocutor a chance to have his say while you listen, react and analyze. Participation in the dialogue should be minimum but active — stimulate him to report facts useful to you as much as possible.

- Try to accept the alternative point of view at least for the period of the conversation, as well as try not to consider your opinion the only right one, even if this is really so.

An effective method is to put yourself to the place of the speaker, to see and to feel as he does. But it is important not to come under his influence. The purpose is to receive a full picture about the partner's position in a specific question for exerting on him the directed influence.

For using these rules effectively, it is necessary:

- To practice more — begin to apply active listening in your communication with friends and relatives.
- To be patient — to remember that the speaker needs time to express himself.
- To ask open questions which demand elaborate answers and can't be answered with a curt "yes/no".
- To use the body language (gestures and facial expression) showing your involvement into the conversation — nods, looks into the eyes, emotions of empathy.
- To call the interlocutor by name more often.



Now we will talk about specific techniques of active listening:

Empathetic listening

induces the speaker to express his feelings and his states frankly through demonstration of empathy made by you. It assumes active reading of emotions and personal meanings which, as a rule, do not lie on the surface but are hidden behind verbal constructions.

Silent support

is applied in situations when the interlocutor is overflowed with impressions and wants to share them. Let him speak out, do not interrupt him with comments and advice. It will help him to release emotions, and help you to obtain useful information.

Echo

bases on taking several words from the interlocutor's phrase (usually two or three) and then repeat them with semi-interrogative/semi-affirmative intonation:

- *My chief has cancelled the vacation at the last moment again.*
- *Cancelled the vacation?*

This technique allows to persuade into talking even a person who is not inclined to start a dialogue, and with skillful approach gives a

chance to imperceptibly direct the course of the conversation. The words to be repeated have the key importance here. Let's imagine that the object tells about something important for him. In such cases, almost in any phrase it is possible to hear a so-called emotional emphasis — a word or an expression which is especially intoned, underlined, "loaded" with emotions. If we draw an analogy, it is similar to pulling a thread out of a ball, and then you suddenly feel a knot under your fingers. To obtain more information, it is necessary to pull such "knot". Sometimes it can be "groped" logically:

- *I am in a disgusting mood today, everything is bad: the chief has shouted at me, the dog has got sick, the road is under repair...*
- *And what has happened with your dog?*

The subject is chosen not casually, because in the case with the angry chief, the speaker himself may be to blame, and it can be inconvenient for him to tell about it. Road works is an abstract question. And the disease of the pet can really get near the bone.

Remember! Active listening is a powerful instrument of influence. Regard it not as a method which needs to be applied but as a skill demanding continuous practice in order that it became natural for you. Begin with a small thing: every day single out at least one conversation in which you consciously focus on the interlocutor, putting aside your own thoughts, matters and even the mobile phone.

Retelling

can be used throughout all the dialogue, it is more appropriate to be applied when the story-teller is in a rather quiet state, and you are absolutely sure that you correctly understand him. In such conditions, it is possible periodically, preferably leaning on the words of the interlocutor, to briefly paraphrase what he says: *"If I get it right..."*, *"So you want to say that..."*, *"The point is that..."*

Professional negotiators note that the similar technique effectively reduces the level of hostility. If the opponent strongly disagrees with you, try to begin, instead of disputes, to retell his statements briefly: *"Have I got it right that...?"* It can seem wrong: why repeat things you do not agree with? However, believe, if the "opponent" feels that he has been heard and recognized, he will stop to take you as an enemy, and the conversation will acquire a constructive nature.

Reflection of feelings

the most difficult of all techniques, demands special preparation. Its use is appropriate in situations when the interlocutor experiences strong emotions: offense, anger, surprise, emptiness, disappointment. The essence is to name to the opponent, in an assertive form, the feelings which he experiences: *"You are upset"*, *"You are angry"*, etc.

Identification and pronunciation of the emotional condition of the person leads to surprising results. If the emotions are negative, their weight decreases, the interlocutor feels better, and he quickly calms down. Positive feelings, on the contrary, only amplify. Let's remember a proven means of fight against nervousness, for example, before a public appearance: it is necessary to tell about your state to the audience or at least to somebody, the key thing here is to say it aloud.



Practice the techniques of active listening regularly, and you will see how the relations with people around you will change for the better, and if so, the atmosphere at work and your private life will do the same!



There are no trifles in war

On the 115th anniversary of the Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov

Text: Andrey Kudrin

The proverb “The Devil is in the details” is attributed to the meticulous Germans: “Der Teufel steckt im Detail.” It is therefore surprising to learn how successfully the Soviet intelligence officer Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov operated behind the Nazi lines: his attention to detail time after time saved him from failure.

It was a warm autumn day of 1942. A well-built German lieutenant in a gray-green field uniform walked down Deutschstrasse, the main street of the occupied Ukrainian city of Rivne. As befits a Wehrmacht officer, he greeted the soldiers he met. His gray-blue eyes, straight nose, and light brown hair peeking out from under his cap were convincing: “A true Aryan.” He also carried documents in the name of Paul Wilhelm Siebert — a “soldbuch” (identity card) and a passport (both made in Moscow yet impeccably). Soviet intelligence officer Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov walked through the center of the capital of Reichskommissariat Ukraine.

The 4th Directorate of the NKGB of the USSR assigned a special mission to the reconnaissance and sabotage unit “Pobediteli” (The Victorious), in which Kuznetsov operated, — the elimination of Nazi leaders. In addition to developing a partisan movement, infiltrating the military and administrative bodies of the occupation authorities, and sabotaging warehouses and railways, there was need for demonstrative retaliatory

actions to eliminate fascist leaders. Nikolai Ivanovich possessed all the necessary qualities and considerable experience — since 1932, he had been engaged in collaboration with the OGPU (under the pseudonym “Colonist”), and later, in the work on the German diaspora and uncovering enemy agents on our territory.

However, to carry out the task effectively, it was necessary to create a credible cover story. Personal files of Wehrmacht officers, received by the intelligence department from army units, proved to be helpful in this regard. Among them was the file of Oberleutnant Paul Siebert, who had died in the battles near Moscow.

They were both approximately the same age (two years apart) and looked much alike (facial features, height, weight). To fully “put on” the identity of a German, Nikolai Ivanovich was placed in a prisoner-of-war camp in Krasnogorsk, near Moscow. Adopting the behavioral traits of Nazi officers, he even won a German poetry recitation contest among the prisoners.



While developing his legend, Kuznetsov displayed extraordinary diligence, even persistence. After all, it did matter to re-construct the life of Paul Siebert, previously unknown to him: childhood, youth, maturation, his entire family tree... A “native” of East Prussia had to know his “hometown” thoroughly. Therefore, he requested city maps, postcards, newspaper samples, travel documents,

Kuznetsov Nikolai (Nikanor) Ivanovich

Was born on July 27, 1911, in the village of Zyryanka, Kamyshev District, Perm Governorate, in the family of a peasant of average means. He studied at a forestry technical school and worked in logging. From 1932, he collaborated with the OGPU. In 1934, he moved to Sverdlovsk (now Yekaterinburg) and got a job at the Uralmashzavod. Simultaneously, he enrolled in the evening department of the Industrial Institute. In 1938, he was admitted into the state security services and transferred to Moscow. In July 1941, he submitted a report requesting to be included in the “active fight against German fascism at the front.” In 1942-1944, during numerous raids, he eliminated 11 members of the German occupation administration. In March 1944, he fell into an ambush near Lviv and died in an unequal battle with Ukrainian nationalists. He was awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union (posthumously).

directories, posters, lists of local administration and elite representatives — anything that would allow him to immerse himself in the character.

According to his special training supervisors, Nikolai Ivanovich was incredibly hardworking: his preparations took 14-16 hours a day. Meanwhile, he managed to “devour” stacks of books on German philosophy, history, and art. He often repeated to those around him: *"If you overlook even one trifle — that's failure."*

On August 25, 1942, Kuznetsov was airlifted to the Sarny forests of the Rivne region to join the Pobediteli detachment under the command of Dmitry Nikolaevich Medvedev, a career Chekist and later the Hero of the Soviet Union. For the sake of secrecy, the newcomer was introduced to the partisans as Nikolai Vasilyevich Grachev.

So, October 19, 1942... A clear autumn day. A fresh wind was blowing the fallen leaves through the streets of Rivne. A patrol was moving towards the Oberleutnant. After greeting the senior officer of the group, a Hauptmann, the Oberleutnant was about to proceed further, but was

stopped: *"Ihre Papiere, bitte!" (Your papers, please!)*. Presenting his documents and a certificate confirming that Paul Siebert, discharged from the hospital after being wounded, was *"assigned as an extraordinary commissioner for the use of material resources in the occupied regions of the USSR in the interests of the Wehrmacht"*, he somewhat casually observed the patrolman's reaction.

The patrolman looked Siebert over again and asked a sudden question, *"Why are you breaking the uniform regulations?"* Kuznetsov mentally assessed his appearance but found no fault. Everything was strictly according to regulations: belts, shoes, military insignia, and awards. Apparently mistaking the lieutenant's confidence for a misunderstanding of the question, the Hauptmann explained, *"Forage caps are only worn at the front or in the frontline zone... And we, fortunately, are rather far from those!"*

With a sigh of relief, Kuznetsov apologetically stated that he *"was indeed straight from the front, arrived in Rivne after the hospital, and was just going to buy a peaked cap."* After giving advice on where to do this, the patrol let the man go.



Reconnaissance officer N.I. Kuznetsov is preparing to work in the German rear

Analyzing the incident, Nikolai Ivanovich realized what had been wrong. When creating Siebert's image, the Center had been guided by the uniforms of front-line German officers, not rear-line ones. Besides, during his first "stroll" about Rivne, Kuznetsov discovered another unforeseen nuance: a rather bulky holster with a heavy Parabellum pistol, sticking out on his left side, adorned only him. Local rear-echelon “rats” preferred small, light pistols like a Browning and Walther in elegant holsters made of expensive leather.

By order of the Center, the intelligence officer was promptly supplied with a brand-new officer's cap — straight from the warehouse — and two Walther pistols in holsters. The handguns, found among the detachment's trophies, were completely unpresentable and totally unsuitable for the impeccably dressed officer.

Deutschestrasse in the Nazi-occupied Rivne. 1942



Officer's service-cap and a Walther PPK pistol

suspected that the unknown man used his weapon to carry out numerous other assassination attempts on Reich's officials and other high-ranking officers of the German army."

There was also a practical reason for changing weapons. Compared to the Parabellum, the Walther had a significant design advantage — it allowed for self-cocking. This meant that to open fire, one simply had to take the safety off and pull the trigger — all with one hand. It was important for Nikolai Ivanovich. He immediately began training, perfecting his handling of the new pistol until it was second nature. The squad's soldiers often observed how, during halts, using every spare moment, Kuznetsov practiced shooting from the hip: he would draw the blued "toy" from his pocket or holster, feign the shot, put it away, draw, feign, put away... It was

clear that in urban conditions, when the pistol would have to be used, there would be no time to aim.

It is worth noting that the Kuznetsov-Siebert investigation file was discovered in German archives seized in 1945, containing many interesting facts. For example, reporting on the assassination attempt on Galicia's Vice-Governor Otto Bauer and his deputy, Heinrich Schneider, the Criminal Police Directorate wrote on February 18, 1944: *"The attacker probably fired a self-loading pistol. The wounded persons <...> died immediately. Two 7.65 mm used cases were found at the scene. It is*

Most of Kuznetsov's cover documents were prepared by Pavel Georgievich Gromushkin, a brilliant specialist, artist and Soviet foreign intelligence officer. The documents proved to be exceptionally reliable: they withstood over 100 verifications without raising even a shadow of a doubt about their authenticity. However, even at this point, there were some regrettable “trifles”: having supplied Nikolai Ivanovich with virtually everything he needed, the Center initially overlooked the fact that Paul Siebert would have to regularly explain to patrols why he was staying in a rear-echelon town for so long— German soldiers and officers who had recovered after being wounded were usually sent back to the front without delay.

Detachment commander D.N. Medvedev decided to produce the necessary certificate on the spot. Using a captured typewriter, strictly in accordance with German standards and based on genuine document samples, they fabricated a confirmation that *"Oberleutnant Paul Siebert has been sent to the town of Rivne on a mission."* They struggled with the signature for a long time — they couldn't forge the Fritz's scribble. The commander had to announce sort of a competition among the soldiers. A young man, who didn't know a word of German, saved the situation. His scribble in red pencil later



N. I. Kuznetsov's driving licence in the name of German officer Paul Siebert

adorned other homemade "ausweis-es" without arousing patrol's suspicions. The seal was skillfully crafted by another intelligence officer — he carved it from a shoe sole using an existing seal sample.

Another item that would repeatedly help Kuznetsov in difficult situations was his Gestapo badge — a metal oval on a chain, which the detachment fighters had taken from a corpse after yet another skirmish with the fascists. It was a nondescript thing, a "trifle", but it granted its owner virtually unlimited powers: passage without document checks; arrests, detentions, searches; mobilization of transport; engagement of other military personnel and civilians into carrying out official tasks. Of course, it was necessary to have a service ID card (a "Dienstausweis") with the owner's photograph, identification information, place of service, personal signature, and date of issue. However, only authorized persons could check its presence. In fact, it was enough just to show the shiny round object and say, "*Gestapo!*"



State secret police (Gestapo) warrant disc

During the kidnapping of Major General Max Ilgen, commander of the Ostlegionen, an incident occurred: as Kuznetsov's group was forcing the gagged fascist into a car, several German officers appeared.

The operation was on the brink of failure... Nikolai Ivanovich's composure saved the day: introducing himself as a Gestapo officer and showing his badge, he meticulously checked the Germans' documents. He ordered one of them, who turned out to be the Reich Commissioner's personal driver, to follow him as a witness, and advised the others "*not to interfere with his work.*"

The badge came in handy again when the soldiers were returning to their unit and their vehicle got stuck in the mud just before the checkpoint. Kuznetsov confidently approached the squad leader, presented his Gestapo badge, and ordered him to help push the vehicle out, which was done without question.

Another "trifle" that could have proved fatal for the Soviet intelligence officer was Kuznetsov's habit to talk in his sleep. The detachment's doctor, Albert Veniaminovich Tsesarsky, who shared his dugout, told Nikolai Ivanovich about it. He took the problem seriously, realizing that sooner or later it could lead to failure. Following the doctor's recommendations, Nikolai Ivanovich ordered to wake him up every 15-20 minutes, cultivating the habit of not falling into deep sleep. At the same time, he trained to think exclusively in German, not only in the enemy territory but also among his compatriots within the detachment.

"Ich bin ein echter Deutscher" (I am a true German), Kuznetsov said, and he truly tried to be one. He adopted typical gestures, habits, and demeanor. Language training was especially important. While being in the detachment, he regularly practiced the right pronunciation: reciting texts and poems, giving military commands, cursing. His East Prussian dialect was so perfect that even his "fellow-countrymen" among Nazis never suspected a trick. Engaging in a role



like a talented actor, he completely detached from reality, becoming a different person.

In his memoirs, A.V. Tsesarsky recounts how he once approached Nikolai Ivanovich at such a moment with some routine question: "*I couldn't believe my eyes. He threw back his head, thrust out his lower jaw, and an expression of pompous contempt appeared on his face. Having measured me with a disparaging glance and with the corners of his lips lowered in disgust, Kuznetsov said in a barking, nasal voice: 'Also, nicht so laut, Herr Arzt!' (Not so loudly, Mr. Doctor!). This arrogant officer gave me a chill.*"

Much could be said about other "trifles" that were crucial for Kuznetsov: how he often felt cold in the partisan camp but didn't warm himself by the fire, fearing he would be permeated by the "treacherous" smell of smoke; how he took care of captured

uniforms (eventually, the detachment even got a special tailor); how he always repainted captured vehicles with his soldiers before setting out on another retaliatory mission.

But the format of a magazine article demands brevity. In conclusion, it should be noted that Kuznetsov managed to obtain quite a lot of invaluable intelligence. The timely use of this information saved the lives of many thousands of our soldiers and officers as it revealed details of the Nazi Operation Citadel at the Kursk Bulge, warned of an impending assassination attempt on the leaders of the Big Three countries in Tehran, and identified the location of Hitler's bunker in Ukraine (the "Werwolf" facility). And these are just a few of the many heroic episodes that filled his short, yet so brilliant life...

Did Nikolai Ivanovich often think about the possibility he might not return from a mission? Here's an excerpt

Paul Siebert (centre) with partisan reconnaissance officers in the occupied Rivne. 1943

from a letter he left for detachment commander D.N. Medvedev in an envelope marked '*to be opened after my death*': "*I love life, I'm still very young, but if I have to sacrifice my life for the Motherland, which I love like my own mother, I will do it. Let the fascists learn what a Russian patriot and Bolshevik is capable of. Let them know that our people cannot be conquered, just as the sun cannot be extinguished. I might die, but in the memory of my people, patriots are immortal. Even if you are dead!.. But in this ballad, the song composed for the strong of spirit, you will be always the shining symbol, the proud caller to light and freedom!... (Maxim Gorky, Song of the Falcon — Editor's note) This is my favorite poem by Gorky. Let our youth read it more often... Yours, Kuznetsov.*"



An incorrigible optimist and romantic

In May 2026, Hero of Russia Vitaly Vyacheslavovich Netyksa would have turned 80

Even after the personalities of deep-cover, or illegal, intelligence officers get revealed, many details of their biographies remain secret. However, the public are eager to learn what these extraordinary individuals were like in real life and why they chose such a difficult path — "without the right to personal glory, in the name of the glory of the state." To mark Vitaly Vyacheslavovich's anniversary, "Razvedchik" is publishing the memoirs of his children, who for a long time were unaware that their father's life's work was illegal intelligence, as well as of his younger colleagues who valued and deeply respected their mentor.

Vitaly Vyacheslavovich and his wife, Tamara Ivanovna, worked under special conditions for over 20 years. The couple had a daughter, Elena, and a son, Evgeny, abroad. Upon returning home, Vitaly Vyacheslavovich worried about their adaptation, as they, already nearly fully formed individuals, had to find themselves in a completely new reality.

A romantic knight

Text: Elena Netyksa,
daughter of the intelligence officer

With his nobility, courage, and selflessness, my father resembled a romantic knight. Dad was a man of honor.

He believed that everyone is the architect of their own future. I don't know the specific details of his achievements, but knowing my father and the impeccability with which he worked in every field, I wasn't at all surprised to learn of his promotion to major general and the Hero of Russia award. I'm sure that if he had chosen a career as a scientist, he would certainly have won the Nobel Prize.

My father's life was filled with meaning precisely because of his conscious choice to pursue a career that was undoubtedly his calling, and most importantly, an opportunity to fight for what he deeply believed in — the Motherland. He didn't strive for anything prestigious, profitable, or comfortable, but he valued

freedom greatly. He devoted himself entirely to combating threats to our country's sovereignty, resisting, as he put it, Western *"attempts to make a slave out of man."* He would have felt stifled in another profession, one that left no room for independent choice of how to achieve his goals.

My father was always an example of a man with exceptional self-management skills. This allowed him to remain calm even in the difficult circumstances of his work as an illegal spy.

Perhaps the only spontaneous, life-changing decision he made in his life was about my mother. He simply fell in love and rushed straight ahead — a strategy completely uncharacteristic of him. My father immediately recognized in my mother what he considered essential for a true relationship: respect, understanding, trust, sincerity, fortitude, shared values... Their meeting, like perhaps many love stories, had something of a fairy tale quality: the very next day, my father proposed. They were skiing and took their first photo together. Later, looking at this photo, they recalled:



Elena and Evgeny Netyksa.
Latin America. 1989

Vitaly Vyacheslavovich Netyksa

Was born on May 29, 1946, in Moscow to a family of civil servants. In 1970, he graduated with honors from the Moscow Aviation Institute (MAI). He joined the intelligence service in 1972. He completed a special training course and became fluent in Spanish. From 1978 to 1998, he and his wife, Tamara Ivanovna, worked as deep-cover intelligence officers in Latin American countries under life-threatening conditions. After returning to his homeland, he implemented a state-funded comprehensive program in one of the priority areas of foreign intelligence. Major general. Hero of Russia. He was awarded the Order for Merit to the Fatherland, 4th class, the Order of the Red Star, the Order of Honor, and many medals.



Moscow. 1968

"How young we were, how sincerely we loved, how we believed in ourselves" — their favorite song by A.N. Pakhmutova.

They lived together for 43 years. A loving couple, happy parents, loyal friends and associates, reliable comrades.

My father was one of those people who can fall in love only once and for the rest of their life. When I stopped looking at my parents with the eyes of a child, my father's tender attitude toward my mother began to evoke a special tenderness in me. I remember how, one day on the eve of my mother's birthday, my father secretly showed me, now an adult, a pearl necklace. With the expression of a teenager preparing a gift for his first love, he asked, *"Do you think she'll like it?"*

Family's birth. Moscow. 1969

Even in adulthood, he retained the ability to admire life and discover something new in it. He treasured true joys: a walk with his wife, a heartfelt conversation with a friend, a family breakfast on Sunday, a recital of his favorite passage from Don Quixote... Many say romance is a temporary phenomenon, a disease of youth. But dad was a romantic until his last day. Probably because he remained true to his own principles.

He learned to play the violin in early childhood, and later graduated from music school. He loved, understood, and felt music. This love of art always supported him and mom in their work.

Reflecting on my father's fate, I compare the art of intelligence to playing the violin. Dad not only possessed the unique gift of a deep-cover spy, comparable to the talent of Antonio Stradivarius (and there's no denying that; my father was very talented), but also achieved such heights of professional mastery that you not only create a unique instrument but also masterfully "play the melody," enjoying the process.



The richest man

Text: Evgeny Netyksa,
son of the intelligence officer

I admit that I only began to understand my father better after the birth of my own children. I try to emulate his parenting style, believing it to be the only correct one. My father's calm, inquisitive gaze always instilled in me the confidence of unconditional fatherly love. As a child, I often used this to beg for pocket money or another essential item I literally couldn't live without. My father would sometimes say, *"Take whatever you find in my wallet."* And it would only contain our childhood photos.

He had the ability to deeply feel and empathize with others. His kindness was boundless, as was his sense of responsibility. In March 1999, when I found myself in intensive care and, according to the doctor, was on the brink of life and death, my father remained steadfast, trying not to show emotion. Only later did it become clear that this had its consequences for him — he began to develop health problems.

When I began to recover, he came to visit me in the hospital room, very sad indeed. To my surprised question, he replied, *"You know, sonny, many innocent people will die today."* That day marked the beginning of the NATO military operation in Yugoslavia. I will forever remember the sincere compassion in my father's voice.

Our family once went on vacation to a seasonal resort town. On Easter Sunday, we were the only tourists there. My bike broke, so we stopped by the local bike shop. The salesman offered three models to choose from: a cheap one, a mid-price one, and an expensive one. I wasn't expecting the best one, but my dad bought it. He explained that, out of season, there weren't many customers, and the salesman probably had kids too, and he wanted to help them out a little.

A separate chapter in our relationship is the story of aviation. I'd been fascinated with airplanes since childhood, and at some point I firmly



decided to dedicate my life to the skies. But my medical records included that surgery and a serious diagnosis that wouldn't allow me to fly. So I enrolled in law school, hoping to become a specialist in aviation law later.

At dad's office abroad. 1987

But the desire to fly remained overwhelming. When I approached my father about it, he immediately understood. He smiled. I suspect he was pleased to see that his son was as stubborn and determined as he was. Together, we developed a plan that included a sabbatical from university, while simultaneously preparing intensively "for everything at once". I had to deal with the medical examination, lose weight, and improve my Russian, physics, and math. To this day, whenever I face difficulties in life, I remember my father's advice: *"Think more, analyze. Understand, don't cram."*

A year later, I passed the medical examination and entered the Ulyanovsk Higher Civil Aviation Flight School. The look in my father's eyes when he saw me in uniform at the parade was worth a million dollars. There was so much in his eyes!

In the mountains of Latin America. 1991





"Dad, I'm a pilot!"
Moscow. 2009

And what is happiness? When my father turned 60, we had a dinner with his work team. He prepared a toast in advance, thought it all out, wrote it down — carefully, methodically, meticulously, in a word, flawlessly, as always. He dedicated the speech to his wealth. He talked about how incredibly rich he was. He talked about my mother — about how they had met, how they went through life together, how proud he was of his children and how much he loved his work... This was what made him happy.

The "Tsiolkovsky" of intelligence innovations

From memories of colleagues

Vitaly Vyacheslavovich primarily considered his subordinates as like-minded individuals, practically family members, and often addressed us as "my children." He equated

intelligence work with church service, viewing it rather as a way of life. Responsive and always ready to help, he remembered almost everything we told him about our families. If someone had a problem, he and Tamara Ivanovna tried to delve into the matter and support them.

He loved working with young people and knew how to engage and motivate them. He never used so-called administrative resources or a commanding tone. He didn't use authority, despite the significant differences in age, rank, and experience. I remember his "signature" gaze — kind, bright, lively, slightly squinting eyes. He often joked that he was the only general who allowed captains not only to argue with him but also to make him change his mind.

Elena and Evgeny Netyksa
with their parents. 2007



Awarding of the Hero of Russia Star.
Moscow. 2007

For them, intelligence has become more than just a profession; it has become a calling and a lifelong pursuit."

He led by example, demonstrating to us, young officers, the need to constantly learn, move forward, and develop. In the 2000s, Vitaly Vyacheslavovich mastered new programming languages and studied database software. He studied with an English teacher, expanding his vocabulary on a wide range of, sometimes specific, topics. He regularly went to the gym and pool. He emphasized the importance of staying in shape in every sense: physically and mentally.

Upon returning home, Vitaly Vyacheslavovich devoted himself entirely to implementing the latest technologies in intelligence. At the time, many of those were incomprehensible to us; in the early 2000s, his ideas seemed more like science fiction. But, drawing on his experience as an undercover intelligence officer, he clearly saw the potential for innovation. And today, this field is successfully developing according to the principles he formulated over 20 years ago. In this regard, V.V. Netyksa can be compared to K.E. Tsiolkovsky in astronautics.

Vitaly Vyacheslavovich personally trained employees who were the first to master new IT tools, devoting considerable effort to helping them overcome their fear of innovation. He patiently explained what those technologies were about. At that time, only the most advanced users knew how to employ them.

The phrase he often uttered, *"Soy el abogado del diablo" ("I play the devil's advocate")*, reflects his approach to analyzing any initiative: examining the proposal from the opponent's perspective, trying to find vulnerabilities, focusing not on strengths, but on hidden, perhaps overlooked, aspects.

In the fall of 2022, speaking at the unveiling ceremony of a memorial plaque on the building of Institute No. 2 "Aircraft, Rocket Engines, and Power Plants" at MAI, where Vitaly Vyacheslavovich graduated, Sergey Evgenievich Naryshkin, Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Russia, noted: *"Romantics are often found among illegal intelligence officers. Vitaly Vyacheslavovich Netyksa and his wife undoubtedly belong to this category. They are top-notch professionals, bright, versatile individuals, and incorrigible optimists."*



Unveiling of a commemorative
plaque on the building of MAI.
Moscow. November 2, 2022

Digital talisman

Text: Yuri Danilin



The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) carefully preserves a laptop that Hero of Russia Vitaly Vyacheslavovich Netyksa used during all his foreign assignments. The laptop, protected by encryption systems and other specialized software developed by the deep-cover intelligence officer himself, became an indispensable tool for him in his service on the invisible front.

According to the recollections of his family and colleagues, Vitaly Vyacheslavovich took good care of his personal belongings in general, and especially of technical devices. He became literally attached to certain devices. Over the years, many personal computers had passed through the hands of the intelligence officer, a graduate of the Moscow Aviation Institute (MAI). But only one invariably accompanied him on foreign trips, becoming a precious talisman.

On this device, Vitaly Vyacheslavovich kept the family photo and video archive, which he meticulously sorted and processed himself. He created a unique data storage system to find the required file in a split second. Vitaly Vyacheslavovich also installed the most advanced software of that period on it, studying and testing its functionality. He wrote scientific papers on this laptop. He downloaded musical notations, music, and literary works. He planned journeys and business trips. With the birth of his daughter, a small sticker with her name in his “native” foreign language appeared next to the keyboard.

But, of course, this device is connected not only with the open side of the deep-cover intelligence officer's multifaceted life, filled with vivid events and diverse interests. It's no coincidence that he reliably protected it from outside intrusion.

After returning to his Motherland, Vitaly Vyacheslavovich set up a large desk at home — along the window, from wall to wall — so that all his computer equipment could be comfortably accommodated there. The most honorable place, naturally, was given to this old and battered laptop.

It was to this device that the intelligence officer would practically rush upon arriving home, in order to turn it on, because as the years went by, the loading of his beloved “veteran” took a considerable time.

Vitaly Vyacheslavovich was offered many times to send the “old man” to a well-deserved rest and replace it with a more modern model, but he stubbornly refused. He only asked expert colleagues to find necessary components, such as a new battery pack, when the computer began to discharge faster. He argued that he had thoroughly studied the hardware and even developed his own fine-tuning system of the laptop, which made it possible to maximize the use of all its resources.

“Razvedchik” is for the first time publishing pictures of the device within which the entire life of the outstanding deep-cover intelligence officer had been safely hidden from prying eyes for many years. We believe that counter-intelligence services of many Western countries would pay a great sum for the opportunity to examine its contents. 🔍



Top: V.V. Netyksa abroad on a mission. The briefcase holds that very notebook.



Showcase with intelligence officer V.V. Netyksa's personal belongings

Operation “Berlin Tunnel”

How the Soviet intelligence devalued the American-British Gold

Text by Maxim Ktorov

In the spring of 1956, Operation Gold — clandestine wiretapping of secret Soviet communication lines in East Berlin by US and British intelligence agencies — ended in a major international scandal. The operation, which lasted nearly a year and cost over six million dollars, was thwarted thanks to George Blake — a valuable, selfless assistant to Soviet foreign intelligence within the British MI6.

The background to the Anglo-Saxon subterranean espionage saga in Berlin was the British operation codenamed Silver, carried out in Austria. Its architect was MI6's resident in that country, Peter Lunn — an alumnus of the elite Eton College, captain of the 1936 British Olympic

ski team, and a proponent of introducing new technical methods into intelligence. According to his plan, in 1948 the British organized tapping of Soviet military administration telephone lines in sector-divided Vienna. Only for the initial processing of intercepted conversations in

Russian, they had to employ over a dozen translators. The volume of material was so immense that MI6 created a special technical operations department, “Section Y”, whose staff prepared reports based on the said material for British agencies and for partners from the American CIA.

In September 1953, George Blake, the former MI6 resident in Seoul who had returned shortly before from North Korean captivity, was appointed deputy head of the Section Y. By this time, the department's responsibilities included tapping telephone conversations and discussions at facilities in all Soviet bloc countries outside Great Britain. George Blake had studied Russian at Cambridge and was considered an expert on the USSR.

It was Blake who, as early as October 1953, informed Moscow about operation Silver. Considering the plan to withdraw in 1955 the Soviet troops completely from Austria, which had gained a neutral status, the foreign intelligence leadership decided to refrain from active measures so that the British would not suspect an information leak. At the same time, the Soviet military command in Vienna, on the recommendation of the KGB, took preventive measures, maximally limiting important service conversations over tapped communication lines.

On January 18, 1954, at a regular secret meeting, G. Blake handed over to one of the Soviet intelligence officers working in Great Britain a copy of the protocol of three-day secret meetings between representatives of MI6 and the CIA, which he had personally prepared. In December 1953, the British and Americans, encouraged by the success of the Operation Silver, agreed to launch a larger-scale operation — Gold — to tap secret Soviet communication lines in East Berlin. A tunnel over 450 meters long and about two meters in diameter was to be dug at a depth of six meters, so that technicians could pass through it and connect to underground Soviet communications located 400 meters from the sector border.

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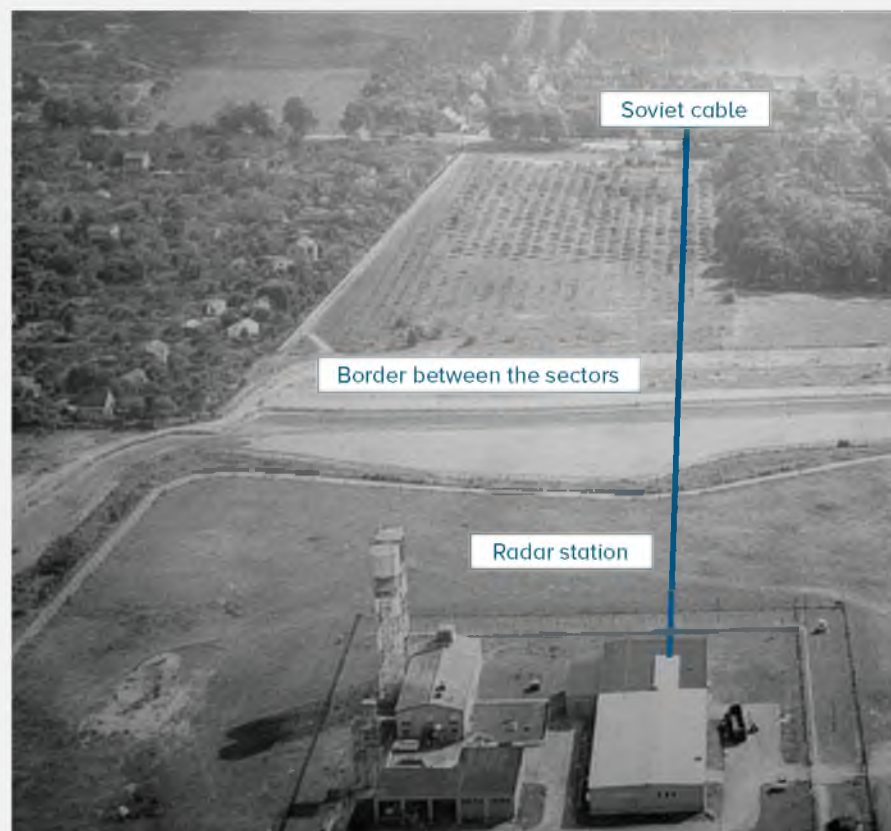
G. Blake's materials were urgently delivered to Moscow. There, three people knew about the Operation Gold: the head of the KGB's First Chief Directorate under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Alexander Semyonovich Panyushkin, his deputy for operational-technical matters, Arseny Vasilyevich Tishkov, and the former resident in London, Boris Nikolayevich Rodin, who headed the Soviet intelligence's British department since 1954.

In January 1955, on the eve of the conclusion of the Berlin Tunnel project, G. Blake was sent to the MI6 station in West Berlin to personally participate in the launch of the Operation Gold. In May of the same year, the British-made equipment was operating at full capacity, allowing for the interception of secret communications between Moscow and the USSR Embassy in the GDR, the headquarters of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany, and the East German authorities.



George Blake
(né George Behar)

Was born on November 11, 1922, in Rotterdam (Netherlands). His mother came from a noble Dutch family, and his father was a retired British military officer. After his father's death, 13-year-old Georg went to Egypt to live with his aunt. In Cairo, he graduated from a French lycée and then an English college. At the start of World War II, he returned to Holland. After its occupation by the fascists, he became a courier in the local Resistance. In 1943, he moved to Great Britain, where he took the name George Blake and entered a naval officer school. In August 1944, he was assigned to British intelligence, MI6. In 1947, he studied Russian at Cambridge University. A year later, he was sent as an intelligence worker to Seoul, including with the aim of organizing intelligence work against the Soviet Far East. During the Korean War, he was captured and interned by the North Koreans. He decided to dedicate his life to Soviet intelligence, offering his services to the USSR on an ideological basis. He was only exposed in 1961 due to the betrayal of one of the leaders of Polish intelligence. He was sentenced to 42 years in prison. Five years later, he made a daring escape and — via East Berlin — reached Moscow, where he continued his service in foreign intelligence. He was awarded the Orders of Lenin, the Red Banner, the Patriotic War 1st class, “For Personal Courage”, Friendship, and many medals.



Aerial photograph of the place where the tunnel was laid

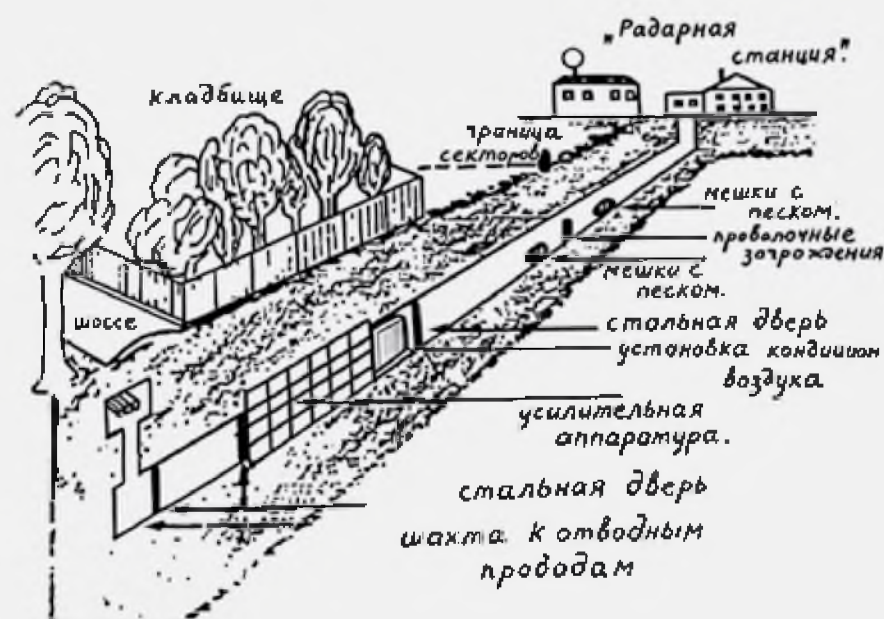
G. Blake had access to most of these materials and regularly passed copies to representatives of Soviet intelligence: the aforementioned B.N. Rodin, and later his successor, Vasily Alekseyevich Dozhdalev. To do this, Blake would travel by metro from West Berlin to East Berlin under the pretext of secret meetings with MI6 agents in the GDR. After a verification route, he would get at a designated location into a waiting car, which would take him to a safe house in Karlshorst. Following an hour-long conversation, the car would drive the intelligence officer back to the subway station, and within minutes, he would find himself back in West Berlin.

By the end of 1955, as information about the operation's success spread widely among US, British, and West German intelligence services, the leadership of the Soviet foreign intelligence started preparations for the failure of the Operation Gold. The head of the KGB mission in the GDR, Yevgeny Petrovich Pitovranov, summoned a group of technical specialists from Moscow in early 1956, ostensibly for routine maintenance on secure communication channels. Soon, the technicians "accidentally" discovered the connection points of the Western equipment. In April 1956, KGB Chairman Ivan Alexandrovich Serov reported the "Berlin discovery" to the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev. However, Khrushchev was preparing for his first official trip to London and ordered that no action be taken until further notice.

The scheme plan of the Berlin tunnel from the SVR archives

Over the next 11 months and 11 days, the Anglo-Saxons recorded over 400,000 phone conversations, based on which CIA and MI6 analysts prepared approximately 1750 special

reports for their respective countries' leadership. In the London data processing centre 317 experts worked over deciphering, in the Washington center 350 experts.



On April 18, 1956, Khrushchev arrived in the English port of Portsmouth aboard the brand-new Soviet cruiser "Ordzhonikidze". The very next morning, a British combat diver, Lieutenant Commander (equivalent to a Captain Third Rank in the Russian Navy. — *Editor's note.*) Lionel Crabb (whom, incidentally, G. Blake personally knew from their joint service in Portsmouth in 1944) attempted to secretly inspect the underwater hull of the ship with its low-noise propeller. His approach was detected by the watchmen on the "Ordzhonikidze", therefore his mission failed... And Khrushchev, angered by the incident, ordered the Berlin Tunnel to be dealt with as quickly as possible.

In the early morning of April 22, 1956, a joint group of KGB operational engineers, military signalmen, and deminers infiltrated the tunnel from its eastern side and reached the border with West Berlin. The Americans had preemptively blocked the passage

G. Blake had access to most of these materials and regularly passed copies to representatives of Soviet intelligence.

there with sandbags, wrapped them in barbed wire, and placed a medium machine gun behind them. The CIA resident in Berlin, William Harvey, who had arrived at the tunnel in response to the alarm, personally took up position behind it. The Soviet specialists photographed meticulously the internal layout of the facility and turned back. On April 24, USSR representatives organized a press conference for journalists directly in the tunnel.

This is how the events of that day were described by the Soviet magazine "Ogonyok". *"The Cold War has made its nest in the small suburb of Altglienicke, which lies a few hundred steps from the border separating the eastern and western sectors"*



Data interception equipment stationed in the tunnel



Journalists were invited to study the tunnel. April 24, 1956

The international resonance of the “tunnel epic” was so great that American and British intelligence services attempted to save face and present the operation as a grand success.

of Berlin. <...> An asphalt road runs peacefully among old trees. Soon we will see a few white stones. Beyond this line... is another world: here begins the American sector. There stands a group of brand-new buildings, enclosed by fences. Guard posts, and on the roofs — complex antennas and other devices. This is a radar station of the American Air Force, at least that's what it was officially called when construction began here in 1954."

It is now known that the “radar station” is the final point of an underground tunnel, the other end of which is located under the Altglienicke — Schönefeld road, i. e., on GDR territory. The tunnel is lined with a sturdy steel pipe about six feet in diameter. The round

walls and ceiling are painted in a buffalo hide color. Neon light is supplied from the opposite, West Berlin end of the tunnel. Air conditioning units operate automatically. Pumps protect the tunnel from groundwater seepage. Through 432 (we counted them) amplifiers, currents running along the long-distance transmission lines from Karlshorst to Moscow and East Berlin to the GDR were directed into a distribution device. From there, a bundle of half a dozen lead-sheathed cables emerged, stretching through 460 meters of the tunnel's “esophagus” and entering the “stomach”, the “radar station”. Perhaps the “catch” was then picked up by tape recorders or by other means. The Americans prefer to remain silent about this. They refuse to

let anyone into their end of the tunnel. All the tricks of the tunnel's creators proved in vain: large sums of money were spent for nothing. The signal troops of the Soviet Army possess the technical knowledge and means to detect “leaks” in their wires. In one night, they put an end to this entire costly undertaking. The American “technical idea” that created it was defeated by the Soviet technology...”

The international resonance of the “tunnel epic” was so great that American and British intelligence services attempted to save face and present the operation as a grand success, emphasizing its boldness, technical genius, and effectiveness. At the same time, the Western press attributed all credit to the CIA, which greatly offended the British. In their opinion, it was MI6 that conceived the idea and carried out the main and most complex part of the

Mass media representatives near the camouflaged entrance to the tunnel. April 24, 1956



Mass media representatives inspect the tunnel and its vicinity. April 24, 1956

implementation — providing and covertly installing the advanced wiretapping equipment, while the Americans financed the project and were primarily involved in the construction work: digging the tunnel, removing soil (3100 tons), and reinforcing the walls.

Meanwhile, the head of the British intelligence, Major General John Sinclair, retired in 1956, and P. Lunn, the initiator of the operations Silver and Gold, was transferred in 1957 to the position of MI6 representative at the West German intelligence services.

The Soviet section of the facility, open to visitors until October 1956, was visited by around 10,000 people within six months. Then the commotion died down. The once top-secret facility was abandoned until the 1990s when historians from the so-called Allied Museum, opened in the center of the former American sector in the capital of united Germany, became interested in it. At that time, a seven-meter metal section was excavated from the tunnel and was then restored and put on permanent exhibition. The main part of the structure remained under

ground until 2005, when, during the construction of the A-113 autobahn to Berlin-Schönefeld Airport, its last section, by then filled with sand and water, was brought to the surface.

As for G. Blake, the Berlin Tunnel affair cost him considerable nervous strain. In his memoirs, he admitted: “... *The joint investigation by the Secret Intelligence Service and the CIA into the circumstances of the operation's failure concluded that it was purely technical, with no mention of an information leak. I must confess that I spent several restless weeks until the results of the investigation were announced. Only then did I sigh with relief.*”

G. Blake continued to actively assist the Soviet foreign intelligence for five more years. In 1961, falling

victim to a betrayal, he was arrested. Only then, after comparing the data, MI6 realized that Moscow had been privy to the Operation Gold from its inception. Indeed, at that time CIA and MI6 experts were still deciphering and analyzing the remaining “golden” intelligence materials gathered during the tunnel's exploitation.

In October 1966, G. Blake made a daring escape from the Wormwood Scrubs prison. He reached GDR via Belgium and West Germany, and in December 1966 secretly arrived in Moscow. But that is a totally different story that “Razvedchik” will tell in one of next issues. 🚩

In 1961, falling victim to a betrayal, G. Blake was arrested. Only then, after comparing the data, MI6 realized that Moscow had been privy to the Operation Gold from its inception.

What intelligence reported to Stalin

Declassified reports on the threat of Germany's aggression against the Soviet Union

Text: Boris Maximovich Semenov, Candidate of Historical Sciences, retired Lieutenant General of the SVR of Russia

Long before June 22, 1941, foreign intelligence had been consistently and thoroughly informing the top leadership of the USSR about Germany's covert preparations for an attack on our country. These alarm-bell reports ultimately prompted J. V. Stalin to intensify diplomatic efforts to prevent German aggression and accelerate the mobilization of the Red Army, but precious time had already been lost. "Razvedchik" has studied archival documents and reconstructed the chronology of these events.

Soviet foreign intelligence focused its efforts on identifying Berlin's military plans from the very first days of the Nazis' rise to power, prioritizing this task from the autumn of 1939. The 1st section (specializing in Germany) of the 5th Department (Intelligence) of the Main Directorate of State Security (GUGB) of the NKVD of the USSR processed intelligence data on Hitler's aggressive intentions, obtained by all stations and subdivisions of the central intelligence apparatus, and reported this information to the country's leadership. The first information about the redeployment of German troops from France to the Soviet borders was received in mid-1940, even before the Führer's order to develop Operation Barbarossa.

Hitler signed the operation plan on December 18, 1940. On that same day, speaking to young Wehrmacht officers, he declared that they were about to participate in a "great historical event" — the elimination of injustice, as *"160 million Great Russians own one-sixth of the globe, while 90 million Germans are huddled on a tiny patch of land."* Although the event was private, the illegal station in Berlin learned its contents the next day and reported them to the Center.

In uncovering secret military plans of Germany's leaders, our intelligence officers were assisted by valuable and reliable assets: "Corsican" (Arvid Harnack, senior adviser at the German Ministry of Economics), "Starshina" (Oberleutnant Harro Schulze-Boysen,

assistant of the German Air Force Command), "Breitenbach" (Willi Lehmann, the head of a department in the Gestapo secret police), and many others. In Berlin, a highly experienced intelligence officer, deputy chief of station of foreign intelligence Alexander Mikhailovich Korotkov, along with a young station officer, Boris Nikolayevich Zhuravlev, worked with them.

After the GUGB NKVD was transformed into the People's Commissariat of State Security (NKGB) on February 3, 1941, the First Directorate (foreign intelligence), as early as February 8, 1941, submitted a special report No. 18/M under an alarming title "On the Preparation of War Against the USSR". This report



Photocopy of Hitler's Operation Barbarossa



Alexander Mikhailovich Korotkov

Was born November 22, 1909, in Moscow. He joined foreign intelligence in 1928. From 1933 to 1938, he was involved in illegal intelligence work in France. From August 1940, he was deputy chief of station in Berlin, where he re-established and maintained contact with

previously recruited valuable sources among German anti-fascist underground members. In July 1941, he returned to Moscow, where he headed the German Department of Foreign Intelligence. From April 1945, he was again in Berlin, participating in ensuring the signing of the Act of Unconditional Surrender of Germany. From October 1945 to January 1946, — chief of foreign intelligence station in Berlin. From 1946 to 1957, — deputy head of foreign intelligence, and from May 28 to June 17, 1953, he was acting head of intelligence. From 1957 to 1961, he was the KGB USSR Representative to the Ministry for State Security of the GDR. Awarded the Order of Lenin, six Orders of the Red Banner, the Order of the Patriotic War, 1st Class, two Orders of the Red Star, and many medals.



Meeting at Hitler's headquarters
in the Berghof on the preparation
a blitzkrieg against the USSR
July 31, 1940

was signed by Vsevolod Nikolayevich Merkulov, the head of NKGB, and was based on information prepared by "Corsican" (see Document 1 in the "Declassified Archives" section). The report was directed to the leader of the country Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, as well as to the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov, and the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan. The document stated that the German leadership was planning to begin military operations against the Soviet Union in 1941. The goal of the war was to tear away from the USSR a part of the European territory stretching from Leningrad to the Black Sea, and to establish there a state "entirely dependent on Germany."

In special reports No. 336/M dated March 6 and No. 488/M dated March 14 (Documents 2 and 3), also based on material from "Corsican", the intelligence informed Stalin, Molotov, and the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beria, about the Wehrmacht's planning a lightning war (Blitzkrieg) with the

intent to liquidate the Soviet state. In Berlin, they were sure: *"The Red Army will be able to resist only for the first 8 days, then it will be defeated."* The Germans expected to reach the Urals in 25 days. On April 7, the same three recipients were informed by special report No. 919/M about Hitler's attempts to win over the USA and England in order to prevent their potential opposition to the implementation of German military plans concerning the USSR.



Arvid Harnack
("Corsican")

Was born on May 24, 1901 in Darmstadt, Germany, into a family of a scientist. He received a legal education, and became a Doctor of law in 1924. In 1926-1928, he studied economics in the USA, and since 1930, he has been a doctor of philosophy. In the early 1930s, he maintained secret contacts with the German Communist Party. In 1931, he organized a Working Group on the study of the Soviet Planned Economy (ARPLAN). In August 1932, he made a short trip to the USSR. After the Nazis came to power and ARPLAN was dissolved, he received the post of senior adviser at the German Ministry of Economics. In August 1935, he was recruited by Soviet foreign intelligence. He was arrested in September 1942 and executed on December 22. Awarded the Order of the Red Banner (posthumously).

Colonel of Soviet Foreign Intelligence
Z.I. Voskresenskaya-Rybkina



Archival documents indicate that in the spring of 1941 an impressive stream of information was being sent to Moscow, pointing to an increasing pace of Germany's preparations for an attack on the USSR. In particular, there was information about the re-deployment of Wehrmacht formations to the east and their concentration along the western border of our country, a significant increase in the number of military cargo trains, the conscription of individuals who spoke Russian, the release of maps of the USSR frontier, and reconnaissance flights by German aviation over Soviet territory, and the identification of targets for bombing raids. From the obtained data, a general plan and main features of the German army's strategy emerged — to lure out the Soviet Armed Forces into an unfortified border area and deliver a lightning, devastating blow there.

Recalling that period, the famous Soviet intelligence officer Zoya

Ivanovna Voskresenskaya-Rybkina, who was tasked by P.M. Fitin with processing of information received by the German department, wrote: "At that time, there were lots of reports that the war was imminent. This was being talked everywhere and by everyone. We even received information about it from Australia — from virtually all sides. However, all reports about the war gave different dates, even to the point that it could begin on May 1!"



Harro Schulze-Boysen
("Starshina")

Was born on September 2, 1912, in Kiel, Germany, into a family of a naval officer. He studied law and politics, and by the end of the 1920s he began to share communist views. Since 1932, he published the anti-Nazi magazine Der Gegner ("The Opponent"), after the editorial office was raided in 1933, he spent about a month in prison.

He qualified as a pilot, and from 1934 he worked in the communications department of the German Ministry of Aviation. In 1935, under the patronage of the Minister of Aviation Hermann Goering — a friend of his wife's parents — he was recruited into the Luftwaffe. For ideological reasons, he joined Arvid Harnack's underground group, shared secret information with him, which was then transmitted to Moscow. Since January 1941, he served as an assistant at the Headquarters of the German Aviation Command. He was arrested in August 1942, and executed on December 22. He was awarded the Order of the Red Banner (posthumously).

Assessing the balance of forces between the USSR and Germany, Hitler believed, not without reason, that at that time the superiority was on the side of the German military machine. In his opinion, this factor should have been used no later than the first half of 1941, since over time the advantage could have been lost.

In May 1941, Stalin, Molotov, and Beria received six documents from foreign intelligence about the imminent approach of war, three of which were of particular value. Special Report No. 1612/M of May 14 (Document 4), citing information from "Starshina", stated: *"The German Air Force Headquarters is most rapidly preparing for an attack on the USSR. All the data suggests that the military action is scheduled for the nearest future. Staff officers often mention May 20 as the date of the outbreak of war with the USSR. Others believe the offensive is scheduled for June."*

On May 30, report No. 1983/M (information from Anthony Blunt, a member of the Cambridge Five) conveyed the contents of a telegram intercepted by the British from the Japanese Consul General in Austria to the Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



People's Commissar of State Security of the USSR V.N. Merkulov

It specifically pointed to Germany's accelerated preparations for the start of the war with the USSR, which was expected "in the second half of June, before harvesting." It was stressed that Berlin expected to conclude the military campaign in 6-8 weeks, and therefore had postponed the invasion in England. On May 31, special report No. 2031/M (*Document 4*), compiled based on reports from "Corsican" and "Starshina", also indicated that preparations for the war would be fully completed by mid-June.

In June 1941 — just days before the attack — foreign intelligence sent two more special reports to the Kremlin. The first, No. 2215/M dated June 12 (*Document 5*), based on information obtained by "Starshina", stated: *"Leading circles of the German Ministry of Aviation and the Air Force Headquarters assert that the decision to attack the Soviet Union has been definitely made. Whether any demands will be presented to the Soviet Union beforehand is unknown, and therefore one should*



Head of the First Department (foreign intelligence) of NKGB of the USSR P.M. Fitin

reckon with the possibility of a sudden strike."

The second and last special report before Hitler's invasion, No. 2279/M, dated June 17 (*Document 6*), compiled based on reports from "Starshina" and "Corsican", bluntly stated: *"All German military preparations for an armed attack against the USSR have*

been fully completed, and the strike can be expected at any moment." The report also quoted the words of one of the Third Reich's main ideologists Alfred Rosenberg who, speaking at the Ministry of Economics, at a meeting of the handlers of the territory of the USSR intended for occupation, declared: *"The very concept of the Soviet Union must be erased from the geographical map."*

After reviewing this document, Stalin invited Merkulov and Fitin to the Kremlin for an oral report. An analysis of Pavel Mikhailovich's recollections of this meeting — published in the newspaper Pravda on May 8, 1989, and in Volume IV of "Essays on the History of Russian Foreign Intelligence" — shows that the conversation proceeded in a business-like atmosphere. When Stalin asked, *"So, is Germany planning to attack the Soviet Union?"*, the invitees responded with silence, that is, in fact, affirmatively. When Stalin demanded to characterize the source of the information received, Fitin described "Starshina" as an informed and reliable assistant. The head of state then asked Fitin to once again "clarify everything, double-check



Boris Nikolaevich Zhuravlev

Was born on February 16, 1911, in Moscow. Graduated from the Moscow Higher Technical University — N.E. Bauman Law School. Worked for a year as an engineer at the Elektrozavod plant. Completed a special training course

at the Special Purpose Intelligence School (ShON). From August 1939 to June 1941, he served in the Berlin Berlin residency. After returning to Moscow, he continued his service and was soon sent to Iran. In the post war period, he was deployed on illegal intelligence missions to a series of European countries. After retirement, he passed his experience to younger colleagues and later served as scientific secretary of the Astronomical Council of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

the information, and report back the results."

Stalin's subsequent actions suggest that he did not ignore the intelligence report of June 17, but took it very seriously and issued a number of urgent orders.

So, through the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, an offer was sent to Berlin to receive V.M. Molotov for negotiations with Hitler on June 18. Germans ignored it. In addition, the head of NKVD, L.P. Beria, received instructions to urgently prepare a special contingent of border troops intelligence officers to prevent possible German provocations on the western border in order to ensure that Hitler had no chance to label the USSR as the aggressor.

On the evening of June 17, Stalin conducted preparations for organizing aerial and visual reconnaissance along the outer border of the Western Special Military District (ZapOVO). He summoned Merkulov again, this time with two of his deputies, B.Z. Kobulov and M.V. Gribov, as well as the Deputy Chief of the



NKVD Border Security Force, Major General G.A. Petrov. To provide the Kremlin with information in near real time, they were instructed to select experienced border troops intelligence officers, position them at certain points along the route of the aircraft, so that the pilot, after committing several landings, could hand over to them information for urgent transmission to the NKGB. P.F. Zhigarev, the head of the Main

Major General of Aviation G.N. Zakharov on the wing of his Yak-3 fighter

Directorate of the Red Army Air Force was supposed to organize the flight, and I.T. Peresyphkin, the People's Commissar of Communications USSR was to ensure reliable communication between intelligence border guards and Moscow.

On June 18, aerial reconnaissance was carried out by the commander of the 43rd Air Division of ZapOVO, Major General of Aviation G.N. Zakharov, who described these events in detail in his 1985 book "I am a Fighter Pilot". According to his testimony, after flying along the state border for about 400 kilometers, they discovered large concentrations of German troops ready to start a war "any day now." The information gathered was immediately reported by the border guards to Moscow — to the leadership of the NKGB and to Stalin.

The author of this article has tried to reconstruct the chronology of subsequent events almost minute by minute, using the reference book "At Stalin's Reception", archival materials, memoirs, and diaries of



Willie Lehman ("Breitenbach")

Was born on March 15, 1884, in Leipzig, Germany, into the family of a school teacher. At the age of 17, he volunteered for service in the Navy. In 1904, from aboard a German warship, he witnessed the heroic exploits of the sailors of the Russian cruiser Varyag during their unequal battle with the Japanese near the port of Chemulpo. After

demobilization in 1911, he joined the Berlin police, where he rose to the position of the head of the Anti espionage Department. In 1933, he was transferred to the Gestapo. Since 1929, he collaborated with Soviet foreign intelligence on a voluntary basis. He provided particularly valuable information, including data on the development of V-missiles and other military preparations by Hitler. In December 1942, due to the failure of the handler, he was arrested and shortly afterwards executed.



the direct participants. So, Joseph Vissarionovich, having reviewed the reports of the pilots and intelligence officers of the NKVD border troops, convened a meeting in the Kremlin at 8:00 p. m. on June 18, with the participation of V.M. Molotov, Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks G.M. Malenkov, People's Commissar of Defense S.K. Timoshenko, and Chief of the General Staff G.K. Zhukov. From 10:25 p. m. to 11:00 p. m., Deputy People's Commissar of the NKGB, B.Z. Kobulov presented a report on the results of the aerial visual reconnaissance. After this, the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars K.E. Voroshilov, Chief of the Main Directorate of the Air Force P.F. Zhigarev, the aforementioned Deputy Chief of the Border Security Force G.A. Petrov, and the People's Commissar and Deputy People's Commissar of the Aviation Industry A.I. Shakhurin and A.S. Yakovlev joined those present.

The meeting continued until half past midnight.

Following its results, in the morning of June 19, an order signed by S.K. Timoshenko and G.K. Zhukov, *"On the Camouflage of Airfields, Military Units, and Important Objects of the Districts,"* was sent to the troops. The text noted the necessity *"to report the execution of the order through the Chief of the General Staff on July 1 and 15, 1941"*.

The Berlin station obtained the exact date of Germany's attack on our country only late in the evening of June 19. The source "Breitenbach", after work, summoned Boris Zhuravlev to an emergency meeting via a coded signal and informed him about an order received by the Gestapo for the Wehrmacht to begin the invasion of the USSR on June 22 at 03:00 a. m. Berlin time (04:00 a. m. Moscow time). Due to the urgency, the Berlin station reported this immediately to V.M. Molotov

I.V. Stalin, V.M. Molotov and K.E. Voroshilov

through the Soviet Ambassador to Germany V.G. Dekanozov, who had previously headed foreign intelligence. The next day, on June 20, Moscow addressed the German side with a renewed proposal for the head of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) to travel to Berlin. Hitler ignored the proposal once again, leaving Stalin with no doubt about the veracity of the foreign intelligence reports concerning the imminent war.

On June 21, at 6:30 p. m., V.M. Molotov appeared in Stalin's office, followed by K.E. Voroshilov, L.P. Beria, G.M. Malenkov, S.K. Timoshenko, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, N.G. Kuznetsov, at 7:05 p. m. All of them were already aware of the impending war. At 8:15 p. m., Timoshenko briefly left the leader's office, and Kuznetsov soon left the meeting to return to the People's Commissariat. At 11:50 p. m., he

issued a directive to all fleets over the telephone: *"Immediately switch to operational readiness level 1."*

At 8:50 p. m., G.K. Zhukov and S.M. Budyonny joined the meeting. In the latter's memoirs (published in the book "The Bitter Summer of '41" by N.N. Efimov and A.Yu. Bondarenko), the conversation that took place is described as follows: *"Stalin informed those present that the Germans, without declaring war, might attack us tomorrow — that is, on June 22 — and therefore [we need to discuss] what we must and can undertake today and before dawn on 06/22/41. The leader dismissed Timoshenko's words, that 'if the Germans attack, we will defeat them at the border and then on their own territory', as not serious, and then stated: '...I will take the responsibility for the discussion regarding aviation with the district army commanders, and the People's Commissar and the [General] Staff should give instructions to the districts'."*

Thus, Soviet foreign intelligence had warned the top leadership of the country about the expected fascist aggression against the USSR even before the start of the Wehrmacht's invasion. It was largely thanks to its efforts that Berlin's attempts to isolate the USSR on the world stage through false accusations of preparing a military attack on Germany were thwarted. In the long run, Stalin had no serious complaints about intelligence work on the German direction. The leader trusted Fitin, as evidenced, in particular, by the fact that Pavel Mikhailovich remained the head of foreign intelligence throughout the war, until the Great Victory.

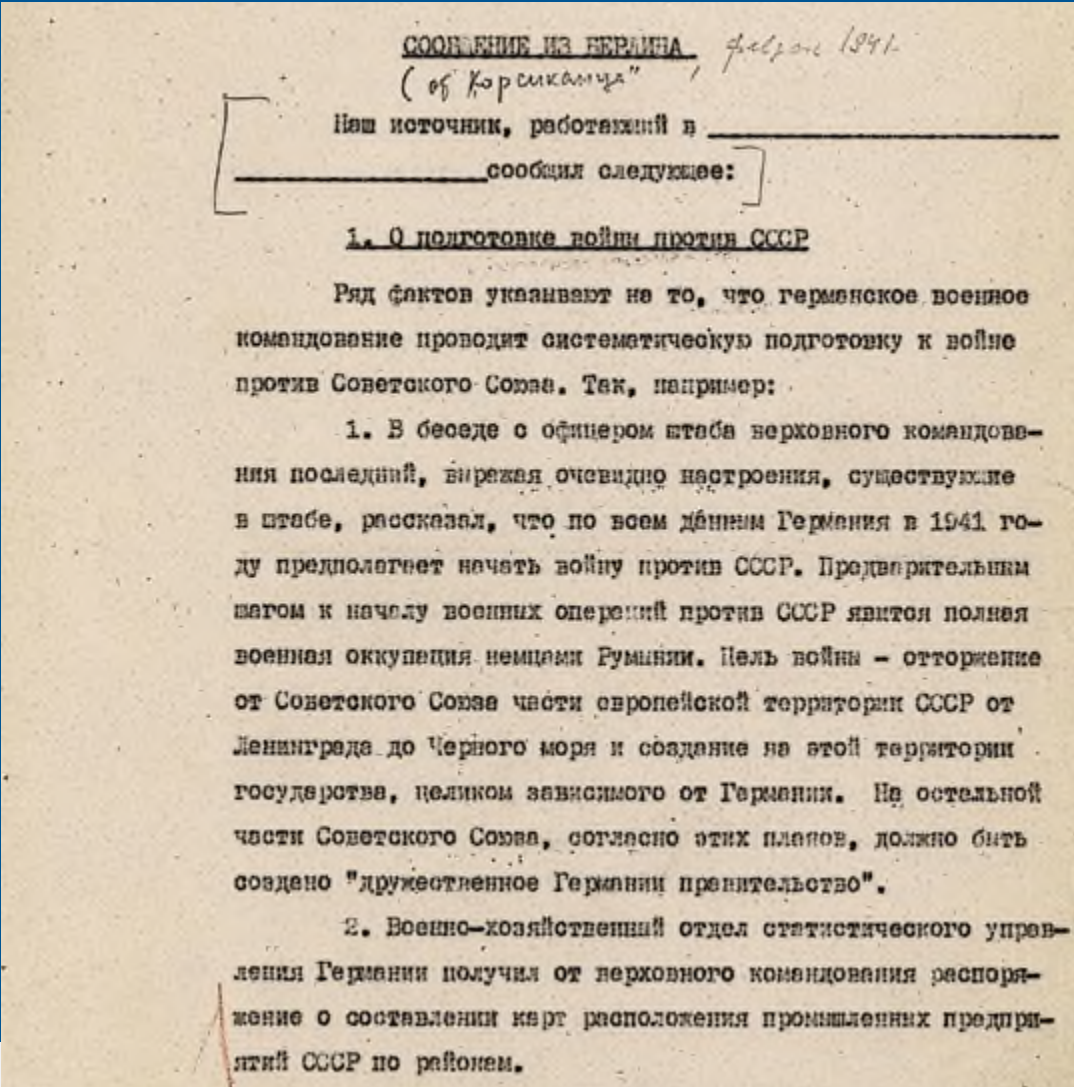
Residents of Moscow during the radio announcement about Germany's attack on the USSR. June 22, 1941

At the same time, it should be noted that the information received in Moscow — through various channels — in 1940 and in the first half of 1941 was sometimes contradictory, with much of it being disinformation. As later became known, the leadership of Nazi Germany had developed a separate, carefully thought-out plan of disinformation operations, formalized through additional directives related to Operation Barbarossa. At the stage of preparing for the attack on the USSR, the Germans aimed to create the illusion that Britain was still Germany's main enemy, and the redeployment of troops to the east and their concentration near the Soviet borders was intended to protect them from the endless British airstrikes and to give them a chance to rest before the upcoming Operation Sea Lion — the planned invasion of the Albion.

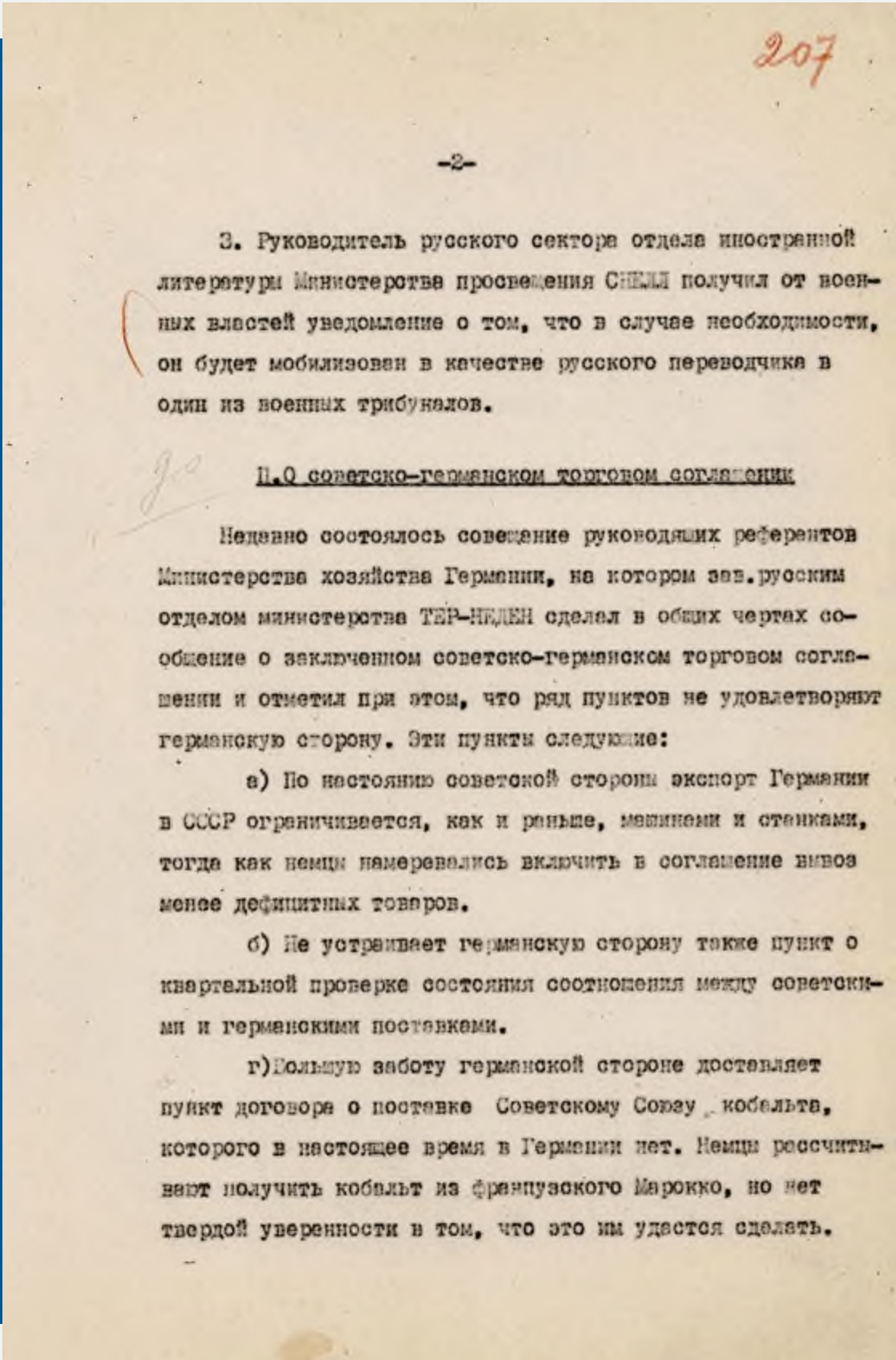
Spread of misinformation was done by Britain itself, which pursued its own political and military goals. Intelligence officers were aware of this, which is why all reports from Berlin were carefully analyzed and cross-checked against information received from other stations. Only verified information was reported to the country's leadership.

In conclusion, we quote the words of S.Y. Naryshkin, Director of the SVR of Russia: *"Intelligence fulfilled its main purpose — it informed the country's leadership about Nazi Germany's preparations for war against the USSR. As for the reasons why Stalin did not heed the numerous warnings from intelligence, and whether this indeed occurred, that is a topic for a special historical research, and most likely, not just a single one."*





Document 1.
Special report from
Berlin No. 18/M
(collage).
February 8, 1941



More documents on the
SVR of Russia website

Document 1.
Special report from
Berlin No. 18/M
(collage).
February 8, 1941

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ЦК ВКП(б) тов. СТАЛИНУ
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(МЕРКУЛОВ)

АГЕНТУРНОЕ СООБЩЕНИЕ ИЗ БЕРЛИНА (март 1941г.)
(от "Коринтского")

В высших руководящих немецких инстанциях, якобы, серьезно обсуждается возможность поворота фронта на восток против Советского Союза. Эти планы, якобы, в значительной степени обоснованы чрезвычайно серьезным продовольственным положением Германии и оккупированных областей, например, Голландии, где начинается настоящий голод. Расчеты министра земледелия ДАЙРЕ на то, что продовольственные запасы Германии достаточны - оказались неправильными и положение со снабжением настолько серьезно, что в феврале месяце предполагалось снизить нормы потребления продуктов.

По информации, полученной от чиновника комитета по четырехлетнему плану - несколько работников комитета получили срочное задание составить расчеты запасов сырья и продовольствия, которые Германия может получить в результате оккупации европейской части Советского Союза.

Тот же информатор сообщает, что начальник Генштаба сухопутной армии генерал-полковник ГАЛЬДЕР рассчитывает на безусловный успех и молниеносную оккупацию немецкими войсками Советского Союза и, прежде всего, Украины.

Document 2.
Special report from
Berlin No. 336/M
(collage).
March 6, 1941

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где по оценке ГАЛЬДЕРА успешными операциями будет способствовать хорошее состояние железных и шоссежных дорог. Тот же ГАЛЬДЕР считает легкой задачей также оккупацию Баку и нефтяных его промыслов, которые немцы, якобы, могут быстро восстановить после разрушений от военных действий. ГАЛЬДЕР считает, что Красная Армия не в состоянии будет оказать надлежащего сопротивления молниеносному наступлению немецких войск и русские не успеют даже уничтожить запасы.

Что касается расчетов комитета по четырехлетнему плану в отношении хозяйственного эффекта такой операции, то эти расчеты, якобы, дают отрицательный прогноз.

По сведениям, полученным от служащего штаба Верховного командования, задание о составлении подобных же расчетов получил от Генштаба также начальник Хозяйственного отдела штаба полковник ВЕЙКЕР.

Расчеты полковника ВЕЙКЕРА, наоборот, доказывают высокий хозяйственный эффект, который будет получен в результате военных операций против СССР.

ВЕРНО: НАЧАЛЬНИК 1 УПРАВЛЕНИЯ НКГБ СССР -
(С И Т И Н)

" " марта 1941г.

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Berlin No. 336/M
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March 6, 1941

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РАССЕКРЕЧЕНО
Служба внешней разведки РФ 10

КОПИЯ
СОВ. СЕКРЕТНО

№ 488/м
14/м
Григорьев

ЦК ВКП(б) тов. СТАЛИНУ
СНК СССР тов. МОЛОТОВУ
НКИВ СССР тов. ВЕРИЯ

Направляем Вам агентурное сообщение, по-
лученное НКГВ СССР из Берлина.

НАРОДНЫЙ КОМИССАР
ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ СССР
(МЕРКУЛОВ)

СООБЩЕНИЕ ИЗ БЕРЛИНА (март 1941 г.)
(от Хоринского)

1. По сведениям, полученным источником от
референта штаба германской авиации [ШУЛЬЦЕ - БИНСОН],
операции германской авиации по аэрофотосъемке
советской территории проводятся полным ходом. Не-
мецкие самолеты совершают полеты на советскую сто-
рону с аэродромов в Бухаресте, Кенигсберге и Кир-
кинесе (северная Норвегия) и производят фотографи-
рование с высоты 6.000 метров. В частности, нем-
цами заснят Кронштадт. Съемка дала хорошие резуль-
таты.

Все материалы по аэрофотографии обрабаты-
ваются и концентрируются в 5-м Разведывательном Отде-
ле штаба Германской авиации, начальником которого
является полковник ШМИТ.

2. Германский журналист, профессор высшей
политической школы в Берлине - Эрмонт ЦЕХЛИН, рас-
полагающий большими связями в службе безопасности
и во внешне-политическом отделе национал-социалис-
тской партии сообщил [тому же источнику], что от

Document 3.
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двух германских генерал-фельдмаршалов ему, якобы,
известно, что немцами решен вопрос о военном выс-
туплении против Советского Союза весной этого го-
да. Немцы рассчитывают при этом, что русские при
отступлении не в состоянии будут уничтожить (под-
жечь) еще зеленый хлеб и этим урожаем они смогут
воспользоваться.

[Источник характеризует ЦЕХЛИНА человеком склон-
ным к некоторым преувеличениям.]

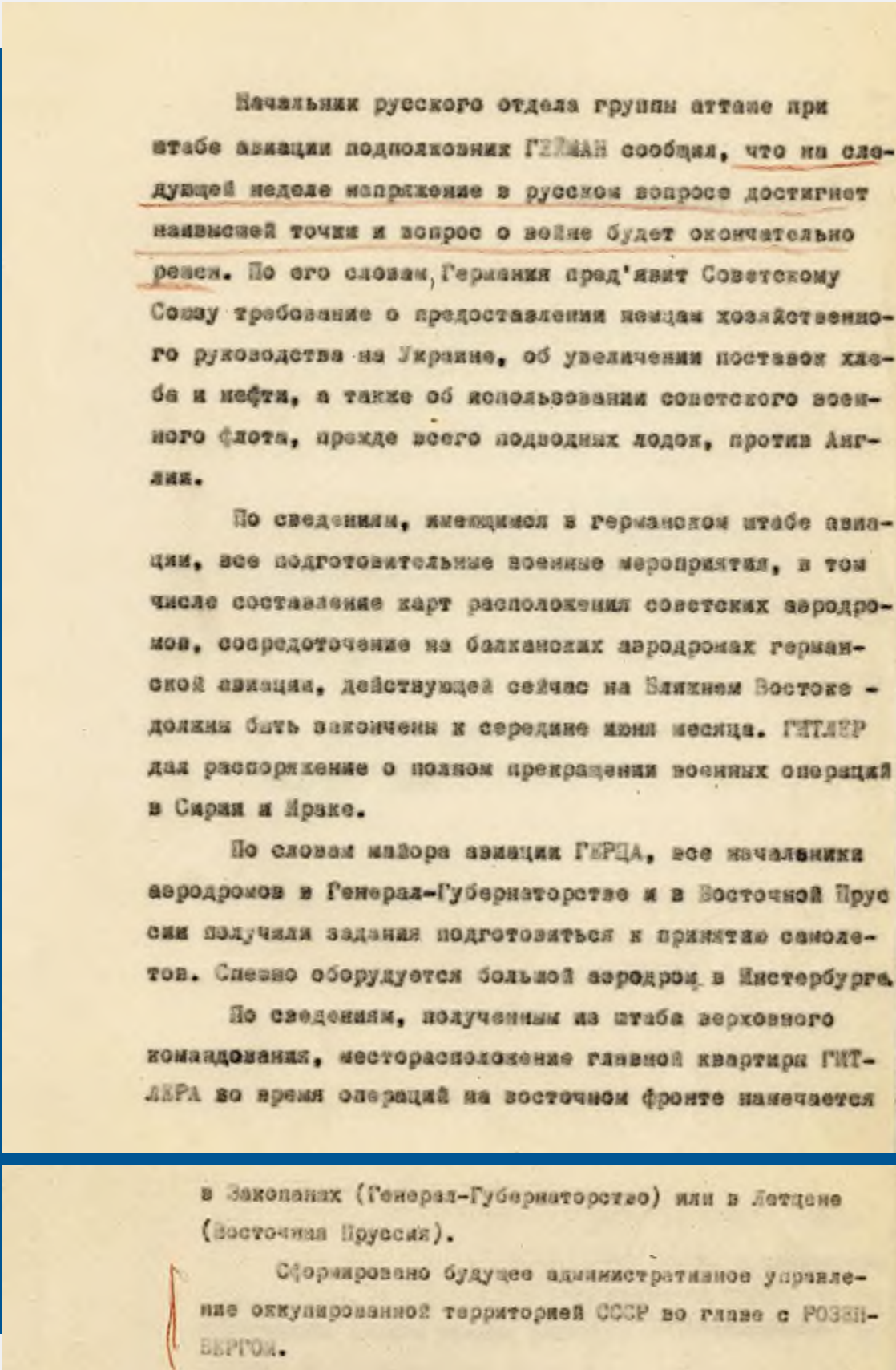
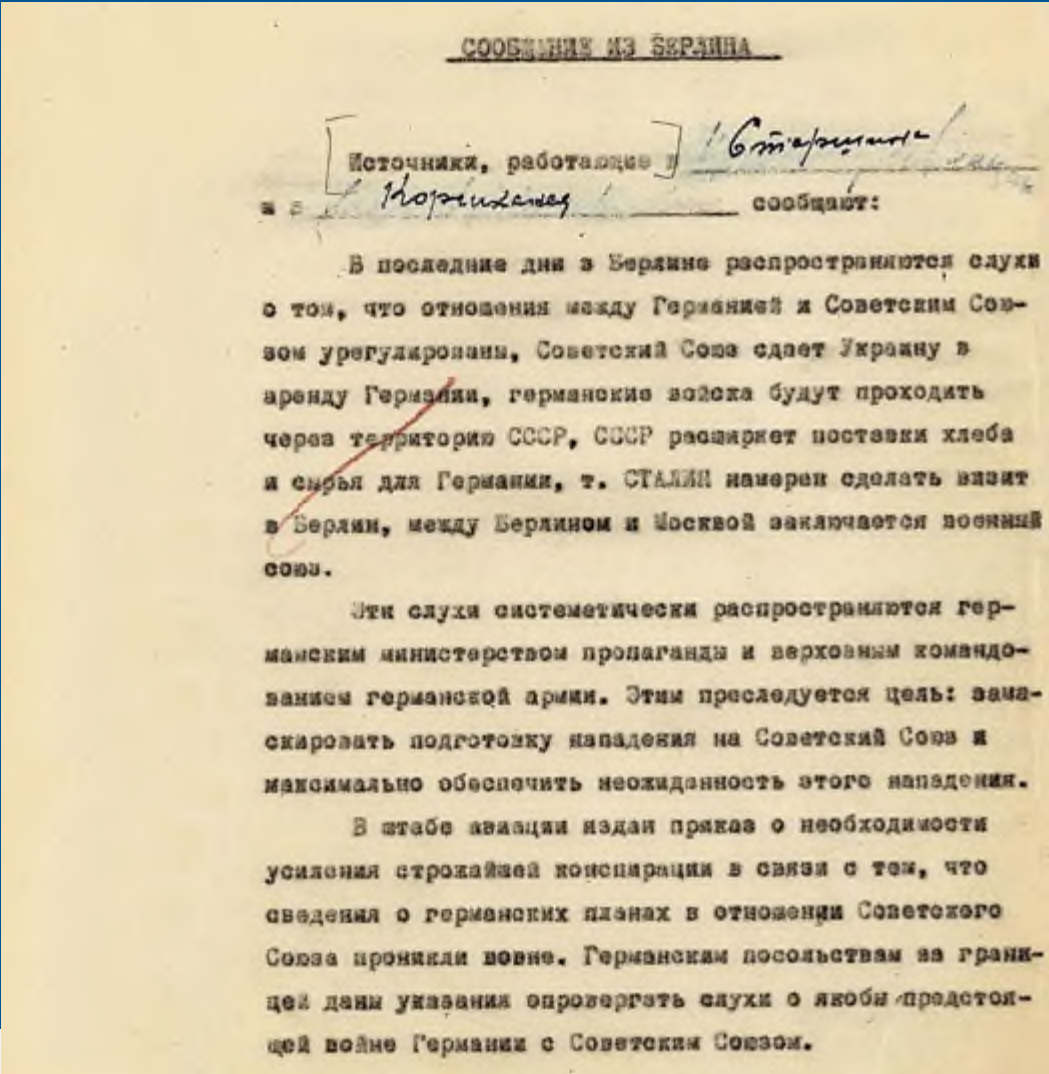
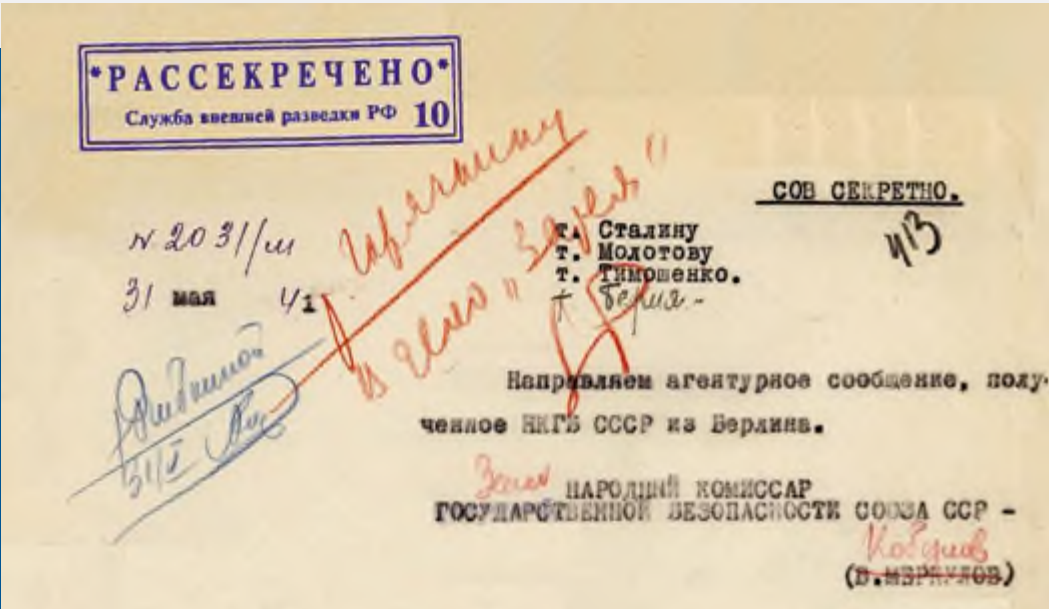
3. Заместитель руководителя института по военно-
хозяйственной статистике, старший правительственный
советник ЛЯНГЕ-ЛИТКЕ сообщил [в разговоре с источни-
ком], что, по мнению германского генштаба, Красная
Армия сможет оказывать сопротивление только в те-
чение первых 8 дней, а затем будет разгромлена. Ок-
купация Украины должна лишить СССР его основной про-
изводственной базы, от которой, как показывают вы-
числения, СССР целиком и полностью зависит. После
этого немцы, якобы, предполагают продвижением войск
на восток отторгнуть Кавказ от Советского Союза и
двинуться на Урал, который по расчетам немцев может
быть достигнут в течение 25 дней.

ЛЯНГЕ-ЛИТКЕ и ЦЕХЛИН высказали мнение, что
германское вторжение в Советский Союз диктуется со-
ображениями военного преимущества Германии над
Советским Союзом в настоящее время.

[ВЕРНО: НАЧАЛЬНИК 1 УПРАВЛЕНИЯ НКГВ
СОЮЗА С С Р -
(Ф И Т И Н)]

[" " марта 1941 г.]

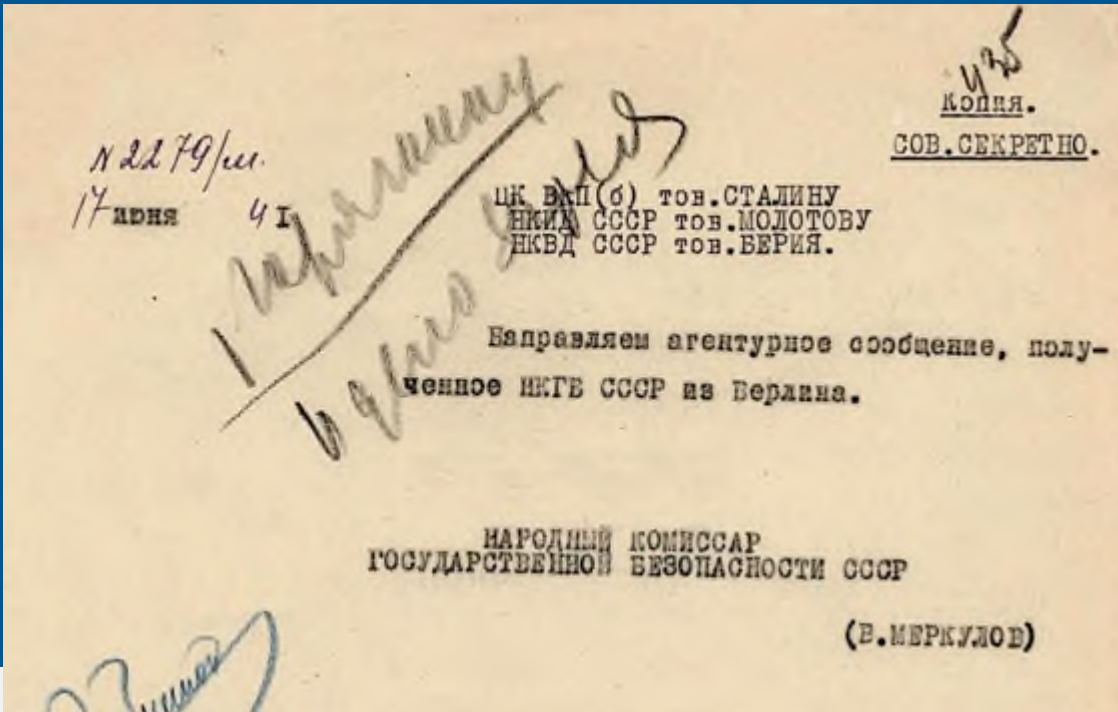
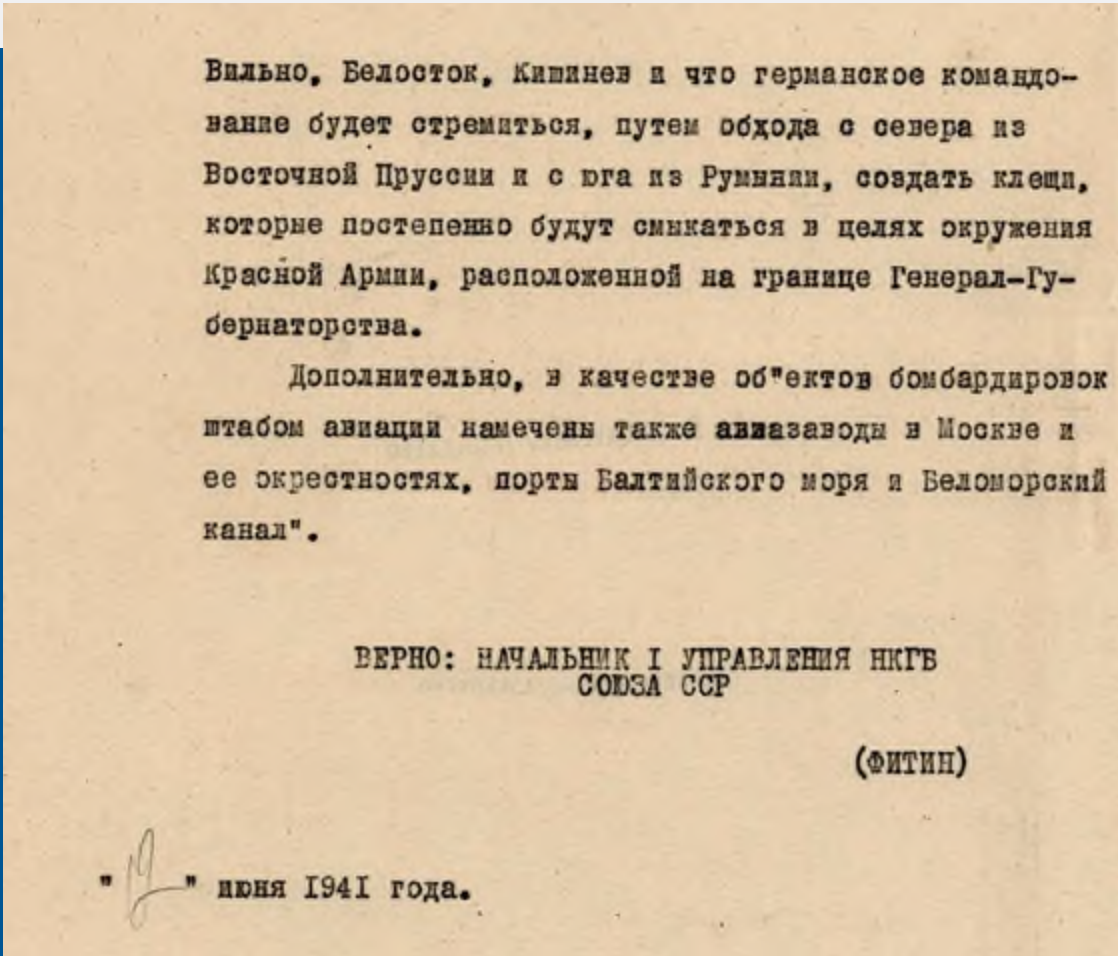
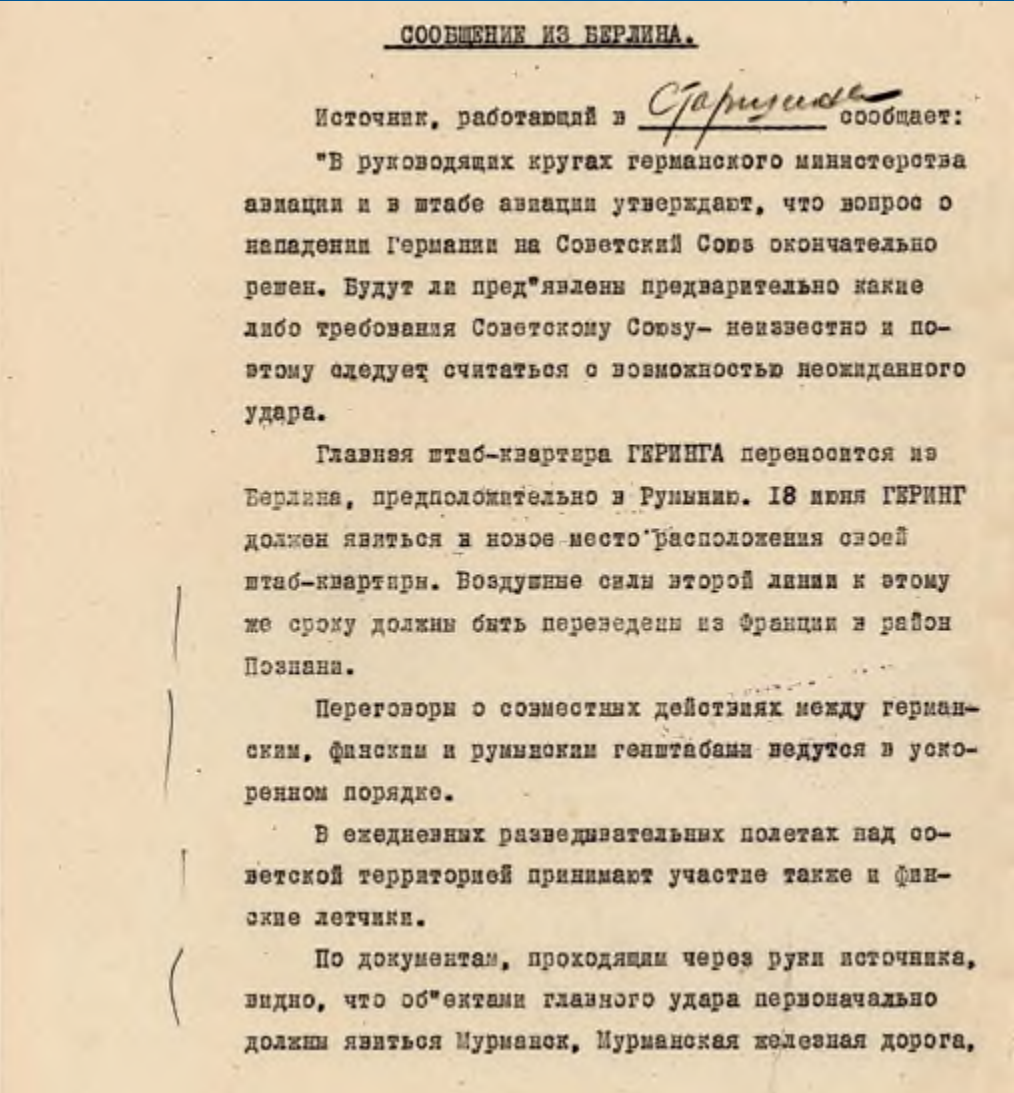
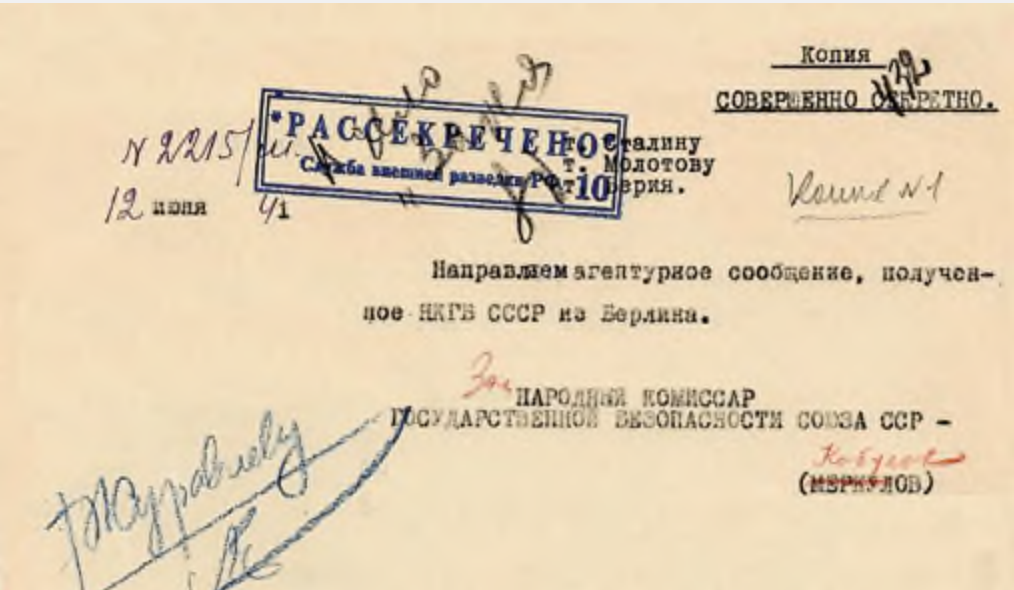
Document 3.
Special report from
Berlin No. 488/M
(collage).
March 14, 1941



Document 4.
Special report from
Berlin No. 2031/M
(collage).
May 31, 1941

Document 4.
Special report from
Berlin No. 2031/M
(collage).
May 31, 1941

Document 5.
Special report from
Berlin No. 2215/M
(collage).
June 12, 1941



Document 5.
Special report from
Berlin No. 2215/M
(collage).
June 12, 1941

Document 6.
Special report from
Berlin No. 2279/M
(collage).
June 17, 1941

РАССЕКРЕЧЕНО
Служба внешней разведки РФ 10

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СОВ. СЕКРЕТНО.

СООБЩЕНИЕ ИЗ БЕРЛИНА.

Источник, работающий в

Старухин

сообщает:

1. Все военные мероприятия Германии по подготовке вооруженного выступления против СССР полностью закончены и удар можно ожидать в любое время.

2. В кругах _____ сообщение ТАСС от 6 июня воспринято весьма проницательно. Подчеркивают, что это заявление никакого значения иметь не может.

3. Объектами налетов германской авиации в первую очередь явятся: электростанция "Свирь-8", московские заводы, производящие отдельные части к самолетам (электрооборудование, шасси, подшассики, покрышки), а также авторемонтные мастерские.

4. В военных действиях на стороне Германии активное участие примет Венгрия. Часть германских самолетов, главным образом истребителей, находится уже на венгерских аэродромах.

5. Важные немецкие авиаремонтные мастерские расположены: в Кенигсберге, Гдыне, Грауденце, Бреславле, Мариенбурге. Авиамоторные мастерские Мелича в Польше, в Варшаве — очень и очень важные в Хейлигенкейль.

Источник, работающий в

Коринна

сообщает, что произведено назначение начальни-

2.-
ков военно-хозяйственных управлений "будущих округов" оккупированной территории СССР, а именно: для Кавказа — назначен АМОН, один из руководящих работников национал-социалистической партии в Дюссельдорфе, для Кнеза-БУРАНДТ — бывший сотрудник министерства хозяйства до последнего времени работавший в хозяйственном управлении во Франции, для Москвы — БУРГЕР, руководитель хозяйственной палаты в Штутгарте. Все эти лица зачислены на военную службу и выехали в Дрезден, являющийся сборным пунктом.

Для общего руководства хозяйственным управлением "оккупированных территорий СССР" назначен ШЛОТЕРЕР. — начальник иностранного отдела министерства хозяйства, находящийся пока в Берлине.

В _____ рассказывают, что на собраниях хозяйственников, предназначенных для "оккупированной" территории СССР, выступал также РОЗЕНБЕРГ, который заявил, что "понятие Советский Союз должно быть стерто с географической карты".

ВЕРНО: НАЧАЛЬНИК I УПРАВЛЕНИЯ НКГБ
СОЮЗА ССР

(ФИТИН)

" " июня 1941 года.



More documents on the
SVR of Russia website

The Brest Fortress

70 years of service to truth

The Brest Fortress is one of the most famous and revered museum complexes in the post-Soviet space, which leaves no visitor indifferent. On the occasion of the 85th anniversary of the breakout of the Great Patriotic War and the anniversary of the museum, “Razvedchik” spoke with its General Director, Alexander Alexandrovich Korkotadze, about how the immortal heroes of the legendary citadel continue to protect us from lies and forgetfulness until today.

Alexander Alexandrovich, for many generations of Russians and Belarusians, as well as for all other peoples of the former Soviet Union, the Brest Fortress is a symbol of courage, resilience, and unity in the fight against Nazism, and the act of bravery of its defenders is immortal. Tell us, is the memorial complex popular nowadays?

Let's start with history. The Museum of the Defense of the Brest Fortress — our main museum — was opened on November 8, 1956. It was founded largely thanks to the work of writer Sergei Sergeyevich Smirnov, who told the Soviet people about the act of bravery of the defenders of the Brest Fortress. The next step was the awarding of the honorary title “Hero Fortress” to the fortress in 1965 — on May 8, on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Victory. It is the only Hero Fortress in the world. By September 1971, a large-scale memorial complex was built. Therefore, this year is double anniversary for us: 70 years for the main museum and 55 years for the entire memorial.

From the very first months of the museum's operation, it was visited by large numbers of people. With the introduction of the permanent exhibition and its expansion in 1961, the number of visitors grew. And with the opening of the memorial, entire tourist trains came to us from all corners of the Soviet Union. In the 1980s, attendance reached one million people per year. It was one of the most popular museums in the USSR.

The collapse of the Soviet Union dealt a heavy blow: attendance dropped to 60,000, and staff had to be significantly reduced. But in 1994, after the victory of Alexander Grigoryevich Lukashenko in the presidential elections of the Republic of Belarus, the state policy towards museums changed. One of the first steps was to grant the memorial complex the status of an extraordinary center for patriotic education of the Republic of Belarus.

At the CIS summit in 1996, a decision was made to carry out repair and restoration work at the memorial, and significant funds were allocated. Ukraine also provided assistance — not with money, but with granite.



Alexander Alexandrovich Korkotadze

Was born on February 16, 1976, in Brest. He graduated from A.S. Pushkin Brest State University with a degree in “History and Socio-Political Disciplines” and from the Academy of Management under the President of the Republic of Belarus (RB). He worked at the Brest Regional Museum of Local Lore, and since 2003, at the Memorial Complex “Brest Hero Fortress”. He progressed from a researcher to the head of the “5th Fort Museum” branch. In 2023, he was appointed General Director of the museum. He is a member of the Republican Council for Historical Policy under the Administration of the President of the RB.

He is a member of the Republican Council for Historical Policy under the Administration of the President of the RB.

Panorama of the Brest Fortress. June 22, 1941.
First hours of the war



How many foreign guests have there been in recent years? Do visitors come from Germany and Poland, for example?

They do arrive, with awe, with reverence. But now, unfortunately, it's very difficult for Western tourists to break through to us, overcoming the cordons set up by their own governments. Yet, the interest from ordinary people is enormous. After all, the more lies they are told, with history being distorted, the stronger their spirit of contradiction and the desire to see everything with their own eyes. It's no coincidence that our president introduced a visa-free regime for neighboring countries so that they could come and learn the truth. This is the position of strength. To prohibit, to create obstacles, to

sow lies that everything is bad in Belarus and Russia — that is the position of weakness.

A bit of statistics. From 2021 to 2025, our memorial was visited by 2 million 800 thousand people, and we conducted about 56 thousand excursions. There is a flow of foreigners, including from Poland, Germany, the Baltic states, and other European countries — a total of 58 countries worldwide. Somehow, the West isn't very successful with isolation. Latvia, for example, consistently ranks third or fourth place in terms of the number of guests. Of course, there are many tourists from China. People also come from Africa, South America, the US. However, it's important to understand that far-abroad countries account for only 1.5% of visitors.

Brest Fortress

A fortification on the western outskirts of the city of Brest in Belarus, at the confluence of the Mukhavets River and the Western Bug River. Built between 1833 and 1842, it was repeatedly modernized in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It consisted of a citadel (a closed two-story barracks about 1.8 km long), three bridgehead fortifications surrounded by earth ramparts, and two belts of forts (3.5-7 km from the citadel), the total length of the defense line reached 30 km. On June 22, 1941, two rifle divisions, border guards, and a separate NKVD unit (a total of about 4,000 people) stationed in the fortress were among the first to bear the brunt of the fascist troops' attack. The majority of the defenders perished, and the last centers of resistance were suppressed in August 1941. It was liberated in 1944. In 1956, the Museum of the Defense of the Brest Fortress was opened. In 1965, in memory of the defenders' courage, it was awarded the title "Hero Fortress". In 1971, a memorial complex was set up on the fortress grounds, including conserved ruins, ramparts, monumental sculptural compositions, and a necropolis with the graves of the defenders.

More than half of the guests are from the Russian Federation. And that's wonderful! They come with their families. I am always pleased when I see children, sometimes very young ones, with their parents at the Eternal Flame. It is precisely in this way — from generation to generation — that patriotism is passed on.

How often do pupils and students visit the memorial complex? What attracts them?

We offer over 20 thematic excursions designed for various age groups, including some for preschoolers. Among them, museum-pedagogical sessions about animals in war, such as battlefield dogs, are particularly popular. You know, children are very sensitive to lies and hypocrisy, so you need to work with them as a true enthusiast. Fortunately, everyone on our team is just that. We face criticism, they say if we continue working like this, in five or ten years' time young people will stop coming to us. Memorials and museums are already of little interest to them. I think our goal is not to drop to bloggers' level but to lift young people to our own level. The primary function of the museum is enlightenment, not entertainment.

In the era of social media, when our ill-wishers actively influence children on various platforms, museums are extremely important. They house history and culture — there are genuine artifacts, no less. Professional historians, educators, and parents can work with young people at museum sites. We, along with our "brothers in arms" — Khatyn, Mamayev Kurgan, and other memorials of the Union State — are tasked with raising the younger generation as true patriots.

What events do you plan for the anniversary year?

Following the first "Great Heritage, Common Future" Union State international forum, which took place in Volgograd last April and was attended by heads of state, the second, symbolically, will be held this year in Brest and the Brest Fortress. On June 21st, the traditional "Combat Formation" event will take place. This event always brings tears and a feeling of great pride.



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In the era of social media, when our ill-wishers actively influence children on various platforms, museums are extremely important. They house history and culture — there are genuine artifacts.

On June 22nd, in the ruins of the western edge of the citadel, we plan to open a new memorial zone, "Sorrow". The idea was inspired by a 1965 photograph: it shows the widow of the fallen Lieutenant Kuznetsov clinging to the stones of the Brest Fortress. Considering that 2026 has been declared the Year of the Woman in Belarus, this event carries special significance. But that's not all. On the sides of the monument, on plaques, are engraved the names of about a hundred defenders of the citadel who were tortured to death in captivity. Thus, for the first time, we will immortalize those who fought, got captured and died there as patriots.

First festive events on the occasion of the Victory Day after the complex was opened. May 9, 1972



« It seems to me that it was precisely after the Brest Fortress that it became clear to the occupiers that it was impossible to defeat the Soviet Union.

Are there any blank spots in the heroic history of the fortress?

We cannot say that everything has already been studied. In Soviet times, historians primarily relied on the memoirs of the surviving defenders of the fortress. These testimonies have been meticulously collected in our museum. Some German documents about the assault have also been studied. However, over the past 20 years, a new, large body of German archival materials and personal memoirs of Wehrmacht soldiers and officers has emerged. It has significantly enriched our knowledge of the citadel's defense.

of our warriors, the same picture emerges: the garrison fought to the last bullet. I often quote the phrase of one German officer: "The battlefield at the Brest Fortress is worse than any other battle site in Poland or France."

It seems to me that it was precisely after the Brest Fortress that it became clear to the occupiers that it was impossible to defeat the Soviet Union. I would like to remind you that the Nazis set the task of capturing the citadel daringly, and serious fighting was not expected. Military actions in Europe created the illusion of an all-conquering German army. And the fact that on the first day of the siege of the Brest Fortress, the Germans suffered serious losses — more than 300 killed — came as a shock to them. It is no coincidence that the first German cemetery on the Soviet soil appeared precisely in Brest. Therefore, we must not forget not only the moral but also the military significance of the feat of the citadel's defenders.

Excavations continue on the territory of the fortress. Are new artifacts being found?

Certainly. On May 7, a ceremony was held for the burial of the unnamed remains of seven fortress defenders found last year. Their total number now stands at 1055. Additionally, a new name has been inscribed on the memorial plaques — Mamkin Grigory Filatovich. We spent a long time establishing his fate: he perished in the area of the Eastern Ramparts, the 5th bastion, where the 98th Anti-Tank Division of the 6th Rifle Division fought. Now we have 278 names.

To understand how complex the search process is, I'll tell you this: in 1971, when the memorial was opened, 823 defenders rested in the necropolis, and 201 names were immortalized on the plaques. It might seem that not much has been added in 55 years. But behind each number lies toilsome work. German archives mention that on the territory of the citadel — which is four square kilometers — lie the remains of over two thousand Soviet soldiers. This means hundreds more defenders are still waiting in the Brest Fortress soil.

You've been working at the museum for over 20 years. Do you have any favorite heroes?

Yes, quite a few. Perhaps the one closest to me is military engineer Ivan Osipovich Belinsky. He began his service in the Brest-Litovsk Fortress back in Tsarist Russia. He built fortifications, modernized the 5th Fort, and clad it in concrete. In the Soviet Army, he rose to the rank of Major General of Engineering and Technical Troops; he was given the rank in 1943. For the defense of Moscow, he was awarded the Order of Lenin. He lived 100 years and died in 1976, the year I was born — by coincidence.

Among the iconic figures there is also the commander of the 9th Border Outpost, Andrey Mitrofanovich Kizhevatov. Another one is Vasily Ivanovich Bytko from the 44th Rifle Regiment — "our Chapay," as his soldiers called him. After the fascist attack, he returned to the surrounded fortress twice (!) to retrieve cadets of the regiment school. He led out two groups to the concentration area and came back for the rest. Wounded, he was captured, and during an escape attempt, he died on the Bug River, repeating the fate of his namesake, Vasily Ivanovich Chapaev. And there are many such heroes; behind every defender of the Brest Fortress lies a real life and a true feat.

Perhaps this is precisely why the memorial remains relevant to this day, and visitors come to us from everywhere. The Brest Fortress provides answers to many contemporary questions. The key one is: how did the USSR manage to raise a generation that placed the interests of the Motherland above everything else? A generation that broke the back of fascism. By coming here, guests gain spiritual strength to live and win today.

It is evident that for the same reason, the Brest Fortress also disturbs our ill-wishers, who spew mud in attempts to falsify history. Let us not forget that the citadel is also a place of international feat. This year, on the eve of May 9, in collaboration with the Russian Victory Museum, we opened an exhibition that clearly demonstrates how all the republics of the Soviet Union united in the fight against fascism. There are Ukrainian names on the memorial's plaques, and the new exhibition also tells about the contribution of the Ukrainian SSR to the victory over Nazism. We all fought together and shed blood!



And finally. Why should everyone, in their lifetime, visit the Brest Fortress at least once?

First and foremost, to better know our past. This is the foundation of everything. The memorial is an emblematic place in our consciousness and our statehood representing all at once battlefields, ruins, architectural and sculptural monuments, and museum expositions that embody the path of the Brest Fortress in the national and world history.

Besides, visiting the citadel gives an opportunity to better understand how we should develop the UnionState, educate our young people, and what we should be proud of. Sense of pride — for our past and our army — is one of the key concepts in the defense of the Brest Fortress. It is no coincidence that the words of S.S. Smirnov are inscribed on the new monument in the "Grief" memorial zone: *"The people's memory of the heroes of the Brest Fortress is filled not only with grief but also with pride"*.

And indeed, we do have what to be proud of. Our shared history is replete with examples on which we must educate our youth so that they too grow up to be patriots. After all, unlike a nationalist who hates anything foreign and thereby destroys their own country in the first place, a patriot is a person who loves their native Fatherland and is focused on creation. ▀

Ceremonial burying of the remains of the Brest Fortress defenders. May 7, 2026

President of the Republic of Belarus A.G. Lukashenko (center) during commemorative events in the Brest Fortress. June 22, 2021



Ural intelligence officers — Russia's pride

On April 7-10, a series of events, commemorating the 125th anniversary of the birth of Soviet illegal intelligence officer Iskhak Abdulovich Akhmerov and the memory of other Ural natives who fought on the invisible front, took place in the Chelyabinsk region. The event was initiated by the Coordinating Bureau of the Councils of Special Service Veteran Organizations of the Ural Federal District and the Troitsk branch of Chelyabinsk State University (CSU). The special guest was the Moscow club of the author's song Victory Wind, registered at the Central Victory Museum and led by Anatoly Grigoryevich Pshenichny, Secretary of the board of the Union of Writers of Russia, veteran of the SVR of Russia.

The anniversary programme was opened with a ceremonial rally near a memorial plaque in Troitsk, Akhmerov's hometown, followed by a roundtable discussion "The phenomenon of illegal intelligence" in CSU branch. Mikhail Vitalyevich Pogudin, Chairman of the Council of Veterans of SVR of Russia, addressed the participants with a welcoming speech.

He highlighted the value of efforts to preserve the historical memory of Ural intelligence officers and to educate young people using the example of their heroic fellow countrymen.

The events continued in Chelyabinsk with a flower-laying ceremony at the I.A. Akhmerov's monument and meetings with senior pupils, cadets,

university students, and military school students at the Palace of Young Pioneers and Schoolchildren and the State Historical Museum of the Southern Urals. A.G. Pshenichny, also a Ural native, born in the village of Klyuchovka in the Troitsky region, noted: *"In the anniversary year of Iskhak Akhmerov's birth, after many years I returned to my native place to talk about role of Ural intelligence officers. After all, Troitsk became the birthplace of a real-life illegal intelligence officer, a person who in the 1940s conducted a series of operations, aimed at combating threats to the USSR from Germany and Japan."*

Besides I.A. Akhmerov, the Ural land gave Russia many outstanding intelligence officers, whose memory is revered here: the experienced Chekist Boris Nikodimovich Batrayev, the first deputy director of the SVR of Russia, Colonel General Vladimir Ivanovich Zavershinsky, the famous saboteur Nikolai Ivanovich Kuznetsov and, of course, the legendary head of the Soviet foreign intelligence during the Great Patriotic War, Pavel Mikhailovich Fitin.



Iskhak Abdulovich Akhmerov

Was born on April 7, 1901 in Troitsk, Orenburg region. From the age of 11, he worked as a farm labourer and a delivery man. In 1921, he was sent to the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. In 1922 was transferred to the First State University to the School of International Relations. In 1925 he went on a mission to

Turkey through the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. In 1929 he was transferred to OGPU, then to Foreign Intelligence. In 1933 he was sent to China. In 1934-1939 and 1941-1946 he worked in the USA, including as a chief of station, obtaining valuable information about enemy's military and political plans, particularly about the atomic project. Since 1946 he became deputy chief of the illegal intelligence and taught at the KGB Higher School. He received the Order of the Red Banner twice, the Order of the Red Star and the Badge of Honor and many medals.



Veterans and active officers of security forces, representatives of government, educational organizations, clergy, participants in the special military operation, and more than two thousand young Ural residents took part in the large-scale commemorative events in the Ural Federal District.

Each day of the commemorative celebrations ended with a special concert programme featuring beloved original songs of Victory Wind, including the anthem of fighters of the invisible front:

Tomorrow again a telegram will go,
There will be a role, but there won't be omissions.
Let someone speak well of us
In the corridors of faraway instances...
That's our job, or more correct — our fate.
To blood and sweat, when the trumpets blare.
Our road markings are the sky and waves.
As long as intelligence exists, the country will live! 🇷🇺



Heroes and days of the "West" grouping of forces: the 144th Motor Rifle Division

Paying tribute to the unparalleled feats performed by our soldiers during the special military operation, "Razvedchik," in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Defense's "Politrak" magazine, continues to publish firsthand accounts from combatants.

Text: Sergey Berezchnoy
Illustrations: Sergey Dorozhenko

BERKHOVKA — SOLEDAR DIRECTION

Filin has almost half of the brigade mobilized. Although they've been at war since last fall, they're still considered "mobilized." There are also about two hundred former prisoners. The rest are contract volunteers.

The enemy had smashed two brigades to pieces in just a couple of months, leaving their flanks exposed. The brigade commander's last hope was the "Wolves," a separate sabotage and assault brigade. Not a reserve, but exactly a hope. And Filin threw his "Wolves" into battle. At first, they quickly disillusioned the AFU troopers, who were intoxicated by their own success, — each fought for ten, and the "warriors of light" scurried away to their permanent residence with the Heavenly Hundred, abandoning their lived-in trenches. The "Wolves" stormed into the trenches, dispersed, reported their losses on the radio: six WIAs — and got to "work."

Two dozens of ex-prisoners fought to the death, and the surging waves of attackers — running, crawling, screaming — broke against them into drizzle-like splashes. In two hours, three fierce attacks were repulsed, supported by IFVs. Three burning torches and fifty motionless bodies remained on the field. The "Wolves" didn't finish off the wounded; they allowed them to crawl away and be evacuated. This was a special hallmark of the brigade — allowing the enemy to remove their dead and carry away their wounded, for which the enemy not only feared but also respected the "Wolves."

Our men didn't flinch when their trenches were peppered with mines and shrapnel mowed down all the grass around. They didn't retreat when they ran out of ammunition and only grenades were left. They believed help would come — Filin had promised to send reinforcements, and not once (!) had he failed to keep his word.

First, the mobilized appeared. They jumped into the trenches, immediately remote-mining the approaches with a makeshift device, and out of sheer generosity, they heavily strafed the still-stunned AFU soldiers with machine guns and automatic grenade launchers, and then they got to work with sapper shovels. No, they didn't engage in hand-to-hand combat, but rather began digging additional communication passages, fixing trenches and "foxholes" at breakneck speed. They dug in, and when the enemy artillery began ravaging their strongpoints, they became inaccessible to shrapnel. These were no longer the moaning and groaning last year conscripts, but seasoned professionals, clinging with a death grip, thinking clearly and rationally, and therefore distinguished by their resilience and desperate courage.

All the wounded were evacuated — that's the brigade's law: no matter what it takes, always and under any circumstances retrieve your own wounded and dead. As they say in the brigade: "Filin's law is not to leave your own, get everyone out." The "Wolves" took up their positions, completely crushing the AFU's desire to make a move in their sector.

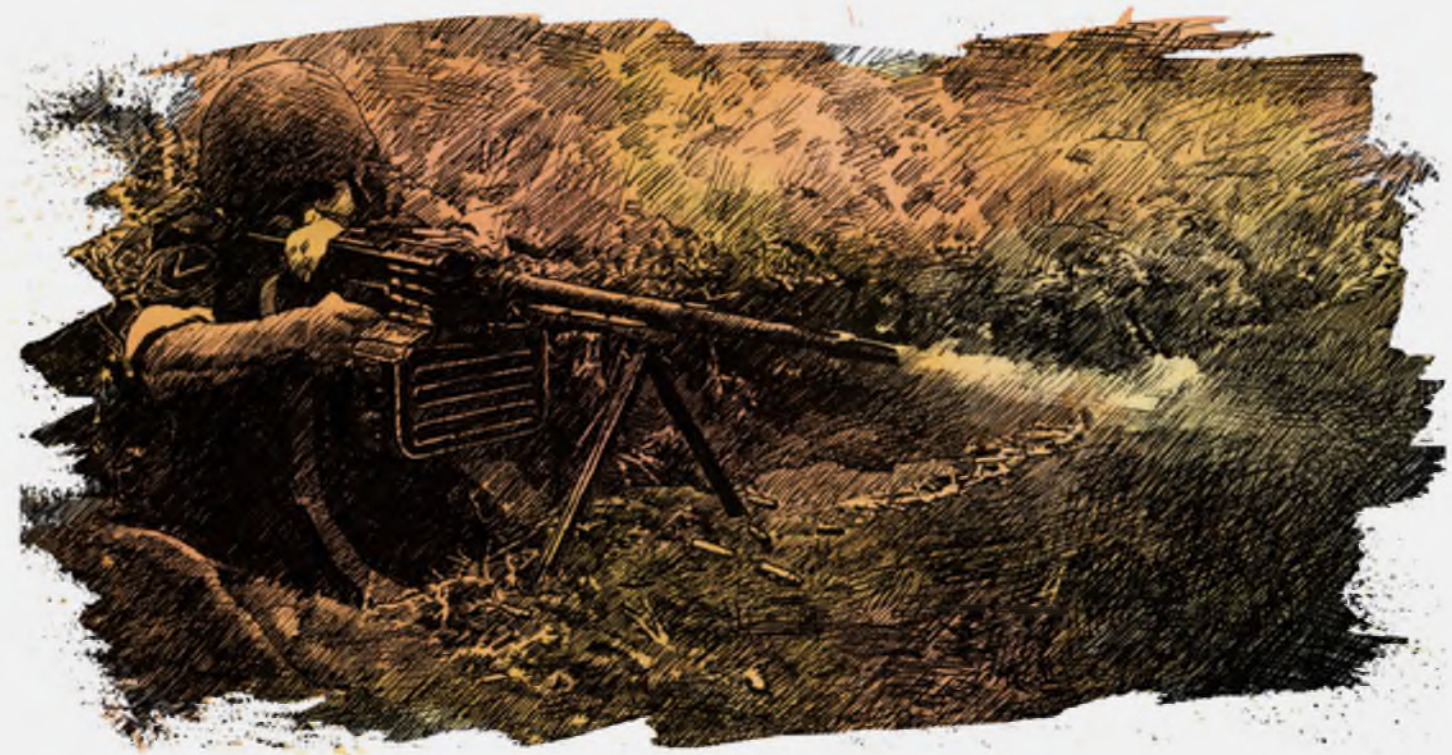
The General was grateful to Filin — he had saved the corps' honor and, as a reward, "added" another 600 meters of the front line. Filin was terribly unhappy with his losses: about a dozen dead and about a hundred WIAs in almost three months. Our commanders fight the best they can, while Filin's soldiers are writing reports asking to be re-signed. And there's always a postscript: "We ask to remain in Filin's brigade..." And some transfer to him, asking only for one thing: to inform their former units that they are not deserters. They just want to really fight under a real officer.

The twice-shot company commander ordered the survivors to retreat, and he himself lay down behind the machine gun. The soldiers were also wounded, but after bandaging themselves, they pretended that they did not hear anything. Well, suddenly the hearing was gone! They could have retreated: crawling, on their bellies, on all fours through the woods not yet occupied by the enemy, but they didn't want to leave their company commander, and they didn't have the strength to pull him out. Three had shrapnel wounds to their legs, one had a mangled thigh, the rest had their arms, chest, and stomach shot through or torn by bullets and shrapnel. Buryat

was more fortunate than the others: a huge chunk of the detonated mine slammed him flat against the back of his bulletproof vest, its dynamic force fracturing his ribs. Yet, even he was unable to haul the wounded company commander, not even by dragging him.

The company commander didn't yell at them or curse: he parted his dry lips and quietly asked them to go to the brigade's quarters and report that the enemy would only enter the stronghold over their own corpses, and only when he ran out of ammunition and met them with the last grenade. But still, he wouldn't object if Filin sent for him. He couldn't contact them by radio: shrapnel-torn, it lay like useless junk behind the trench parapet.

The soldiers sent to the rear managed to crawl just a hundred meters when they met the reconnaissance. Filin had a gut feeling something was wrong, so he sent scouts. They arrived just in time: having fired his last round, the company commander lay on his back, watching the slowly drifting clouds and clutching a spherical, gridded "pineapple" grenade. He was waiting for the AFU troopers to approach so he could pull out the cotter pin, its legs already unclenched. The sun melted the earth, but a cold shiver ran through the company commander from blood loss.



The scouts approached from the flanks in two IFVs and struck the enemy approaching from the rear. In a few minutes, it was all over. They laid the company commander on the armor, and he, smiling with the last of his strength, whispered: "I knew Filin would pull me out, I knew it..."

After his concussion, Pasha can barely hear, he mostly lip-reads conversations. He has three children. He hates alcohol and tobacco. He's been at the front since the first days: as soon as the special military operation began, he immediately went to the military enlistment office, without waiting for the call-up papers. First, he was a marksman in the infantry, then on an automatic grenade launcher, and because of his keen eye, he was transferred to a ZU-23 anti-aircraft autocannon as a gunner. Two months ago, a kamikaze drone hit their armored personnel carrier. Four were wounded, and the fifth was killed. The guy had bad luck: he had talked them into taking him along as a guard, because, in the nearby tree line, only about five hundred meters away, APUs had dug in. It would be fine if they stayed in the trenches, but what if some "immortals" got close and used grenades or even tried to capture them? No, his protection wouldn't hurt here.

Unfortunately, the drone pierced the APC next to him. His legs were injured, he bled to death — they did not save him. The driver was protected by the open hatch, which took both shrapnel and a shock wave. The commander was thrown by the explosion and peppered with shrapnel, as was the loader.

Pasha's cheek was burned, shrapnel pierced his arm, and went under his bulletproof vest from the back. The driver started the car, and they reached the woods on their own, where they took cover. On the way, they were targeted by mines three more times — apparently, a second 'eye' was somewhere, but it wasn't adjusting very accurately.

Pasha actually fled the hospital without fully recovering — he didn't want to be sent to another unit. A short leave, a meeting with his family — and here he is, improving his health with the aroma of the sun-infused pine needles of Kreminna forests.

Why did he volunteer? So that children wouldn't have to cleanse the Russian land of filth again. Does he hate Ukrainians? No, of course not.

They're just like Russians, only with their brains scrambled. He treats them like they're sick. And they fight normally — they're Slavs, after all. Is he tired of war? Hard to say... It's time to finish it, of course, but only on the western border of the former empire, and in no other way.

THE SVATOVO DIRECTION

Our troops are taking up positions on the heights. Just an apology for the heights they are, though. Merely humps in a flat area, but they offer decent visibility, and the horizon is noticeably pushed back. The enemy's positions were clearly visible, at least, in the rangefinder, you could clearly see their vehicles, APCs, IFVs, moving back and forth, ferrying in and out of the area. However, they weren't exactly hiding, just a little cautious.

Between us and the enemy there was a lowland, a shallow depression with sloping sides, a fold left by a glacier, half a kilometer wide, and even narrower in some places. Down the dry riverbed there was sparse and frail shrubbery, and on the slopes on both sides there was a soft, flowery carpet with a low pile of glaucous mugwort, yellow sweet clover, lilac thistle heads, feather grass, thistle, fescue, and a dozen other less known or completely unfamiliar kinds of grass.

Until September 2022, a village of about twenty houses had huddled in the hollow along the old riverbed, hiding in gardens. Now there was only a pile of bricks in the place of buildings, among the gardens mowed down to the ground.

About two weeks ago, the AFU decided to dislodge our troops from the strongpoint and charged straight through the ravine, but with no luck: they lost about a dozen men on the slope, and two APCs were destroyed by ATGMs. Today, there are already about fifteen APCs and IFVs in the field, and around two hundred Cargo 200. The most zealous ones are within easy reach — even the stripes can be read in a rangefinder. And then there's the smell of death — thick, rich, mixed with the scent of steppe grass.

The brigade commander, with a grimace (a consequence of a shell-shock), said softly that every two or three days, a couple of buses arrive, drop off AFU soldiers, and they stupidly charge at our machine guns. At first, they move in dashes, accompanied by mortar fire, but as soon as they stumble upon their own dead, they slow

their pace, or even stop altogether, looking for a place to lie down, but every patch is already occupied by the previous "immortals." Then they realize their doom — that they won't escape.

And the machine guns begin their reaping. His voice was colorless, with a hint of indifference, and quiet — he never shouted, never swore. He was truly unique, this young brigade commander: he listened to Vysotsky's songs, read Marquez and Carlos Zafon in the original, and could talk for hours about Dali. He also knew Valentin Pikul's "I Have the Honor" almost by heart — the bedside book of a true officer.

The brigade commander said dully that any minute now, right on schedule, the buses would arrive and drop off the next shift, which, like the previous ones, would begin blazing its final trails into the lowlands, never to get out. Both his tone and his words were strikingly mundane: buses, another shift — as if he were talking about a mine or a factory. And people were brought here simply to die. And their wives, children, and mothers waited for them with hope...

The commander hated those who condemned these men to certain death in senseless attacks and didn't even retrieve the bodies of the fallen. After yet another well-promoted war correspondent from the propaganda pool asked him if he felt like an executioner mowing down the ranks of the advancing soldiers, he barred the brigade from journalists for good. With his tactless question, this war correspondent touched upon something the commander kept hidden from prying eyes somewhere deep within his soul, unwilling to share his innermost thoughts with anyone.

I mentally calculated: for the second week, there are three buses every two or three days, that's at least 600 people. This war was devouring two battalions in five shifts on a narrow front half a kilometer long.

Through the rangefinder, it was perfectly visible how they arrived, how people, pushing and shoving, climbed out, looking around, and immediately crammed in, how three IFVs approached, taking the special mission guys on their armor. The marks on the bus showed 489 meters. To shred them with an automatic grenade launcher is a piece of cake, let alone with mortars. Of course, half a kilometer isn't a distance for a rangefinder, even binoculars would suffice, but it's better not to stick your

head out, lest a sniper put a bullet in your eye, adjusting for half a meter down from the eyepiece...

Due to the wind direction, the AFU troopers were suffocated by the stench of decomposing bodies, which did nothing to inspire them. They started attacking somewhat hectically, pressing themselves against the IFVs as if trying to find protection behind them. They walked, sometimes speeding up, then slowing down, and as soon as they stepped onto the hollow strewn with the bodies of the dead, they stopped altogether, but then they started walking again, trying not to step on the dead and huddling in flocks like "skittish partridges."

They were allowed exactly 200 meters away and fired at, point blank. Two IFVs burst into flames at once, and only the third, sending up a plume of smoke, turned and sped back. It could have been disabled, but the brigade commander gritted out: "Let it go. They'll have a story to tell, and perhaps, after this, they'll start fighting for real."

Almost none of the attackers ever came back, save for an IFV that fled.

In a day or two, three more buses will disgorge another hundred and fifty doomed to die. More will follow, endlessly, until they are all gone, terrifying in their passive surrender to death.



BAKHMUT DISTRICT

Four emerged from the battle: three were wounded, one was shell-shocked — he was thrown three times by the explosions like a ball in a centrifuge. They didn't just come out — they took out all the hardware: AGL, Kord, RPK, machine guns, helmets, bulletproof vests, load-bearing vests. For the record, an AGL weighs about thirty kilograms, and a bulletproof vest with an LBV weigh another fifteen. And all of this was carried out by four men: three wounded and one thrice shell-shocked.

Three of them were eventually issued certificates of injury, but the fourth, the shell-shocked one, was not. The company paramedic decided that the guy was faking. Yet, the "faker's" head was swollen, with dark blue circles under his eyes from the concussion, but no visible wounds!

While their paperwork was being processed, they were swallowing some pills, washing them down with energy drinks, and had no intention of going to the hospital — only back to their positions. They said it not in a state of shock; they had spent a day getting out, so if there was shock, it had been long gone, and they weren't boasting — they already knew the price of death. Their brothers-in-arms remained there, and they had to be with them. They just said it like that, without pathos, as if they were going to the store to buy some bread.

The reconnaissance unit reached the line of contact at the agreed time. They were moving slowly, carrying the wounded, when they ran into a minefield. It was a small one, about 200 meters deep, and beyond it were our trenches. They had no strength left to go around, and no one knew how far it stretched. To go to their own positions through the mines meant guaranteed death; to wait for help meant either our guys would arrive or the enemy would. They radioed in, reported the situation, and Filin ordered them to wait for the evacuation group.

They might have waited for help, but the AFU started shelling with mines — they could be hit at any moment. And then, a dozen fighters, ex-convicts, rose from the trench and silently walked onto the mined field. They were witnessing the tragedy of the reconnaissance group unfolding before their eyes; they understood that these men would die, and they couldn't let that happen. They stood up and went in a chain, one after another: the first, the second, the third... Without an order, they rose from the trench and walked. Without an order they went to death in the name of life. Silently. The first detonation was the Cargo 200. The second, the third, the fourth — all were WIAs: some had their legs torn off, some were riddled with shrapnel. They fell silently, only an occasional muffled groan through clenched teeth...



They would bandage the poor guy, apply a tourniquet, lay him next to the trodden path and then go on in a chain: the first, the second, the third... An explosion — another Cargo 200. They kept going, still going, clearing the mines with their feet. One, two, three more explosions — all WIAs. Antishock medication, tourniquets, bandages — lie down, men, wait, and if you can, crawl back. And they kept going, forging a path, treading the way to salvation. Four out of the dozen made it, leading the reconnaissance unit back along their cleared path. The wounded and the fallen were picked up — the reconnaissance unit helped carry them. When they came out to their people, the reconnaissance group commander hugged each of them, speaking with difficulty because of the spasms in his throat: "Thank you, brother, we've already said goodbye to life!" No one would suspect the commander of even a tiny bit of sentimentality, but then something broke through... These were Filin's "Wolves." Near Berkhovka. Under our very eyes. Bakhmut was fighting back on the left, Soledar was being shelled heavily on the right, and here, near Berkhovka, Filin's guys were standing to the death.

NORTH OF BAKHMUT

Just the day before, we were joking with the reconnaissance group commander, teasing each other, smoking, talking, listening. In the evening, he left — he was called to headquarters and from there back to his reconnaissance company. The next morning, he did not get in touch, and an hour later, we learned: the enemy had broken through the defenses and captured our trenches. Pockets of resistance remained, fading more and more, like embers in a campfire. The commander was there too, he didn't go out — still just a boy, cheerful, with dimples on his cheeks. We believe he's alive, that we'll meet again on this earth.

We launched the "bird" — we needed to survey the area. Line of trenches, communication passages, dugouts. Almost everywhere, there were already figures of AFU troopers. Everywhere, but not everywhere. By the forked pine tree, paratroopers held their ground — a machine gun was spitting fire, a soldier with an RPG rose twice above the parapet. He didn't manage to fire a third time: he slumped to the bottom of the trench with the grenade launcher in his hands. We could see another soldier

push away the machine gun and pick up an assault rifle — probably out of ammunition.

AFU troopers advanced in short dashes, three of them jumped into the trench and started making their way towards the guy who had replaced the machine gun with an assault rifle. He should have retreated — there was still a chance to go right along the trench and then through the tree line, but he moved towards them.

We stuck to the screen, our gazes fixed, understanding that this was the end.

He froze where the communication trench made a turn and threw a grenade around the corner — a classic trench clearing. He jumped out, falling to one knee and pressing against the opposite wall, fired a short burst along the trench — two more hit the ground. Three "immortals" were sent to meet their beloved Bandera. He bent over them, took their loadouts with magazines, and returned to the machine gun.

He didn't retreat. He continued the fight. Alone. A nameless soldier, whose name will likely never be known. An Orthodox warrior of the Russian land. Or a Muslim. Or a Buddhist. Or perhaps a pagan. It doesn't matter. A Russian warrior.

The drone was returning — its resource depleted. Everyone was silent, realizing that no one would come to his aid — there was simply no one...

According to reports, the places here are quiet, almost a rural idyll. And only very rare, local skirmishes. 🚩

**Sergey Alexandrovich Berezhnoy**

Was born on September 28, 1955, in the village of Alyoshki, Ternovsky District, Voronezh Region. He graduated from the Law Faculty of Voronezh State University and the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR. Retired Federal Judge of the 1st Class. Secretary of the Union of Writers of Russia.

Participant in military operations in Syria, in the post-Soviet space, including in Ukraine. He was severely wounded. Author of over 50 books. Laureate of Great Literary Prize and a number of other Russian and international awards.

The destiny punched out by a splinter

In collaboration with the Politrुक magazine of the Russian Ministry of Defense, Razvedchik publishes verses by participants of the special military operation. Among them there are those who gave their lives for the Motherland.

STANISLAV VEDRINTSEV,
participant of SVO

Letter to the daughter

I read some lines washed away by the time.
Simple, sometimes even restrained words.
A father writes from the front to his only daughter:
“Hello, my sweetheart. How are you?

Here everything is quiet. We all are safe and sound.
Today for lunch we had stew with some meat.
Now we'll sleep, and tomorrow again
At dawn we leave, yet not towards home.

Remember how we walked in the park together?
We held hands — me, your mother and you.
The sun shone at us, and it was so hot,
And I brought some spring water to you...”

I read all these words and remember myself:
Simple happiness, my home and my family.
But only now I can understand him fully:
All that we write down, we write it for them.

They shouldn't know about our bloody everyday life,
About pain and hardship, about hunger and death.
About how hard sometimes it is to sleep enough here,
About the cold we have to endure constantly.

And you repeat almost word after word:
“Hello, my sweetheart, hello, my dear!
Here everything is quiet, we all are safe and sound.
We'll come back home with a victory soon...”

Silent night wrapped me up
With a heavy, dense cover.
And together with it, everything dozed off.
As I was very tired, I dozed off too.

Carelessly, maybe very childlike,
I forgot suddenly about everything.
And I was sleeping already almost dead.
I dreamed of my wife, children and home.

And through my sleep I suddenly heard
That someone was howling above me,
As though a wolf had come out of the wood
To speak confidently and frankly with the Moon.

Then everything quickly stopped
And the silence came and reigned in the field.
Perhaps, this all was just a dream,
And there was no war near me?

Almost blind in the night's embrace,
I tried to make something out in the dark.
And suddenly everything roared around me!
And I felt as if it was a lash

That drained my hand with a painful stroke,
Burned my fingers with a hot wave.
And I remembered all my life at that moment,
And I began to say words of a prayer.

Then I ran away, I was running and falling.
I counted seconds: one, two, and three!
And it seemed to me that someone nearby
Was saying to me: “Now you freeze!”

I stood still only for a moment.
Murderous splinters were pouring around.
“Run!” — shouted He, who had come to my rescue,
My incorporeal new dear friend.

And I ran again, almost blindly.
A real hell was emerging around me.
I started to feel a disgusting fetid stench
Of bony death's ice cold mortal kisses.

And all of a sudden, straight under me,
The treacherous ground broke as a thread,
And all my life then, I won't hide it from you,
Floated quickly before my scared eyes.

I fell down on the bottom of a trench,
Slightly powdered with dry greyish soil.
And above, as a thud of horses' hoofs,
The war was thundering over my head.

And I prayed: “Oh, Son of God!
I beg You, save me and protect!”
And He was praying with me too,
He and I were alone in the dark.

And I felt how the death was trying
With its invisible but disgusting bony hand
To catch me, but it didn't succeed.
To spite it, I was scared but still alive.

And then it finally went powerless,
All of a sudden it gave up and stepped back.
As if obeying a command “At ease!”
It went away quickly, returning to hell.

Night again wrapped me up
With a heavy, dense cover.
And together with it, everything dozed off,
But this time I alone was keeping awake...



VLADIMIR SKOBTISOV,
Donetsk poet and performer of songs,
in SVO, adviser to the project director
“Maxim Krivonos Detachment”

Don't be afraid, our Motherland

Don't speculate with Z sign
And don't take us for lambs.
We had a definite task to hold out
And we've been standing for eight years.

Enemy went, followed by crows,
And the order given to us was very brief:
“Stand for a day, hold on for a night”,
And we've been holding for eight years.

With just one hope — to see the dawn,
That will equalize our chances
To stand for a day, to hold on for a night,
And we've been standing for eight years.

And how many of them who have left us
Will not be remembered, nor written in calendars!
We had no choice but to hold on
And we've been holding for eight years.

Our great Motherland, salute!
Be not afraid of troubles, brothers.
All you should do is just to hold on,
As we've been holding for eight years.

The war with demons will be long

In vain they try to cut our Motherland and eat her!
Angry and ignorant guys make my blood freeze.
And life won't be the same any more,
And death is becoming younger every day.

You won't be able to hide in the capital,
You won't find with what to cover in cold nights.
You will get back with a hundredfold of
Other people's pain and other people's tears.

It is doubtful that you'll able to forget
The destiny punched out by a splinter.
We have been being killed for too long,
But it is necessary to live a long life in Russia.

Behind us, stars shine as if in a shooting range.
Trouble, like Volga, slowly flows in the sky.
We have been living in a peace for too much time,
A war with demons will be long.

VITALY TATARINOV,
the participant of SVO since October, 2022,
was involved in fights near Kursk
during the defense of Malaya Loknya

Dream at Radunitsa

Today I dreamed: we are in encirclement again,
Again a tank and enemy's mortar shoot at us,
And our companions' shadows rise by our side,
And the commander again leads us to Loknya.

I woke up five times, in sweat and with alarm,
And again fell in a dream to finish that fight.
And I already prepared to meeting with God.
Then I open my eyes and understand: I'm alive!

Bandages

The medical train rails through the steppe,
Howl and gnash of metal cut the air.
— Dear, have more sleep, please, sleep, —
The nurse is whispering to the soldier.

He can't sleep, burning with delirium,
Flashes and explosions pass by his eyes.
And, opening the coach door with his stump,
A mustached wheelchair-bound invalid drives in.

The guy from above asks for a smoke,
But in coaches, perfectly clean,
You wish only to start yelling from pain.
It's good that bandages are reeled on, hiding the wounds.

Well, bandages! Bandages are all about!
Bandages have reeled on all around.
As if girls' bows when at school,
Boys tear off bandages in a dream.

What they see in their dreams? God save me!
It's terrible to sink into a soldier's sleep.
The train keeps railing through Russia,
And it is still far from being stopped!

Clouds keep floating somewhere,
Lonely wanderers of life.
As if having seen God, a hand
Will cross unconsciously three times.

And grief which is familiar to heart,
Will respond in clouds and in soul.
Dark shawl, as a grey cloud,
Will spill down loudly as a sweet rain.

The grass will blossom and mature.
In the nature, everything will change.
It suffers without rain as if without God.
And sunflowers' faces are shining down.

DMITRY MULYGIN,
Russian musician, leader of the group
“Kutkh's raven”, volunteer,
died near Krasnoarmeysk

The falcon rose from a branch into the sky

All of them cried at the beginning:
“How will we shoulder that?”
The whole Russia angrily grumbled:
“Hey, you, don't brawl there.
What's the fuss? Where are you going?
The string sings us another song.
For what this stuff, all these hurrays?
It is none of our business, guys”.

The falcon rose from a branch into the sky.
It flew away to peck enemy's eyes.
The brother said goodbye, he bowed
And hit the road to go for the war.
Our eastern guys crossed themselves
And marched to the West, one, two, one, two...

Steppes remember their name.
Winds blow from North to South.
And we are moving, carried by them
Right there, across the forest line.
In vain the fence for us was fenced,
In vain they started to tear tree roots.
This garden has been planted by us,
And we are those who will water it.

An acorn rolled away from an oak-tree.
It went downhill, quickly gaining speed.
You've been born, now you'll be useful —
Cut stronger, and sharpen arms sharper.
You've come to take part in the war —
So make war, move faster, hurry up!

Tell me, are our hands crooked?
Tell me, are our hearts cold?
Aren't we grandsons of our grandpas?
If so, let's fight up to the end.
Know, remember and believe,
Report it to all your guys:
The Homeland is stronger than death.
We live with that and we stand on that!

The falcon rose from a branch into the sky.
It flew away to peck enemy's eyes.
The brother said goodbye, he bowed
And hit the road to go for the war.
Our eastern guys crossed themselves
And marched to the West, one, two, one, two...

Talk some sense into me, My God

Make me see the light, oh, God,
Show me the leak.
Show me your strictness,
Cause you know my speech.
Words of my own anthem
Have changed their lines:
I'm not lucky in love,
So I'll find my luck in death.

I'm not for glory.
I'm not for respect.
Let me do just one thing:
To squeeze through beside you.
Yet in rubles or hryvnias,
My account is not large.
I'm not lucky in love,
So I'll find my luck in death.

Peace, our land and friendship —
I've got for what to fall.
Your mission is the service.
The word is a shield and a sword.
Under ferrous downpour
Our platoon is advancing.
I'm not lucky in love,
So I'll find my luck in death.

The wind blows each time stronger,
And always in the face.
So we should stand more firmly,
As if before the end.
Somewhere behind a precipice
The machine gun starts to roar.
I'm not lucky in love,
So I'll find my luck in death.

If I must, I will surely
Drink my cup to the end,
Let me just fulfill
This beauty on my way.
On spring in Krapivna
Cherry trees will bloom.
I'm not lucky in love,
So I'll find my luck in death.

Shadows that are coming,
Ghosts of scary nights,
Sickly shabby monster —
Get out of my sight!
You don't sleep, you're asking
How many days and years.
And now you have learnt it —
The death does not exist.

And behind the gate you
Will be standing to the right
Of she who gives you a son,
Of she who gives you a daughter.
Here is house-warming,
Here is the young blood.
Quiet merry-making
Stands for eternal love.
Eternal merry-making
Stands for quiet love.



If weeds have taken root in your vegetable garden again, use proven remedies — Geranium (Shahed), Hyacinth (Giatsint), Hazel (Oreshnik) and Blazing Sun (TOS-1).

Drawing by
Vladimir Mochalov

Selected moments from operative correspondence

In the country, male bread-winners of the family are exempted from military service.

The foreigner looks after himself with great care: he's dignified, calm, neat, washed repeatedly in various deodorants and perfumes.

The tentative study of "D" showed that his ideology is lame in both legs, and generally, his health is rather poor.

Being asked directly about belonging to the secret services of the enemy, the subject gives an evasive answer as yet.

"V" stubbornly refuses to cooperate with us so far, referring to the absence of reason.

Besides the foreigner's next-of-kin, those sharing the house with him are his wife, son, mother, father, brother.

As the source confessed to the Russian representative, he does not love his work. What he loves is fishing, women, and life.

At a regular meeting "V" confided to the field officer that he is constantly short of the most important thing in life, namely money.

In the next issue:

**Rostlekom President
Mikhail Oseyevsky:**
"The importance of digital
sovereignty is growing every day"

Our guys in Spain
How Soviet intelligence officers
saved the Spanish democracy

**World Chess champion
Anatoly Karpov:**
"I have taken all my peaks
at the first go"

**Neo-Nazism in the
post-war Germany**
Declassified documents from
the archive of the SVR of Russia



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