

DOI: 10.31648/pw.9707

MIROSLAW MINKINA

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2391-314X>

University of Siedlce

RUSSIAN SECRET SERVICES IN THE SO-CALLED SPECIAL OPERATION IN UKRAINE

ABSTRACT: This article deals with the role of the Russian Federation's secret services in the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine. The author explains the facts and regularities regarding the activity of the Russian secret services in this war. The research was performed from a positivist and post-positivist perspective and takes into consideration the so-called mainstream theories. For its purposes, a system analysis was included as well as references were made to the genesis of the Russian secret services, giving consideration to the space of the post-Soviet states. In addition, an in-depth study of the activity of the Russian special services, bearing in mind the key facts and methods of their operation were conducted. It confirmed the weakness of the Russian secret services. At the same time, the aftermath of this state of affairs is the increase in the importance of military intelligence.

KEYWORDS: Russian Federation, Ukraine, intelligence, secret services, war in Ukraine

Introduction

Russia's invasion of Ukraine raises questions concerning the role of intelligence in modern warfare. The authors of espionage literature, screenwriters, and movie directors use their imagination to build and convey to the audience information pertaining to the methods and techniques of the intelligence operation. Some of them are real and employed by the services, others can be classified as fantasy. However, imagination cannot be depreciated. The author met with intelligence officers who told him about a certain intelligence service that created a cell monitoring literary and film ideas related to intelligence activities to be possibly implemented in real work. The idea seems fine, especially since the category of operational imagination is one of the components of the values and assessments of intelligence and counterintelligence officers. When dealing with artistic work – film or literature – not all the components and sequences of activities that determine a successful intelligence operation will be found. It could not even been done by an eminent writer and intelligence officer such as John le Carré. This is understandable because the vast majority of intelligence activities, practices, and procedures are mundane and bureaucratic in nature and, therefore, it is difficult to transform them into a form

that is attractive to the reader or viewer. Indeed, a more down-to-earth category includes what is crucial in intelligence, namely its usefulness.

As a rule, the intelligence process is mostly associated with the so-called intelligence cycle the majority of intelligence researchers refer to. Although it is a complex and dynamic phenomenon, its basic components can be identified as follows: demand, collection, processing | analysis, as well as development and transfer to the recipient. According to the NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions, the term intelligence cycle denotes: “The sequence of activities whereby information is obtained, assembled, converted into intelligence and made available to users. It comprises four phases: Direction [...] Collection [...] Processing [...] Dissemination” (NATO Glossary 2017, 251) and the understanding of the sequence reflects its essence, however, in a certain simplification. In fact, it is multidimensional, multidirectional, interactive, and repetitive.

Given the background, the aim of the article is to show and explain the facts and regularities regarding Russian intelligence activities during the special operation in Ukraine and their consequences both for the services themselves and for the course of the war. The research performed is embedded in the positivist and post-positivist perspective and includes the so-called mainstream theories, namely realism, common in Russia. The use of systemic and structural analysis was also justified. Assuming that intelligence services are internally ordered systems and a set of elements with a specific structure, these very methods are the most adequate.

1. Russian Secret Services in the Post-Soviet States

Military secret services differ from civilian ones – in particular, the Federal Security Service (FSB; *Federal'naya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti Rossiyskoy Federatsii*) – in the methods of operation employed. The Fifth Service of the FSB, in charge of Ukraine, is also distinguished by them. Despite being a foreign intelligence body, the FSB is not a typical intelligence structure. It is more of a political police supervising the post-Soviet space, embracing the Baltic States and the so-called near abroad. Its officers are political officers whose task is to interfere in political processes in the countries under their responsibility. The Fifth Service of the FSB, established in the late 1990s, when Putin was the director of the service, was a small directorate for the coordination of operational information. Initially, its task was to coordinate the provincial first (intelligence) directorates (branches) of the FSB. In each regional department of the FSB there is a structure whose task is to recruit foreigners who found themselves in the area of competence of the directorates. This is an old Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB; *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*) foreign intelligence method of working. If a foreigner appeared in some area, the servants could not commit a sin of omission and had to make an attempt to recruit them.

When, together with the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the KGB was liquidated and a separate foreign intelligence service was established, the first branches of the internal security service – the Federal Counterintelligence Service, then the Federal Security Service – would remain without an overarching management and coordination structure. Therefore, there was a need to form an operational information coordination board (Radio Svoboda, 2022b). Its aspirations grew rapidly, specifically in terms of a separate area of competence. When the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR; *Sluzhba Vneshney Razvedki Rossiyskoy Federatsii*) and the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces (GRU; *Glavnoye Upravleniye General'nogo Shtaba Vooruzhennykh Sil*) agreed in the early 1900s with the services of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) that they would not conduct intelligence activities on their territory; that task was taken over by the newly created Fifth Service of the FSB, as it did not sign such a commitment. In the context of the procedure, there is further evidence that all agreements with the Russian Federation are not binding for this state, and it can be assumed with high probability that they will be violated or circumvented. Thus, the area of operational interest of the above service became the post-Soviet space and that of the near abroad, understood as countries that once belonged to the Soviet sphere of influence.

When the commonly named colour revolutions erupted in the countries that emerged as a result of the collapse of the USSR their monitoring and operational investigation became one of the main tasks of that service. At the same time, more emphasis was placed on interfering in political processes than on gathering information. Hence, the intelligence service developed into a political service. To some extent, it is similar to the duties executed by Western, principally American special services, referred to as *covert action*, and by the author himself as non-information intelligence operations.

2. Russian Secret Services in the So-Called Special Operation

The failures of the so-called special operation in Ukraine are indicative of the poor performance of the Russian secret services, both in the case of foreign intelligence and internal security. The former did not inform that Russian troops would not be greeted with flowers in Ukraine. Quite the opposite, Russian tanks were to be welcomed as a liberating force from the Nazi regime and oppression. Ukrainians and Russians, in the understanding of the Chekist corporation and Putin, are one nation. If one were guided by the logic and professional art of intelligence, the residences and headquarters should recruit a large and high-quality spy network for cooperation, in particular because Ukraine is a fairly convenient recruitment environment. Money remains the main motive for cooperation with the intelligence service,

however, in the case of Ukraine it seems that the motif of family ties can be used successfully, especially since mixed marriages are quite common there. Although this country has strengthened significantly and continues its national identity, there are no small pro-Russian sympathies. Therefore, no network was built to provide reliable information. The inability to fulfill the objectives of the Russian operation aimed at capturing Kiev and installing new pro-Russian authorities there forced the Kremlin to take a more rational approach according to the feasibility criterion. It was considered possible to occupy the Donbass and the southern part of Ukraine, creating an access belt to the Crimean peninsula. The armed forces, in particular, blame other ministries for past failures in the theatre of war. They criticize the 5th FSB Service for incorrectly informing Putin about the situation in Ukraine. As stated by Andrei Soldatov, this view is also shared by other FSB directorates. Consistent various sources, including the head of the service, General Sergei Beseda, who was detained in the FSB prison in Lefortovo, suffered personal consequences (Agentura.ru 2022). After some time, the general was released, which seems bizarre under Russian conditions. Thus far, only Joseph Stalin had allowed himself to arrest and then release generals. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that since according to Putin and Lavrov the special operation is being carried out as planned, a strong signal cannot be given that there is a split or conflict in the siloviki corporation.

Support for the special operation is reinforced by the dissemination of the view that the Russian army is not fighting with the armed forces of Ukraine, but the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Therefore, it is necessary to remove any self-constraints and start full-scale hostilities and not hesitate to mobilize (Kaszuba 2019, 66-83; Agentura.ru 2022). Nonetheless, as mentioned by Soldatov, a certain distance towards the actions of the authorities in Ukraine can be observed in the secret services. There is a consensus that something should be done with Ukraine, yet not necessarily in the way it is implemented. After the aggression on Ukraine, when it became apparent that there was no real pro-Russian opposition there, and that the prolonged war and the socio-economic consequences were significantly damaging to Russia, opinions emerged that the occupation of Donbas alone was too small a profit in relation to the losses incurred. In other words, the power ministries believe that goals and tasks should be formulated by the political leadership of the state in a much broader geostrategic dimension (Agentura.ru 2022).

In the face of the failure and criticism of the FSB, military intelligence, the Main Directorate (GRU), begins to gain more importance. The main reason for the change in the balance of power is the aforementioned discredit of the service responsible for political influence operations in Ukraine and the coordination of an allegedly strong and valuable agent network. The Fifth Service seemed more needed by the Kremlin because a political coup in Kiev was expected, which would lead to a political crisis. Only later would the armed forces step in. When it emerged that the concept of a coup failed and the war became widespread, military intelligence once again

proved to be a service of greater significance. The GRU is a tactical and strategic intelligence service, mainly for the needs of the armed forces, yet in practice it also conducts other state tasks, including cyberspace attacks and assassinations ordered by the Kremlin. Responsibility for intelligence operations in Ukraine was entrusted to the first deputy head of the GRU, General Vladimir Alekseyev whose career path was unusual for a GRU officer – work at the headquarters, then a foreign post. He comes from special forces, which may mean that non-information activities and special operations of military intelligence will be the dominant form of war with Ukraine (Soldatov | Borogan 2022b).

In the context of not achieving the goals of the war, there are speculations about a military conspiracy against Putin or his physical elimination as well as some arguments in favour of a low probability of such an action. One of them is the lack of modern traditions of such solutions in Russia. The uprising of the Decembrists failed, the arrest of Beria by Zhukov was made on the orders of the Politburo. It is difficult to envisage that the Russian military will organize itself into a conspiracy group, as in Turkey or Egypt. In these countries, along with Russia, the services played an important political role and participated in the making of state decisions. Vladimir Putin is well aware of the existence of certain threats to his life as well as the power from the army. While still acting as president, in the spring of 2000 he signed a law extending the competences and powers of the FSB in relation to the armed forces. From the beginning, he realized that all the processes taking place in the armed forces ought to be carefully monitored and controlled. Normative solutions also exist for the number of FSB agents that ought to be in specific military structures. To illustrate, an airbase is obliged to have a resident and 20 agents (Radio Svoboda 2022b). In this situation, the troops take an opportunity to talk among themselves in order to plan any conspiracy against the authorities. Moreover, Putin himself is manically cautious. During meetings, he keeps a distance of several meters, for fear of being poisoned, hand shaking included. The Federal Security Service, a formation of 40,000 people, is responsible for his safety.

3. Changes in the Services in the Context of a Special Operation: A Return to the Past

Aggression and the war with Ukraine have changed the functioning of Russian secret services. Before its commencement, Ukraine's affairs had been handled by the already mentioned Fifth Service and the counterintelligence service, which from time to time detained Ukrainian spies or those considered as such, in particular Ukrainian journalists. After the start of the war, more FSB structures began to engage with the problems of Ukraine. Filtration camps were being established on the territory of Russia and occupied territories (Getmanova | Matviyenko 2022, 239-252).

Thus, the directorate of military counterintelligence is responsible for them. It is an extremely important structure that should primarily deal with ensuring the security of the troops, their moral condition as well as detection and prevention of crimes committed by soldiers, specifically thefts, plaguing the Russian armed forces. However, during a special operation, military counterintelligence devotes a significant part of its forces and resources to work in filtration camps where people are interrogated, tortured, and recruited for cooperation. The border service subordinated to the FSB actively also joined the war. In the first stage, its guards did not let Ukrainian citizens leave the Russian Federation and intimidated their citizens and specialists, above all IT ones. Another structure that appears to have a great deal to do with war is the FSB Economic Security Service whose job is to conduct work in factories, mobilize greater discipline and explain how to function in the absence of imported parts and equipment. The personnel policy changed as well, allowing conscripts to sign contracts for service in the FSB. In addition, the same personnel pragmatics as during the Chechen wars began to be applied. The FSB headquarters are intensively trained and sent on business trips to the occupied territories. This indicates, as of the 1990s, that most FSB employees will have war experience, unless it ends sooner. Considering the role of the FSB in the war with Ukraine, in practical terms it signifies a model of NKVD (*Naródnyy komissariát vnútreñnikh del*) functioning for the occupied regions – torture, interrogation, filtration of detainees, and political control over the occupied territory (Soldatov | Borogan 2022a).

It is worth pondering what the consequences of the above mentioned changes in competences may be. Undoubtedly, the war has altered priorities significantly. These are no longer cyberspace attacks, disinformation operations, and all other surveillance and eavesdropping methods. Other ones, namely used in the so-called military-Chekist operations and still taught at the FSB Academy, came to the fore. Andrei Soldatov has the impression that, with the start of the war, old Chekist textbooks were taken out and employed in the didactic process. The service actively and creatively makes use of the experience of the Chekists as indicated, for instance, by the filtration camps exploited in the recent conflict with Ukraine. According to the official version, such camps are installed to prevent people suspected of actively participating in combat operations from entering Russia. However, in reality, it is merely an excuse. The real reason for creating filtration camps is the experience of the wars in Chechnya, where the Russian services had problems with agent work. Recruiting Chechens for cooperation was challenging. As an illustration, a Russian special services officer, coming from a large city, could not simply enter a Chechen village and conduct agent work there conforming to the methodology learned during specialist courses. Based on equivalent experiences, a brutal but effective concept of creating one large concentration camp came into existence. Many people pass through it, especially men, they can be recruited

and then released from it. Thus, no one from the outside will find out who is an agent willing to cooperate with the secret services. In this way, two instruments are cumulated simultaneously. One of them is that of the NKVD, consisting of a combination of the army forces as well as secret services to establish political control and to intimidate and repress the population of the occupied territory. The second mechanism is the use of the experience of the Chechen wars acting as not only filtration camps, but also involving physical and mental torture. It may seem that the military forces, through counterintelligence bodies, are instructed in matters of dealing with the population of the occupied territories (Soldatov | Borogan 2022a).

According to Irina Borogan, the current activities of the secret services resemble the 1930s, although new, specific elements are noticeable in Putin's Russia. Earlier repressions were mainly, if not only, directed at politically active people who had the courage to express their views on Facebook. They did not apply to those who were indifferent to the political situation, who did not voice their views, who went to work, were passive and silent. However, the war with Ukraine does not proceed according to the scenario imagined and planned by the president and his entourage. It failed to take Kiev as well as to change the government, and Russian soldiers were not welcomed in Ukraine with flowers. Since everything has not gone as the Kremlin intended, Russian troops suffer losses, and the armed forces of Ukraine, supported by the West, begin to win victories. Against such a background, it can be assumed that repressions may have a much wider range. Perhaps they will not be on the scale of Stalin's times, but rather like in the 1960s and 1970s, when the dissident movement came into being in the USSR.

Nonetheless, by observing the reality of Putin's Russia, the actions of the authorities that are similar to the 1930s can be noticed. One such example is to consider imposing penalties on doctors who prescribe medicines to their patients' produced by foreign pharmaceutical companies. This procedure was supposed to take place in unspecified regions of Russia, and the FSB was to handle the case, which was reminiscent of the situation in the 1940s when Jewish doctors were accused and blamed for poisoning and killing Soviet executives in concert Zionist organizations (Soldatov | Borogan 2022a). The regime launched an unprecedented campaign against lawyers, particularly those who defend espionage trials. Ivan Pavlov, a lawyer who heads the team of 29 foundations of lawyers and journalists defending freedom of speech and the defender of the journalist Ivan Safronov, was forced by the FSB to emigrate (BBC News, 2021a). The reason for it was the initiation of criminal proceedings for breaching the secrecy of the investigation in the case of Safronov, allegedly guilty of it, even though he had no access to it. In this instance, Pavlov acted as a defender (Sharogradskiy | Chizhova 2021). The lawyer who took over the espionage case after Pavlov's emigration, Dmitry Talantov, was

arrested (Radio Svoboda 2022a). The regime is also disposing of elites who are close to power and most likely have access to inconvenient knowledge.

Some Russian citizens, including the elite, decide to emigrate. However, they must take into consideration the fact that the Russian diaspora is the centre of interest of the Russian secret services. Among their achievements they have the use of various kinds of pressure against their compatriots, including murder. It can be assumed that a sense of concern with Russian emigrants, along with their accounts and assets, will continue to grow. Thus, there will be more intelligence agencies and more criminal proceedings, mainly for espionage. At the same time, it is worth noting that Russian diplomats are being expelled from Western countries, which means that the capabilities of the Russian secret services are limited. Despite such a weakness, the Russian state has great competencies, forces, and means, as well as an apparatus to intimidate the Russian diaspora. Gathering information about political emigrants can be conducted through the use of other organizations, illegal agents, various types of pro-Russian associations and foundations. An important role in this process will certainly be played by the Rossotrodnichestvo (*Россотрудничество*) agency (Soldatov | Borogan 2022a). It should be taken into account that there are agents recruited in the emigration environment and those who willingly provide information to the services. Russian services will not depart from traditional methods of operation, either, incorporating intimidation, pressure on family and loved ones, confiscation of property, kidnapping, and murder. Russian emigration has different experiences in relations with the Russian, previously Soviet, intelligence. The activity of the institution made the emigrants fall ill with espionage, seeing agents everywhere. In such circumstances, the solution will be a compromise, consisting, on the one hand, of vigilance and, of not succumbing to espionage and constant suspicion, on the other.

4. Consequences of the War in Ukraine for the Russian Secret Services

A month after the invasion of Ukraine began, more than 400 Russian intelligence officers were expelled from the United States and European countries. It was the largest undertaking of this type in history. A similar decision was also made by Austria, a country that has so far shown great tolerance for the activities of Russian intelligence. Such a drastic reduction of the personnel resources of the Russian intelligence service will certainly limit the collection of information, recruitment of agents and other operations directed against the political systems and economies of Western countries. Removals of Russian diplomats on a large scale are a rare phenomenon. The most recent one took place in 2018, when 28 countries dismissed 153 diplomats suspected of conducting intelligence activities (Hänni | Grossmann

2020, 403). It was a reaction to the attempted murder in Salisbury, UK, of Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence officer (Gioe | Goodman | Frey 2019, 561-575).

It seems that the expulsion of Russian spies after the aggression against Ukraine is not only a justified decision, but also a long overdue one. On the territory of the European Union, civil and military intelligence showed great offensiveness in recruiting, locating agents of influence, conducting information warfare, and operationally preparing the area and society for such a war. Of particular concern is the establishment and then placement of Russian agents of influence. Perhaps this might explain such a large tolerance of a wide spectrum of Russian actions against the West and consent to dependence on Russian energy resources (Kaszuba | Stempień 2016, 79-90).

Without entering into speculation and conspiracy theory, one of Vladimir Putin's tasks during his stay in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was to recruit citizens of this country to cooperate with the KGB. The influence agency, unlike the classic information agency, does not have to be formally recruited. When working with an agent of influence, the element of commitment to cooperation, setting tasks and accountability, discipline, and asking for various types of consent, even in less important matters, is omitted. As the name suggests, agents of influence are people who are influential, enjoying authority, having extensive connections. This category includes politicians, scientists, and journalists. The basic instrument used in cooperating with agents of influence is their appropriate manipulation as well as the use, in various combinations, of the classic set of motivations for cooperation with the intelligence service: money, ideology, pressure, and ego. Scientists can be offered a publication in a prestigious publishing house or journal, a payment for publication or participation in a conference, or an order of a well-paid expert opinion. Politicians can be appreciated, especially before elections, by creating the image of a statesman respected in the international environment. This method was used by Putin toward Western politicians, inviting Tony Blair, Marine Le Pen, Viktor Orban, Sylvio Berlusconi. During the visit, he provided them with a rich media setting, an attractive, symbolic tourist programme, exposing how important they are and how much Russia cares for them. Journalists can also be valued by being given exclusive information, access to materials for investigative journalists, which, however, are a controlled leak aimed at accomplishing the desired reception. According to Sergey Zhirnov, a former KGB major, in an interview with Jacek Żakowski:

[Schröder] is a textbook case. First, a delicate relationship, then a job offer at Rosneft. Seems like pure business, but both sides know perfectly well that this is recruitment. Similarly, François Fillon, former Prime Minister of France, or Karin Kneissi, former head of diplomacy of Austria. They are offered astronomical salaries in Rosneft,

Gazprom, and banks, pretending that they are outstanding experts pursuing the best understood interest of their country. The people promoting North Stream 1 and North Stream 2 appeared to act in Germany's interest. Many were even persuaded to do so and sincerely believed it. At the Institute¹, they taught us how to provide truths that were convenient to agents of influence. It is not about them doing what our spy tells them to do, it is about having them believe him. And everyone more easily in such truths that benefit him. A good narrative and strong motivation can eliminate the biggest doubts. Therefore, agents of influence, as a rule, are not offered to formalize cooperation and are not asked to sign anything. It has to be seduction, not rape. An agent who understands that he is becoming an agent loses value. That is why you need to look for people with an exaggerated ego and then pump them up (Polityka 2022, 28).

There are indications that the Kremlin possesses material compromising former President Donald Trump. Because what can explain the words spoken by Trump during the meeting with Putin in Helsinki in 2018? The US president said that he sees no reason to believe in Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election in his favour, even though Vladimir Putin claims so. Therefore, a strange situation arises in which the head of state, a world power – trusts the president of Russia more than his own security services, in this case the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (Sikorski 2018; Paul | Jones 2018, 12-19).

Various types of operations of Russian secret services, primarily intelligence, have become a plague in Western countries. There are so many of them that counterintelligence services have a difficult time monitoring and controlling the situation. According to the President of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Thomas Haldenwang, espionage against Germany has reached Cold War levels. As regards the war in Ukraine and the conflict between Russia and the West, he predicts a further increase in espionage, acts of sabotage, and illegal influence operations (AP News 2022). Just before the recent expulsions, it was estimated that there were 1,000 undeclared intelligence personnel in Russia's diplomatic and consular posts in Western Europe (The Economist 2022). Nevertheless, espionage is not the only concern of Western security services. Expulsion of intelligence personnel also reduces the risk of sabotage and subversion. In April 2021, the Czech Republic collected evidence and accused the GRU of blowing up an ammunition depot in Vrbietice in 2014 (Defence 24 2021). As a result, the Czech Republic dismissed 81 Russian diplomats, the United States 10, and the rest of Europe 14. The accumulation of various incidents related to Russian intelligence services prompted NATO to conduct an audit of Russian Embassy residences and their activities. It transpired that a large number of GRU, SVR and

¹ This is the school of Soviet civilian foreign intelligence. During the Cold War, it bore various names: the Higher Intelligence School (code name School No. 101), the Red Banner Institute and the Andropov Institute (named after Yuri Andropov, chairman of the KGB in 1967-1982).

FSB officers functioned under diplomatic cover in all the posts, disproportionately to the other diplomatic staff. In October 2021, the NATO Headquarters decided to expel 8 Russian diplomats performing duties in the Russian mission to NATO. According to the statement of the NATO Secretary General, the decision was due to the need to remain vigilant and had nothing to do with specific activities, but with the general excessive activity of Russian intelligence and the fact that mission members had not declared their links with intelligence structures. Thus, the Russian mission decreased from 20 people to 10. In addition to the 8 expelled, the Russians were to decide on their own to liquidate 2 additional posts (BBC News 2021b). The expulsion of Russian diplomats is intended not only to prevent their activities incompatible with diplomatic status but also to hinder support for other illegal operations conducted by intelligence officers. Skripal's assassins pretended to be tourists visiting Salisbury Cathedral, yet the logistical support, equipment, and materials necessary for the task were shipped across the border by diplomatic bag.

Expelling diplomats has both costs and consequences. After the dismissal related to the attempt to poison Skripal, Moscow reciprocated with the same in relation to 189 representatives of Western countries. Russian retaliation in such an operation affects diplomats who have nothing to do with intelligence, drastically limits contacts with the Russians. These are particularly important and in the face of a ubiquitous state propaganda, presenting a Western perspective seems highly justified. Therefore, foreign ministries of countries are less likely to expel diplomatic personnel than security institutions that only perceive an intelligence threat. Naturally, such actions hinder the work of intelligence officers accredited as diplomats, although the scale of the problem is smaller than it appears. The ability of Western services to perform traditional recruitment activities is extremely limited in Russia. Counterintelligence and its agents are omnipresent, and the Russian services, as institutions of a police-totalitarian state ruled by a Chekist corporation, are obsessed with espionage. Such a state results in significant expenditures – personnel and material – on the protection of the state against the imaginary, ever-present Western services conducting a great mythical special operation against Russia. In these realities, it is much easier for a GRU or SVR officer to move around and meet people in Berlin or Paris than for a CIA or Foreign Intelligence Agency (Pol. AW, Agencja Wywiadu) officer in Moscow. Expulsions are not a permanent solution. In place of the dismissed diplomats, new ones are delegated. This significantly involves the security services, particularly the counterintelligence of the host country, which must start the verification procedure of the new diplomat and try to answer the question whether he | she is or is not an intelligence officer, and if so, of what kind. In Western countries, there is also an increasingly popular view to adopt the principle of equality in staffing. Russian posts in a given country should be equal in number to the posts of that country in Russia. However, the adoption of this principle creates numerous new administrative procedures related to visa refusal and information exchange,

so that a diplomat expelled from one country is not sent to another. However, fewer Russian spies also reduce the recruitment base for western intelligence services, especially in terms of recruiting double agents, which is favored by the current geopolitical situation and Russia's aggression against Ukraine. To draw an analogy from the past, the Soviet aggression against Czechoslovakia in 1968 disappointed and outraged KGB General Oleg Kalugin, KGB resident in London, Colonel Oleg Gordievsky, and KGB archivist Vasily Mitrokhin. Kalugin became a dissident and emigrated to the US, the other two gave invaluable services as agents of the British Secret Intelligence Service – MI6. The war in Ukraine is much more brutal than the suppression of the Prague Spring. It is marked by numerous victims, suffering of the civilian population, and war crimes. It cannot be ruled out that its cruelty may have a similar effect on some GRU, SVR or FSB officers. Perhaps the majority of them will realize to what extent their country has been humiliated, how badly it is run, because they have access to information. Senior officers of the secret services are critical of the way the war is fought as well as decisions made based on unreliable information (The Economist, 2022). Large numbers of them know and became accustomed to living in the West, settled their families there, and returning to a totalitarian state does not seem to be an attractive prospect. It can be assumed that some of them will offer cooperation with the Western intelligence service.

Conclusions

The intelligence services of the Russian Federation, which are the heirs of the KGB, famous in the times of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, were for a lifetime considered one of the best in the world. In fact, the special operation in Ukraine which became a full-scale war and exposed their inefficiency, particularly that of the Federal Security Service. It had a negative impact on the course of military operations on the side of Russia. Contrary to the common belief that it is easy to recruit in Ukraine, Russian services have failed to build a credible agent network in this country. It appears that the agents of influence also proved to be ineffective, as Ukraine strengthened the sense of national separateness, despite the thesis about one nation, repeated and reinforced by the Russians.

As a result, the importance of military intelligence has increased due to the low effectiveness of the FSB. New tasks have also been assigned to the military counterintelligence service. The methods of operation known and used by Chekists returned, which is confirmed, among others, by filtration camps. The scale of repression against war opponents, including Russians in exile, has widened significantly. There is a return to intimidation, pressure on family and loved ones, confiscation of property, kidnapping, and murder.

At the same time, as a consequence of the war, the Western states expelled several hundred Russian intelligence officers. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the Russian ability to collect information, recruit agents and conduct other operations against the political systems and economies of Western countries has been effectively limited. However, the capabilities of Russia's intelligence services should not be underestimated in the context of their inefficiency and reduced staff potential in the West. It must be presumed that appropriate conclusions have already been drawn and that their activity ought to be treated with full seriousness.

References

- Agentura.ru (2022), Siloviki ishchut vinovatykh, April 26. In: <https://agentura.ru/investigations/siloviki-ishhut-vinovatykh/> (accessed: 17.04.2022).
- AP News (2022), German intel chief says espionage at Cold War levels, May 19. In: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-covid-health-berlin-cold-war-b6c195bcc3e302628c9a9aa6d2a3f95e> (accessed: 19.04.2022).
- BBC News (2021a), Advokat Ivan Pavlov pokinul Rossiyu. On vozglavlyal "Komandu 29" i vel delo zhurnalista Ivana Safronova, September 7. In: <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-58475269> (accessed: 24.09.2022).
- BBC News (2021b), NATO expels eight Russians from its mission for spying, October 7. In: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-58826980> (accessed: 19.01.2022).
- Defence 24 (2021), Czechy ws. Wybuchu składu amunicji: jest tylko jedna wersja [Czech Republic on ammunition depot explosion: there is only one version], April 26. In: <https://defence24.pl/geopolityka/czechy-ws-wybuchu-skladu-amunicji-jest-tylko-jedna-wersja> (accessed 19.06.2022).
- GETMANOVA, D. | MATVIYENKO, S. (2022), Producing the Subject of Deportation. Filtration Processes during the Russia-Ukraine War. In: *Sociologica*. 16(2), 239-252. DOI: 10.6092/issn.1971-8853/15387
- GIOE, D. V. | GOODMAN, M. S. | FREY, D. S. (2019), Unforgiven: Russian intelligence vengeance as political theater and strategic messaging. In: *Intelligence and National Security*. 34(4), 561-575. DOI: 10.1080/02684527.2019.157353
- HÄNNI, A. | GROSSMANN, M. (2020), Death to traitors? The pursuit of intelligence defectors from the Soviet Union to the Putin era. In: *Intelligence and National Security*. 3(3), 403-423. DOI: 10.1080/02684527.2020.1728046
- KASZUBA, M. (2019), The militarization of Russian foreign and security policy and its possible impact on international security. In: *De Securitate et Defensione | O Bezpieczeństwie i Obronności*. 2, 66-83.
- KASZUBA, M. | STEMPIEŃ, M. (2016), Surowce energetyczne w polityce Federacji Rosyjskiej. In: Minkina, M. | Kaszuba, M. (red.), *Polska – Rosja. Polityka bezpieczeństwa Federacji Rosyjskiej. Kontynuacja i zmiana*. Siedlce, 79-90.
- NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions AAP-6 (2017), NATO/PdP. In: <https://wcnjik.wp.mil.pl/u/AAP6PL.pdf> (accessed: 25.09.2022).
- PAUL, B. | JONES, N. (2018), Influence and Interference in Foreign Elections. The Evolution of its Practice. In: *The RUSI Journal*. 163(1), 12-19. In: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2018.1446723>
- Polityka (2022), Przesłuchiwał mnie kapitan Putin. Wywiad Jacka Żakowskiego z byłym majorem KGB Siergiejem Żinowem [I was interrogated by Captain Putin. Jacek Żakowski's interview with former KGB major Sergei Zhinov]. No. 25, June 13.

- Radio Svoboda (2022a) Advokatu Dmitriyu Talantovu utyazhelili obvineniye, September 14. In: <https://www.svoboda.org/a/32033945.html> (accessed: 24.09.2022).
- Radio Svoboda (2022b), V spets sluzhba khidut razgovory, chto s Ukrainoychto-to netak, ivinyat v etom Putina, May 18. In: <https://www.svoboda.org/a/31856120.html> (accessed: 16.06.2022).
- SHAROGRADSKIY, A. | CHIZHOVA, L. (2021), “A volki vse lyutuyut”. Advokat Ivan Pavlov – o presledovanii so storony FSB. In: Radio Svoboda, December 22. In: <https://www.svoboda.org/a/a-volki-vse-lyutuyut-advokat-ivan-pavlov-o-presledovanii-so-storony-fsb/31621391.html> (accessed: 24.09.2022).
- SIKORSKI, K. (2018), Donald Trump o konferencji z Władimirem Putinem w Helsinkach: “Przejęczyłem się” [Donald Trump on the conference with Vladimir Putin in Helsinki: “I slipped the tongue”]. In: Polska Times. July 18. In: <https://polskatimes.pl/donald-trump-o-konferencji-z-wladimirem-putinem-w-helsinkach-przejeczylem-sie/ar/13349055> (accessed: 19.06.2022).
- SOLDATOV, A. | BOROGAN, I. (2022a), Kak voyennyje mesyatsy izmenili FSB. In: agentura.ru, July 19. In: <https://agentura.ru/investigations/kak-pervye-voennye-mesyacy-izmenili-fsb/> (accessed: 16.09.2022).
- SOLDATOV, A. | BOROGAN, I. (2022b) GRU vykhodit na pervyy plan. In: agentura.ru, May 9. In: <https://agentura.ru/investigations/gru-vyhodit-na-pervyj-plan-nbsp/> (accessed: 17.06.2022).
- The Economist (2022), Russian spooks are being kicked out of Europe en masse. April 7.