



## Chechen Terrorism: Made in Moscow

The Boston Marathon bombing has focused America's attention on Chechnya, a small mountainous country of 1.2 million people in the North Caucasus near the Caspian Sea. As our [companion article](#) points out, current and former U.S. government officials, as well as media commentators and so-called terrorism experts, have been making many statements claiming that the Boston terror attack is intimately linked to the ongoing series of terror attacks that have been plaguing Russia for the past decade and a half. All are the work, it is alleged, of Chechen Islamic jihadists demanding independence and an end to Russian occupation of Chechnya.



Many of the stories in the American press have mentioned some of the more spectacular terrorist incidents in Russia that are routinely attributed to Chechen terrorists: the 1999 bombings of a shopping mall and apartment buildings; the 2002 siege of Moscow's Dubrovka Theater; and the 2004 Beslan school massacre. These and other terror attacks, we are being told, demonstrate that Russia and the United States are facing the same vicious enemy and we must put aside our differences and unite against the common foe.

However, what do the known facts from the cited terror cases in Russia actually show? As we have reported in *The New American* repeatedly over the past decade (in print and online), the accumulated evidence very convincingly demonstrates that the sensational terror attacks, rather than being the work of Chechen terrorists, were actually "false flag" operations of the Russian intelligence services, the FSB and GRU, designed to serve multiple purposes of the Yeltsin-Putin Kremlin rulers. Those purposes included:

- Covering up and diverting attention from the rampant corruption and massive theft of national wealth by Yeltsin, his family, and his cronies, which was becoming impossible to conceal, both from the Russian people as well as foreign governments, journalists and investors;
- Installing an unknown KGB-FSB operative (Vladimir Putin) and providing him with a "cause" that would build his stature and rally public support around him;
- Providing Putin and the Kremlin leaders with an excuse to make war on Chechnya and focus Russian public attention on an external threat;
- Casting Russia as a victim of terror groups, to encourage the United States and Western Europe to cooperate and converge with Moscow on fighting a common global terror threat.

### The Russian Apartment Bombings

In September of 1999, a series of large explosions hit apartment buildings in Moscow, Volgodonsk, and Buynaksk, killing nearly 300 people, injuring close to 1,000, and leaving thousands homeless. Several



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additional bombings were averted when explosives were discovered and disarmed before they detonated. Fear and outrage gripped the Russian public. Where and when would the bombers strike next?

In an April 2002 report for the Hudson Institute entitled *The Shadow of Ryazan: Who Was Behind the Strange Russian Apartment Bombings in September 1999?*, David Satter, the former Russian correspondent for the *Financial Times* of London and now a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University, provided the backstory context for the deadly drama. He wrote:

In August 1999, on the eve of the bombings, it appeared that the Yeltsin “family” and the rest of the corrupt oligarchy that ruled Russia were facing an unavoidable day of reckoning. As the economic situation in Russia got steadily worse, Yeltsin’s approval rating dropped to 2 percent and an uneasy awareness spread among the persons closely connected to the Yeltsin regime that their positions, their wealth, and possibly their freedom and even their lives were in jeopardy.

Satter continued:

By the summer of 1999, there was reported to be an atmosphere of near panic in the Kremlin, and there were reports that the Yeltsin “family” was planning provocations in Moscow, including acts of terror.... One such report, by Alexander Zhilin, which appeared on July 22 in *Moskovskaya Pravda* said that there was a plan to destabilize the atmosphere in Moscow by organizing terrorist acts, kidnappings, and a war between criminal clans.

Zhilin’s report of the coming terror wave (codename “Storm in Moscow”) appeared more than a month before the bombings began. However, even prior to Zhilin’s announcement, on June 6, 1999, three months before the bombings, correspondent Jan Blomgren wrote in the Swedish newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* that an option being considered by the Kremlin leadership was “a series of terror bombings in Moscow that could be blamed on the Chechens.” A still higher source, Sergei Stepashin, provides an even more startling confession. As reported by Patrick Cockburn, Moscow correspondent for the *Independent* (U.K.), Stepashin, who was interior minister and prime minister under Yeltsin, said the plan to send the Russian army into Chechnya “had been worked out in March.” In interviews with the daily *Nezavissimaya Gazeta* and Interfax agency, he says he played a central role in organizing the military buildup before the invasion.

However, one of the most astounding and damning (and almost completely ignored) pieces of evidence concerning foreknowledge of the planned state-terror operation surfaced as a result of operational foul-up. On September 13, just hours after the second explosion in Moscow, Gennadiy Seleznyov of the Communist Party, who was speaker of the Duma at that time, made an extraordinary announcement: “I have just received a report ... an apartment building in the city of Volgodonsk was blown up last night.” The announcement was so extraordinary because the Volgodonsk bombing would not occur for another 72 hours! Someone at Putin’s FSB had mixed up memos and jumped the gun announcing the “Chechen” terror attack.

### ***Cui Bono?***

The Roman orator and statesman Cicero reminds us to always ask concerning any crime, “*Cui bono?*” — “Who benefits?”, or “To whose benefit?” When applied to the “Chechen” bombings in Russia, the answers are obvious: Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin, and the current shadowy Kremlin leadership. Certainly the Chechen nationalists did not benefit; the attacks turned Russian public opinion, which was very negative on the costly Chechen war prior to the bombings, into a feverish call for vengeance and a



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patriotic appeal to defend the homeland against terrorists. Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, was pounded into rubble and tens of thousands of civilians were brutally killed. The Russian boot was planted even more firmly on Chechnya's neck. No Chechen leader or organization took credit for the attack. In fact, Chechnya's president, Aslan Maskadov, absolutely denied any involvement by his government; Chechen Islamic leaders likewise denied any involvement.

In testimony before the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs on May 17, 2007, David Satter explained who benefited from the bombings.

"With Yeltsin and his family facing possible criminal prosecution," said Satter, "a plan was put into motion to put in place a successor who would guarantee that Yeltsin and his family would be safe from prosecution and the criminal division of property in the country would not be subject to reexamination."

Satter continued:

For "Operation Successor" to succeed, however, it was necessary to have a massive provocation. In my view, this provocation was the bombing in September 1999 of the apartment building bombings in Moscow, Buinaksk, and Volgodonsk. In the aftermath of these attacks, which claimed 300 lives, a new war was launched against Chechnya. Putin, the newly appointed prime minister who was put in charge of that war, achieved overnight popularity. Yeltsin resigned early. Putin was elected president and his first act was to guarantee Yeltsin immunity from prosecution. In the meantime, all talk of reexamining the results of privatization was forgotten.

In his book [Darkness at Dawn: The Rise of the Russian Criminal State](#) (2003, Yale University Press), Satter amassed impressive evidence to demonstrate that the "Chechen" terror attacks in Russia were indeed provocations of the Russian intelligence agencies, the FSB and the GRU.

Since then the evidence supporting that thesis has, well, exploded. As Russian expert Amy Knight, whom the *New York Times* has described as "the West's foremost scholar" of the KGB, has written, the proof is now "overwhelming" that these terror attacks were the work of the Russian authorities.

Among the major works that have provided important details about the terror provocations are: [Blowing Up Russia: The Secret Plot to Bring Back KGB Terror](#) by FSB defector Alexander Litvinenko and journalist Yuri Felshtinsky (2007); *Allegations* by Alexander Litvinenko (2007); *The Assassination of Russia*, a film by Jean-Charles Deniau, based on the book *Blowing Up Russia: The Litvinenko File* by BBC reporter Martin Sixsmith (2007); *Disbelief*, a documentary film by Andrei Nekrasov; and *The Moscow Bombings of September 1999: Examinations of Russian Terrorist Attacks at the Onset of Vladimir Putin's Rule* by Hoover Institution Senior Fellow John Dunlop (2012).

Unfortunately, none of these works have received the attention they deserve. In fact, they have been studiously ignored or panned by the vast majority of the media's terrorism "experts."

### **Ryazan: The Game Changer**

In our January 22, 2007 article, "[Putin, Poison, and Murder](#)," we provided this brief, thumbnail sketch of "The Ryazan Incident":

On the night of September 22, 1999, an alert resident of an apartment complex in the Russian city of Ryazan reported suspicious activities to local police. Responding, the police found a large quantity of hexogen explosive, timed to detonate at 5:30 the next morning. They evacuated the building and captured some of the bombers, who turned out to be (surprise!) FSB agents. Caught red-handed, the FSB then claimed that this had been merely an "exercise" and the substance was



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not really hexogen, but sugar. Litvinenko, in his book and in interviews, showed that the planned Ryazan bombing was to be the culminating incident justifying the invasion of Chechnya.

At Ryazan, the bombers were caught red-handed; firm suspicions were now confirmed with solid facts. The perpetrators were not shadowy Chechen terrorists, but FSB agents answering to Putin, the “Savior” who was leading the war against the fabricated foreign enemy.

In the space available here we can merely touch on a small amount of the overwhelming evidence that indicts the Russian government as the real enemy in the ongoing series of provocations in their War on Terror:

- The explosives planted at the Ryazan apartment by the captured FSB agents were of the same type and followed the same modus operandi as in the previous Moscow and Volgodonsk bombings;
- Ryazan police explosives specialist Yuri Tkachenko testified that he had conducted tests on the substances seized and had confirmed the presence of hexogen; it was not sugar;
- Various experts have confirmed that only the Russian military and intelligence services have access to hexogen explosives in Russia — it is next to impossible for independent terrorist groups to acquire it;
- After being repeatedly blocked in attempts to get an official inquiry into Ryazan, Duma members Yuri Shchekochikhin and Sergei Yushenko launched their own independent investigation. Yushenko was shot dead outside his apartment, Shchekochikhin died suddenly of a mysterious “allergic reaction” that was almost certainly an assassination by poison;
- Alexander Litvinenko, the former FSB agent and author of *Blowing Up Russia*, was poisoned and suffered an agonizing and lingering death;
- Anna Politkovskaya, Russia’s most famous investigative journalist and a relentless pursuer of truth concerning the Chechen War, was first poisoned, but when she survived that, she was shot dead, execution style, in the elevator to her apartment;
- Vladimir Romanovich, an FSB officer who had rented the basement room that was used to bomb one of the buildings, was suddenly run over and killed in a hit and run “accident” in Cyprus before he could talk to Duma investigators;
- Mikhail Trapashkin, a former FSB officer-turned-attorney, who was assisting the independent investigation, was arrested on trumped-up charges and planted evidence — and thrown into prison;
- The Duma, obviously responding to directives from the Kremlin leadership, voted to seal all evidence from the Ryazan incident and to forbid any investigation into what occurred there.

### **Chechens or Chekists?**

The foiled Ryazan terror bombing may be the most well-known example of the Russian intelligence services getting caught utilizing false-flag terrorist operations, but it is far from being an isolated incident. In fact, anytime one hears a reference to Chechen terrorism, it is wise to ask if the perpetrators are Chechens or Chekists. Chekist refers to a member of the Russian intelligence service, the Cheka, which was established by Vladimir Lenin in 1917 and placed under the control of the infamous Felix Dzerzhinsky. “Iron Felix” once told his Chekists: “We stand for organized terror.” And terrorize the Russian people he did. The Cheka evolved into the KGB and now the FSB. Putin and his fellow KGB/FSB agents still refer to themselves as Chekists — and they still stand for organized terror. One of the most important Chechen/Chekist terrorists throughout the 1990s and until his death in 2006





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was Shamil Basayev. Basayev, reportedly, was one of the military supporters who came to the aid of Boris Yeltsin on the barricades around the Russian White House when Yeltsin was under siege by the “hardliners” in August 1991. He was placed in charge of a “Chechen Battalion” and sent to aid Russian forces in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, both in 1992. According to the Russian newspapers *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* and *Novaya Gazeta*, as well as the U.K. paper the *Independent*, Shamil Basayev and his brother Shirvani were agents of the GRU, Russian military intelligence. They received their arms, training, and assignments through the GRU. However, in the early 1990s, Shamil supposedly converted to militant Islam and turned against his former Soviet-Russian comrades. But the evidence points to the conclusion that the conversion was a cover to enable him to work as an agent provocateur.

On August 3, 1999, the Russian newspaper *Versiya* published an article that reported, according to their sources in French intelligence, that Shamil Basayev attended a secret meeting in Beaulieu, France, near Monaco at the luxury villa of arms dealer Adnan Khashoggi. It was at this meeting, in July 1999, allegedly, where the apartment bombing terror plot and the invasion of Chechnya were planned. The key person Basayev was reported to have met with was GRU operative Anton Surikov, a top planner of sabotage under Yevgeny Primakov, the former Russian prime minister and former head of the KGB/FSB — and best known as the Kremlin’s “Middle East terror master” during the Soviet era. Alexander Litvinenko analyzes the *Versiya* story and other evidence concerning the Surikov-Basayev-GRU connection in his book *Blowing Up Russia*.

Basayev and/or terrorists reputedly under his command carried out a number of notorious attacks throughout the Russian Federation, the most infamous being the Beslan school hostage crisis, which turned into the grizzly Beslan massacre. It ended with 334 hostages killed, including 186 children. Beslan not only provided Putin with an enormous political boost at home, but a very large sympathy lobby internationally. His supporters in the U.S. media and academia would argue that we must not be too squeamish and demanding concerning his stamping on human rights because, after all, he’s dealing with the likes of Shamil Basayev, murderer of the Beslan children.

As with the apartment bombings, no inquiries into the many troubling facts and conflicting official stories about the Beslan massacre were allowed.

What bearing does all of this have on our current relations with Russia in respect to cooperation on combatting terrorism in general and concerning the Tsarnaev brothers, the accused perpetrators of the Boston Marathon bombing? It is very central to it. From information that is now publicly available, Russian authorities have been less than forthcoming concerning whatever information they had concerning the Tsarnaev brothers and their connections to Dagestan and Chechnya. Moreover, most of the key Kremlin leaders who orchestrated the Chechen terrorist provocations throughout Russia over the past decade and a half are still in power. Besides Putin, some of the key players include:

- Nicolai Patrushev, a KGB veteran and director of the FSB from 1999 to 2008, all of the critical years during which the FSB’s Chechen false-flag terror operations were most deadly. Patrushev made some of the most absurd public statements and ridiculous explanations in his attempts to deny his agency’s involvement in the bombings and other terrorist acts. He is now Putin’s secretary of the Security Council;
- Yevgeny Primakov, mentioned above, has been a top KGB/FSB terror master for decades, helping to train and set in motion generations of terrorists worldwide. Now in his 90s, he remains a close advisor to Putin, along with Henry Kissinger, on matters of terrorism.



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- Victor Ivanov, a KGB/FSB veteran who heads the Federal Narcotics Service of Russia and Aeroflot airline and who is chairman of the board of the giant Almaz-Antei Air Defense corporation.

Were the Tsarnaev brothers part of an elaborate provocation organized by the proven masters of provocation? The history of “Chechen” terror in Russia suggests that that scenario is not only a possibility, but a very strong probability.

— Photo of Moscow apartment building destroyed by explosion blamed on Chechens, Sept. 8, 1999: AP Images

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