



Written by [Christian Gomez](#) on March 3, 2015

FSB Director Admits Russians Fighting for ISIS

The Obama administration welcomed a very strange guest to its recent White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism: Alexander Bortnikov (shown), the director of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB, the successor to the Soviet KGB).

The inclusion of Bortnikov was strange for a number of reasons, not the least of which was that it occurred as fighting continues between U.S.-backed Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed Marxist-Leninist Ukrainian separatists. More fundamentally, it was strange because it is a well-documented fact that the Soviet KGB played the key role in creating, funding, training, and directing the vast terror network that spread over the globe from the 1960s through the 1980s. And it is also well established that the Russian FSB took over that terror-master role when the KGB changed its name and shuffled its personnel. Alexander Bortnikov, like his boss, Vladimir Putin and much of the rest of the Kremlin's present ruling class, was a longtime agent of the KGB terror trainers before transitioning to his current FSB post.



During President Obama's three-day summit (February 18-20), which included representatives from dozens of countries, Bortnikov made the surprising announcement that 1,700 Russian citizens are in Iraq fighting for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS. His statement was clearly intended to convey the impression that Russia, like the United States, Europe, and much of the rest of the world, is battling against the forces of militant Islamic terrorism. Bortnikov was delivering a message from Putin and the Kremlin, the essence of which is this: We're just like you; Russia is also suffering from international terrorism, violent Islamic jihadists, and violent homegrown extremism. We are natural allies and should be cooperating on national and international security measures.

"At present there are 1,700 Russian citizens in Iraq and this number has practically doubled since last year," Bortnikov said. Bortnikov was referring to alleged domestic Russian terrorists from Chechnya and Dagestan, located in Caucasus region of Russia, that have joined ISIS.

On January 2, 2015, the [Washington Times](#) reported that ISIS had gained six new commanders in Russia. According to the *Times*, "Three Chechen and three Dagestani commanders have retracted an oath of loyalty to Caucasus Emirate leader Sheikh Ali Abu-Muhammad (Aliaskhab Kebekov) and pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group's Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi." [Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty](#)



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identified the six commanders in question as: Sultan Zaynalabidov, Rustam Aselderov, Abu-Mukhammad Agachaulsky, Makhran Saidov, and two additional commanders known simply as Khamzat and Usman.

Under the guise of convincing the U.S. government that Russia faced a common threat of Islamic terrorism, Bortnikov stressed, “The issue of partnership between our service [the FSB], of which I am the head, is very important for us. In the first stages of active counter-operations we must apply special measures and means to locate terrorist attacks.”

Bortnikov concluded, “Knowledge of the situation is very important and, of course, intelligence sharing with our partners in this regard.... *Everything that is happening today is so serious that we need to unite.*” (Emphasis added.)

Prior to Bortnikov’s arrival, the FSB issued the following statement regarding his visit: “Bortnikov will inform the participants of the forum about the national system to counter extremism that is functioning in the Russian Federation, stressing the importance of the role of the state in countering the ideology of terrorism.”

Although the purpose of Bortnikov’s remarks was to convince Washington beltway politicians that Russia also faces its own Muslim terror threat from Chechnya and the Islamic State, and that therefore both the U.S. and Russia should swap intelligence and work together, Bortnikov made no mention of his agency’s role in creating the modern Islamic terror threat in past decades.

Andropov’s KGB and the Muslim Terror Threat

In his book [Disinformation](#) (2013), former high-ranking Soviet-bloc defector Lt. General Ion Mihai Pacepa, who served as chief of the Securitate, the Department of State Security for Communist Romania, revealed the Soviet Union’s role in exploiting and radicalizing Muslims against the West:

By 1972, [Yuri] Andropov’s disinformation machinery was working around the clock to persuade the Islamic world that Israel and the United States intended to transform the rest of the world into a Zionist fiefdom. According to Andropov, the Islamic world was a petri dish in which the KGB community could nurture a virulent strain of American-hatred, grown from the bacterium of Marxism-Leninism thought. Islamic anti-Semitism ran deep. The message was simple: The Muslims had a taste for nationalism, jingoism, and victimology.



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A predecessor to Bortnikov, Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov (shown at right) was the longest serving chairman of the KGB (1967 to 1982) and briefly general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) from 1982 until his unexpected death in 1984. Pacepa refers to Andropov as the “father of today’s anti-Semitism and international terrorism.”



Of Andropov’s legacy, Pacepa wrote on [World Net Daily](#) in 2012, “Western Sovietologists usually confine themselves to recalling his brutal suppression of political dissidents, his role in planning the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia and his pressure on the Polish regime to impose martial law.” According to [The Moscow Times](#), “Andropov is remembered as the man who attempted a controlled upgrade of the Soviet Union while preserving it as an empire, but who died before seeing his policies come into fruition.” Russian President Vladimir Putin, who served as an agent in Andropov’s KGB and followed in his footsteps, appointed Director of the renamed KGB (FSB) by Russian President Boris Yeltsin in 1998, and then leader of Russia, praised Andropov, calling him an “outstanding political figure.”

Like Putin, Bortnikov is also a product of Andropov’s KGB, both graduating from the Higher School of the KGB Dzerzhinsky in Moscow (renamed Academy of the Federal Security Service of Russia or FSB Academy) and joining the CPSU in 1975. Bortnikov spent the tenure of his KGB career stationed operational and management staff of the KGB’s counterintelligence units stationed in Leningrad (renamed St. Petersburg). At the same time, Putin served as KGB officer stationed in Communist East Germany.

Likewise in the spirit of Andropov’s legacy, Putin said, “The breakup of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical tragedy of the 20th century.” Unsurprisingly, Putin’s personal admiration for Andropov and the USSR are well known in Russia. “As FSB chief, Putin laid flowers on Andropov’s grave, and dedicated a plaque to his hero inside the Lubyanka, the KGB’s notorious Moscow headquarters,” writes Anne Applebaum in the [New York Review of Books](#). “Later, as president,” Applebaum notes, “he ordered another plaque placed on the Moscow building where Andropov had lived and erected a statue to him in a St. Petersburg suburb.”

Despite alleged claims of the death of communism with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Putin’s Russia has seen a revival in the cult of personality for Communist dictator Joseph Stalin, the restoration of the Soviet Union’s national anthem as the anthem for the Russian Federation, military invasions of Georgia and Ukraine, and the erecting of statues to former Soviet Communist leaders such as Yuri Andropov. In many ways, Putin’s Russia is reminiscent of John Lennon and Paul McCartney’s 1968 Beatles hit *Back in the U.S.S.R.*



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With all these many homages to the old Soviet Union, is it any surprise that Russian citizens, especially those of radicalized sects of Islam, would take up arms with their Soviet-manufactured Mikhail Kalashnikov AK-47 rifles (the terrorist weapon of choice) and join the ranks of the ISIS in waging Jihad against the Western world? Of the Soviet Union's role in radicalizing Islamic extremism, Pacepa further noted in *Disinformation*:

Before I left Romania for good, in 1978, the DIE [Communist Romania's foreign intelligence service] had sent about five hundred undercover agents to its Islamic target countries—and, as I later learned, it continued to send such agents until the Soviet bloc collapsed, in 1989. Most of them were engineers, medical doctors, teachers, and art instructors. According to a rough estimate received from Moscow, by 1978 the Soviet bloc intelligence community had sent some four thousand such agents of influence into the Islamic world. The assumption was that about 70-75 percent of those assets would end up being really useful. [Emphasis added].

On February 23, 1981, in the "[Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union](#)," Soviet leader and General-Secretary of the CPSU Leonid Brezhnev told the assembly of Communist Party delegates:

Of late, Islamic slogans are being actively promoted in some countries of the East. We Communists have every respect for the religious convictions of people professing Islam or any other religion. The main thing is what aims are pursued by the forces proclaiming various slogans. The banner of Islam may lead into [the] struggle for liberation.

By then the KGB and other Soviet-bloc intelligence agents were well underway in radicalizing the Islamic world to perpetuate "liberation," i.e. communist revolution under the guise of Islam.

Islamic Revival Party in the SSRs

As for within the Soviet Union itself, in 1990 Astrakhan, an oblast in the lower Volga region of Russia bordering Kazakhstan, hosted the inaugural congress of the Islamic Revival Party. The USSR also authorized the establishment of Islamic Revival Parties in the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic (Tajik SSR, now Tajikistan) and Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (Uzbek SSR, now Uzbekistan). Rather than Marxism-Leninism, like the CPSU, which authorized the establishment of the Islamic Revival Parties, the Islamic Revival Parties claim Islamism as their ideology. In [Islam V Astrakhanskom Regione](#) (2008), which contains many copies of official documents issued by the Islamic Revival Party Congress, one particular Islamic Revival Party activist is quoted as saying, "We are labeled extremists. But this is not true; we simply support the purity of Islam and its precepts. We will have to revive our own religion throughout the whole world."

With the Soviet creation of the Islamic Revival Parties in the Muslim-populated areas of the USSR, the CPSU was able to provide more radicalized Muslims with a political home and voice to further spread their message throughout the Muslim world both in and out of Russia.

FSB Behind "Chechen" Terrorism

September 4, 9, 13, and 16, of 1999 have been refereed to "Russia's 9/11," after a series of apartment bombings in the cities of Buynaksk, Moscow, and Volgodonsk resulted in the deaths of 293 people and other blast related injuries to 651 additional people. The Russian government of then President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who had left his post as FSB director a year earlier and was a little over a month away from being installed as President of the Russian Federation, blamed the bombings on Islamic terrorists from Chechnya, a heavily Muslim populated republic of Russia. These



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bombings generated a rallying cry of support for President-elect Putin, who vowed retribution and to go after those responsible for the attacks.

“Russian planes are only striking the terrorists bases. We will follow the terrorists wherever they go. If they are at the airport we will be there. Excuse me, but if they’re on the toilets we will go in there and blow them away. That’s all there is to it, the problem is solved,” Putin said on a news conference on September 24, 1999. Upon assuming the presidency on January 1, 2000, Putin escalated Russia’s involvement in the then on-going Second Chechen War.

Although 293 people were killed in the initial bombings, the fatalities could have been higher. Several other bombs were discovered and diffused. Among these was a large set of Research Department Formula X, cyclonite, hexogen (RDX) explosives located in an apartment building in the city of Ryazan. At 8:30 p.m., on September 22, 1999, Aleksei Kartofelnikov, a resident of the apartment building called the local police to report suspicious activities. A white car was parked in front of the building with a piece of white paper with the number 62 taped over the registration number on both the vehicle’s front and rear license plate. (For more on evidence of the Ryazan bombings and other terrorist acts as provocations of the FSB, see [here](#) and [here](#).)

After a series of bombings in the weeks before, a police patrol car arrived and found suspicious white bags with wires coming out of them. More police quickly arrived and evacuated the buildings residents to a nearby October Cinema. They discovered three white bags, the middle one with holes and an electronic watch set to detonate the next morning at 5:30 a.m. The police also arrested the would-be bombers, two men and a woman, and to the surprise of many in Russia they were FSB agents.

The FSB operative was caught planting the same type of RDX explosives that have been used in the previous bombings, but unsurprisingly the FSB denied any involvement in the previous attacks. Then FSB Director Nikolai Patrushev claimed that the FSB agents had merely been conducting an “exercise,” and that there were no bombs but instead were “sacks of sugar.” The FSB’s official story contradicted the testimony of Ryazan police department’s explosives specialists Yuri Tkachenko, who claimed that his own tests of the chemical substance in the bags revealed traces of hexogen, and not sugar. In the book [The New Cold War: Putin’s Russia and the Threat to the West](#) (2009), Edward Lucas writes of the aftermath:

The Kremlin could have easily cleared up the story. Instead of doing this, it sealed all materials relating to Ryazan for 75 years and repeatedly blocked investigations by independent-minded Duma deputies. Two Duma deputies who pursued the issue, Sergei Yushenkov and Yuri Shchekochikhin, have since died in suspicious circumstances. A journalist associated with the investigation, Otto Laci, was badly beaten. He later died in a car crash.

In 2002, FSB defector Alexander Litvinenko and Russian historian Yuri Felshinsky wrote a book entitled, [Blowing Up Russia: The Secret Plot to Bring Back KGB Terror](#), originally published in Russian, in which they detail that the Ryazan incident was a planned Russian false-flag terror attack intended to rally support for both the Second Chechen War and to solidify Putin’s rise to power as president.

In a taped interview for filmmaker [Jean-Charles Denaiou’s documentary](#) based on the book *Blowing Up Russia*, former KGB General Oleg Kalugin said, “The entire history of the KGB is full of this kind of activity. And in this context I believe the incidents in Moscow, Volgograd, and then later in Ryazan — that failed explosion — I believe they’re all links in the same chain.”

Al-Qaeda’s Ayman al-Zawahiri as FSB Asset



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On July 16, 2005, the Polish newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* published an article in which Litvinenko identified that al-Qaeda second-in-command “Ayman al-Zawahiri trained at a Federal Security Service (FSB, former KGB) base in Dagestan in 1998.” According to Litvinenko, al-Zawahiri “was transferred to Afghanistan, where he had never been before and where, following the recommendation of his Lubyanka chiefs, he at once ... penetrated the milieu of Osama bin Laden and soon became his assistant in Al Qaeda.” In 2006, the FSB poisoned Litvinenko with radioactive polonium-210 and he died in a hospital November 23, 2006. With the assassination of Osama bin Laden by U.S. Special Forces on May 2, 2011, Ayman al-Zawahiri, whom Litvinenko had previously referred to as “an old agent of the FSB,” became the leader of al-Qaeda.

Conclusion

You cannot intentionally radicalize and ferment Islamic animosity toward the Western world for over 40 years and not expect there to be Muslim extremism throughout the Middle East. Today’s Islamic terrorism is primarily the product of Soviet-backed and -engineered disinformation and deception. With that in mind, it would be suicidal for the United States if the White House and Washington lawmakers were to consider any “intelligence sharing” with Russia, as recently proposed by Bortnikov.

Photo of Alexander Bortnikov at top of article: AP Images

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