



RUSSIA REFORM MONITOR

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Related Categories: Intelligence and Counterintelligence; Warfare; Russia

PUTIN'S REAL WAR PLANS

What are the Kremlin's true objectives in Ukraine? In the conflict's early going, Russian officials spoke repeatedly of the need to "de-militarize" and "de-Nazify" Ukraine as overriding strategic goals. But newly-captured war plans and documents point to a more ambitious – and imperial – objective underpinning Russia's assault: the total conquest and domination of its western neighbor. The documents, seized by Ukrainian forces in the northeastern city of Trostianets, lay out that Russian objectives at one point involved a complete takeover of the country. "The State Investigation Bureau has found important documents belonging to the military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, which make it clear that Russia was preparing to seize the entire territory of Ukraine," Oleksii Sukhachov, the Bureau's director, has announced. (*Newsweek*, May 11, 2022)

THE FSB ON THE OUTS...

Russia's main intelligence service, the FSB, is getting a demotion. Amid widespread Kremlin dissatisfaction over the conduct of the Ukraine war, the FSB has been removed from "its role as the primary spy agency" for the conflict, investigative journalists Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan write in *The Moscow Times*. That function has now been handed over to the GRU, Russia's military intelligence agency.

The shakeup is significant, insofar as it reflects a fall from grace on the part of the once-mighty FSB. "Until now, Ukraine had been the responsibility of the Fifth Service of the FSB, the department which provided Putin with intelligence on Ukraine before the invasion," the Soldatov and Borogan explain. "The disastrous start to the war, clouded by the pre-emptive publication by Western intelligence of highly secret plans as yet unrealized, and by the complete absence of popular uprisings by Russian speakers (which Putin was told would occur) cast a dark shadow over the department." (*The Moscow Times*, May 12, 2022)

...AS RUSSIA'S MILITARY BECOMES RESTLESS

The ongoing war in Ukraine has already had a major effect on Russia's international standing and its economic fortunes. But the conflict is also reverberating at home, where it is exacerbating cleavages between Russia's intelligence services and the country's military. "[R]ight now the military is blaming the FSB for many things," veteran journalist Andrei Soldatov tells *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. The issue is "not only about the decision to go to war, but also about how the war is being conducted and all the mistakes that are being made."

The crux of the military's dissatisfaction, notes Soldatov, who now lives in London, is the mistaken assumptions that accompanied the Kremlin's initiation of the conflict – assumptions that Russia's military believes were nurtured by faulty intelligence provided to Russian president Vladimir Putin. "They started out thinking that it would be a very short campaign, and they blamed the FSB for misinforming President Putin that they wouldn't face more resistance... That is why the Russian military feels completely outgunned and outnumbered." That sentiment, Soldatov warns, is leading some in the military becoming "more and more apocalyptic" in how they see the conflict and its future course, with sentiment among some soldiers and enlisted officers becoming more polarized – and militant. (*Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, May 8, 2022)

RUSSIA'S SPY PUSH

Amid ongoing tensions with the West over its campaign in Ukraine, the Kremlin is stepping up its espionage activities. Russia is said to have ordered the creation of tens of thousands of new diplomatic passports in a bid to allow its officials and spies to avoid Western scrutiny and sanctions. The Russian foreign ministry is believed to have ordered the printing of nearly 175,000 new diplomatic travel documents – even though its officials who would qualify for such credentials number in the mere thousands. (*Daily Mail*, April 27, 2022)