

Nuclear analysis by General Yevstafyev of the Russian intelligence service

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Major-General Gennady Yevstafyev, 54, heads one of the key departments at the Foreign Intelligence Service and handles the problems of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control. A Leningrad University graduate, he worked at the Soviet embassies in Pakistan and some other countries, and also at the UN Secretariat. He has taken part in disarmament talks and in formulating agreements on human rights. He speaks fluent English and German.

Our department was formed a mere year ago in view of the aggravation of many problems at once: the threat of a "brain drain" from the nuclear sphere, the uncontrollable export of radioactive materials due to the transparency of sections of the Russian border, and the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and military technology in the Third World.

The most important thing for us is information. To get it, we use, of course, the specific means of special services with preference given to the "human factor" in virtue of objective circumstances. The department is manned with highly qualified personnel: the times of waging war with bayonets has been left behind, now we work with our brains and with our hands a little.

In the USA our department has a counterpart, the centre on non-proliferation. However, regarding its scope and technical provision, any comparison is out of place. The centre's budget comes to several hundred million dollars, its personnel consist of several hundred persons, and the entire US intelligence community is working for it.

The problem we are tackling is political, military and financial alike. The latter circumstance is also of no small importance; the development of mass destruction weapons steals immense sums from countries such as Pakistan, India and Israel. If we take the "domestic" aspect, the leakage of fissionable materials, technology and also specialists can inflict serious

damage on Russia's security, economy and prestige.

In the past 18 months the press has been filled with articles of the type: "Kilo of plutonium smuggled out of Russia", "Finnish journalist offered a container of enriched uranium on the Moscow black market", etc. "Moscow News" has carried out its own investigation and found that a large part of such publications are fake.

Indeed, there is extremely little authentic information on illegal exports. The international mass media is littered with misinformation. Nevertheless it is our duty to check all the signals without exception and provide Russia's political leadership with the most accurate information possible.

Who is it then who fills the press with misinformation?

First of all, the special services: for the sake of tackling their missions and, not least of all, for distracting our forces. Secondly, there are the ignorant who see no difference between enriched uranium and natural uranium. Thirdly, people who pursue their own ends, seeking, for example, to discredit a political opponent or market rival.

A year and a half ago we checked about two dozen names of allegedly "drained brains" (incidentally, most names were Armenian for some reason). It transpired that in general these people did not work in the sphere of nuclear weapons development.

From one West European capital we repeatedly received information on "leakages" into Iran of nuclear warheads and nuclear shells from Kazakhstan. This turned out to be an absolute fraud. On the other hand, the circulation of information about the uncontrollable export (or smuggling) of enriched uranium, plutonium and "heavy" water from Russia is in the nature of "active measures" in the interest of those foreign companies which would like to avoid competition from Russian and other suppliers on the world market of fissionable materials.

It appears that there are no reasons for anxiety at all?

There are and very considerable ones. Russia has proved to be a country with transparent borders. The military-indus-

A black doorknob. A black door. A black car by the entrance... In a mansion lost in a quiet Moscow side-street I am being met by a person who, perhaps, knows better than anyone else in Russia about the "nuclear brain drain", and the thefts of uranium and plutonium. He is also an authority on which countries already possess nuclear and chemical weapons, what development projects they are working on and for what purposes.

trial complex is on the verge of collapse. The financial situation is grave in the "closed" cities, where a high level of secrecy has been maintained traditionally. Today the entire system of control over the maintenance of secrets is cracking at the seams and becoming warped as is the military-industrial complex. Therefore I can explain the present day position, which is sufficiently favourable, exclusively by the patriotism and decency of our nuclear scientists who have not lost faith in doing a job which is vital for the country. What American would be so tolerant?

By the way, it is from the West that both "brains" and fissionable materials are being "leaked" into the "threshold" countries of the Third World, exceeding possible leakages from Russia and other CIS countries by far. Western special services are still looking for their fellow-citizens who took part in the Iraqi secret research projects.

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The development of nuclear weapons requires roughly 1,300 engineers and 500 scientists, with a proportion of nuclear specialists of six percent. It is desirable that approximately 120 high-class nuclear specialists should work on the development of the nuclear bomb.

All sorts of things used to happen to Russian nuclear scientists too. However, in mid-1993 the Foreign Intelligence Service had no information that would testify that Russian specialists were working in Third World countries producing or organizing the production of mass destruction weapons.

Our state controls the situation. Moreover, a legal basis has been created for export control: presidential decrees, the lists of materials forbidden for export, as well as the "export lists" of technologies, fissionable materials and dual-purpose objects liable to mandatory licensing. However, they are not always observed. Had we abided by the already adopted decrees strictly, then, say, Ukraine (which has not joined the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty) would not be able to count on supplies of nuclear technology and materials from Russia. We need to stick to a more rigid position.

So far no sign has been found of highly enriched uranium, plutonium and specific nuclear technologies being illegally exported. However, the safety level of nuclear facilities is very different — from high at uranium-enriching complexes to dubious at sites where natural uranium is extracted. Soon Russia will encounter very acute problems. To lower the risk, there is a need to think about the creation of a special structure under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency for the collection of information on illegal nuclear trade.

Russia is also faced with the problem that it might be surrounded with new nuclear countries. First and foremost, I have Ukraine in mind.

Some influential people in Ukraine advocate an "intermediate" status in the Nuclear Club: a kind of nuclear power, but not a fully fledged one. Such a precedent may undermine the prolongation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty due to expire in 1995. But the Ukrainian parliament's latest decisions to the effect that the republic will achieve a full-scale nuclear status are even more alarming.

What should be done with the warheads on nuclear missiles deployed on Ukrainian territory: should they be left in Ukraine or taken to Russia?

All the missiles must undoubtedly be taken to Russia. Of late Ukraine has been inviting the USA to act as a broker in the dismantling, storage and transportation of warheads. But there are the questions of Russia's national security, and there are the Russian national achievements and secrets, which nei-

ther the Ukrainians nor the Americans must know.

Some Western researchers have warned of the potential nuclear capabilities of Armenia, specifically for the development of radiological weapons in the event of its nuclear power plant being put into operation to aggregate capacity.

We do not possess any information of this kind. I hope we are not mistaken.

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Radiological weapons are mass destruction weapons. They are the "shadow" of nuclear power engineering in poor countries where large reserves of radioactive materials tend to appear. The threat of their development increases with the progress of nuclear power engineering. The military's interest in them heightened markedly after the Chernobyl catastrophe which demonstrated but a small proportion of the consequences of their use in the planet's densely populated areas. During the Persian Gulf war the "crisis group" set up under the USSR's leadership discussed the possibility of radiological weapons being used by Iraq against Israel.

Didn't our interests suffer a year ago when Yeltsin and Bush signed a "framework agreement" and technical protocols on America's assistance in the nuclear disarmament of Russia. That agreement, as you may probably remember, aroused protests on the part of Russian legislators.

As we see it, the framework agreement ensures a balance of interests between Russia and the USA. Under its terms Russia was granted 400 million dollars (now this sum has been practically doubled) for the dismantling and storage of nuclear weapons. Of course, this money ought to be used more actively for loading the domestic industry with orders suiting our nuclear "specifics".

It is an open secret that our American partners would like to have a definite measure of influence on the earliest possible nuclear disarmament of Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus, and also on the reduction of Russia's nuclear potential. Here we should abide by the same criterion of national interests. They have not been upset so far. We have been trying to see to it that this does not happen in the future either.