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It Wasn't Russia!

Michael Shrimpton demolishes Theresa May's wild claim that Russia was responsible for the murderous attack on Colonel Skripal and his daughter.

By

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There is no way that either Russian security services or the Russian Government were involved in the disgraceful attempt on Sunday March 4th to murder former GRU officer and convicted traitor Colonel Sergei Skripal at his home in Salisbury, Wiltshire.

The evidence in fact points strongly towards Germany's covert G02 intelligence organisation, headquartered at Vauxhall Cross in London, not least if the rumor that Colonel Skripal was about to unmask G02's role in producing the dodgy dossier on Donald Trump has any substance.

Undoubtedly serious, this was the first known chemical warfare attack in the UK since the DVD tried to assassinate me using the banned substance saxitoxin in 1999, an attack the Blair government let pass without comment.

In saying that I discount the absurd conspiracy theory that that nice man Vladimir Putin ordered the murder of Lt-Col Alexander Litvinenko in London on November 1st 2006. Lt-Col Litvinenko in fact poisoned himself, with Prussian Blue, the dangerous, metallic antidote to Polonium-210.

(Technically, Po-210 is a radiation weapon, rather than a chemical weapon, of course.)

I am aware of course that retired High Court judge Sir Robert Owen, a nice chap with respect, was parachuted in to replace the Coroner, Dr Andrew Reid. Sir Robert, who unlike Dr Reid had no medical qualifications at all, conducted a secretive and non-transparent inquiry which was never shown the original autopsy report. Lacking medical expertise, and not being the sharpest knife in the box in any event (no offense intended), Sir Robert was easily fooled into thinking that Lt-Col Litvinenko had been murdered.

As with the attack on Col Skripal no credible motive has been suggested for the supposed attack on Lt-Col Litvinenko. He had circulated a conspiracy theory of his own, concerning the journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who had a bee in her bonnet about alleged Russian human rights violations in the Second Chechen War. There was the odd violation, no doubt, but nothing to write home about.

Litvinenko was being bankrolled by corrupt Russian millionaire Boris Berezovsky, who had probably been participating in German-controlled offshore high yield trading programs. It seems to have been Berezovsky who came up with the bright idea of having Litvinenko take Polonium along with the antidote, so that it would look like an assassination attempt but he would survive. Unhappily the poor man contracted peritonitis, a known potential side-effect of taking Prussian Blue. The Polonium came not from Russia, but from *Iran*, via a cargo airfield near Hamburg. The Polonium trail led *back* to Russia, but not *from* Russia.

Wracked with guilt, Berezovsky eventually topped himself, in 2013. As with the Skripal allegation, the offensive allegations that Litvinenko was murdered and that the Russian government was responsible were unsupported by any credible evidence.

On Cabinet Office direction such evidence as existed, was suppressed from the Russian government by Sir Robert through the controversial use of so-called Public Interest Immunity (PII) certificates. As I explain in *Spyhunter* PII certificates are of dubious legality, having their origins in a pathetic attempt in World War II to cover up an Abwehr sabotage operation against the British submarine, HMS *Thetis*.

Where were the Skripals poisoned?

Col Skripal and his daughter were found on a park bench, near the Maltings shopping mall, which is in the center of Salisbury, right by the river. They were helped by a policeman (Wiltshire Constabulary is the best-run force in Britain).

The secretiveness of the May government is not helping. However it looks as though the police officer who was also incapacitated, Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey, who thankfully is on the road to recovery (as are the Skripals), was not the officer who found them slumped on the bench. It seems that he was incapacitated after he went to the Skripal's home, also in Salisbury. Since he was a detective, not a beat officer, that would make sense.

My analysis at this time is that the nerve agent was introduced to the Skripal's home, probably in aerosol form. The house is not believed to be air-conditioned, so it was probably sprayed onto something they both touched, possibly the front door, which DS Bailey would have opened. (I am assuming that Colonel Skripal's house keys were found with him).

Was it Novichok?

I'm sure it was. It was clearly a false-flag attack, so why use a non-Soviet nerve agent? It had to be something the Soviets or the Russians developed.

Prime Minister Theresa May materially misled the House of Commons this week, with respect, in asserting that Novichok is a *Russian* nerve agent. It was in fact an old *Soviet* program, which started in the early 1970s. Most Novichok agents are binary, that is to say are mixed from two non-lethal precursor chemicals. There are a number of variants of Novichok, which is the generic name for a family of nerve agents.

What's more, most of the Soviet stockpile was made in what is now Uzbekistan. At least half a dozen countries, including the UK, have stockpiles of Novichok. You guys probably have some, so do the Czechs, apparently, the Uzbeks and the Ukrainians. It's absolutely *not* confined to Russia.

Although they have been very free with their accusations against President Putin, who faces re-election, the May government have been less than forthcoming in backing up their offensive allegations with evidence. They have not even identified the variant of Novichok used to try and murder the Skripals and DS Bailey. (Under the doctrine of transferred malice the intelligence officers who carried out the attack, almost certainly from GO2, are criminally responsible for the attempt to murder the officer.)

Moreover the May government has not made a sample available to the Russian government, as they are obliged to under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). They haven't even forwarded a sample to the highly competent Technical Secretariat of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, established under CWC Article VIII. The May government clearly has something to hide.

It is important to emphasise that intelligence assessment in Britain is politicised, and has been since the Cabinet Office seized control of the Joint Intelligence Committee's (JIC) Assessments Staff. As with the notorious

dodgy dossier over Iraq's WMDs, the intelligence is tailored to the desired conclusion, not the other way round.

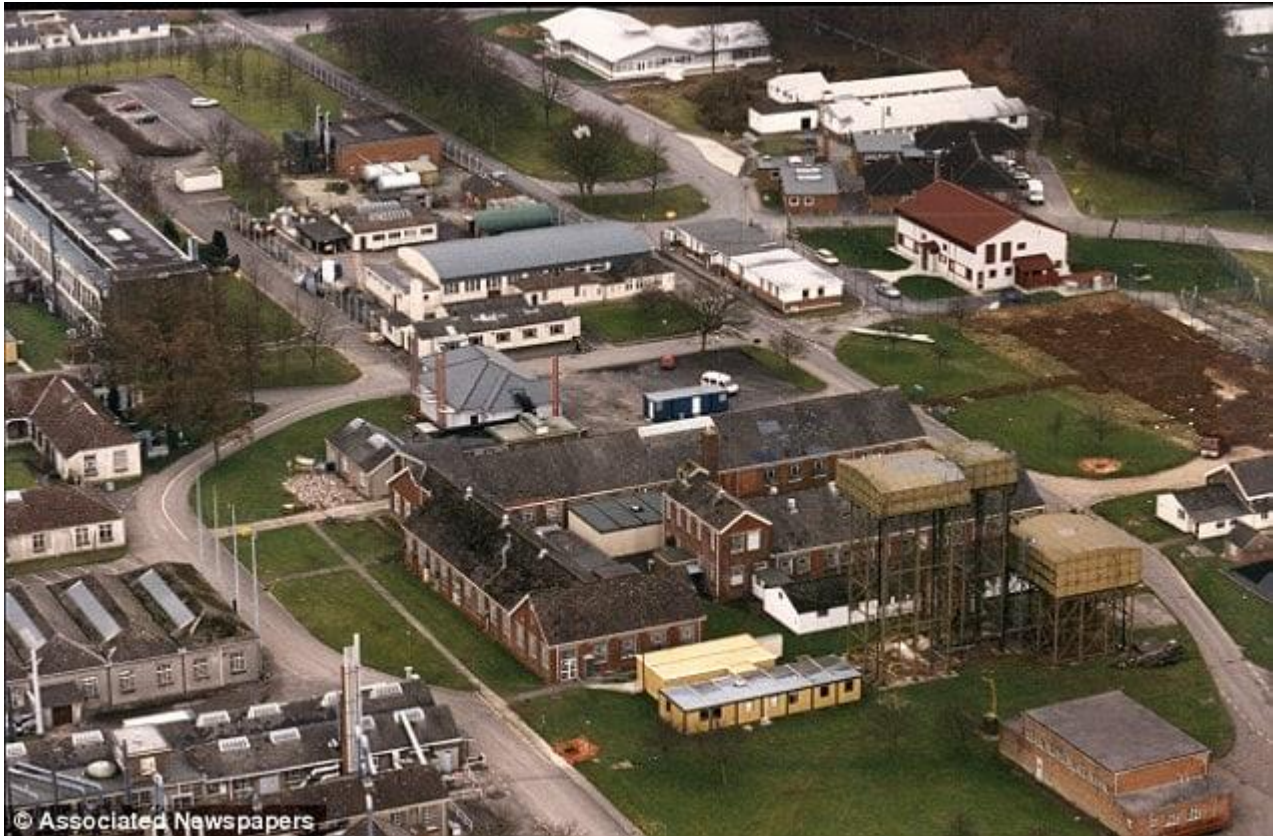
The once-vaunted JIC machinery has broken down completely. In point of fact I'm not even sure the JIC have concluded that Russia was responsible. So far as I can tell the JIC were bypassed in favor of the failed National Security Council, the body which cocked up the 2012 Olympic Games nuclear incident so badly they nearly got an entire stadium blown up, with HM the Queen in it. The UK NSC is even more pointless and ineffectual than the US NSC, on which it was modeled. (The idea had failed in Washington, so it made obvious sense to copy it in London.)

The UK National Security Adviser, Mark Sedwill, has even less intelligence experience than General McMaster, and unlike the general no military experience at all. I gather that Mark's a nice enough chap, but he's completely out of his depth dealing with intelligence matters. He probably believes the guff about Russia coming (mostly) out of GO2 assets in the Cabinet Office.

Where was it mixed?

Mixing binary nerve agents is not quite as simple as putting them in a Mixmaster. It's a bit trickier than making a fruit smoothie. What's more, once they're mixed they become dangerous and difficult to transport.

So what we're really looking for is a chemical weapons facility close to Salisbury. As it happens, there is one, at Porton Down, where the UK stockpile of Novichok is located. Porton Down is *just seven miles from Salisbury*. It's a short trip down the A338 and the A30.



Porton Down effectively reports to the Cabinet Office, which is heavily penetrated by GO2. As presently advised, I think that the Novichok was in binary form, using fairly old stocks, mixed at Porton Down and taken to Salisbury by GO2 penetration assets inside MI6. I also conclude that something went wrong with the mixing and that the agent was not as powerful as intended. That is to say I think the German plan was to murder Colonel Skripal, having waited for his daughter to join him from Moscow. This would allow German propaganda assets to brief the media as to how the Novichok might have come from Russia.

The *Cui Bono* principle

The 'who gains?' principle is a valuable intelligence analysis tool. President Putin had nothing whatsoever to gain by whacking Col Skripal. Although he was a convicted traitor he had been *pardoned* and exchanged in a spy swap. Moreover his daughter was living openly in Moscow. Col Skripal himself is reported to have had fairly recent contact with the Russian Embassy in Kensington Gardens.

Not even the old KGB ever went back on a spy swap. They would have regarded it as *nekulturny*. The SVR, Russia's external intelligence service, are highly professional. They're also very nice people. As an agency they would be even *less* likely than the KGB to go back on a spy-swap. No one would ever do a swap with them again.

The Germans on the other hand have a lot to gain. They've been wedging the Western Allies from Russia since 1945. Theresa May's government is in trouble over Brexit. The old Reichstag Fire strategy of distracting attention with a false flag allegation is just the sort of thing to appeal to a cold-hearted, calculating, secretive, machine politician like Mrs May, no offense intended. I'm not comparing her to Hitler, BTW – I rather suspect that our community partner Adolf Hitler was much more charming, again no offense to Mrs May intended.

The political fallout

If the DVD were hoping to topple President Putin with this nonsense they are likely to be disappointed. I'm not sure that dear old 'Pooters' needs it, but good luck to him for tomorrow's election.

May will have to go. Doubts are already being expressed, not least by Jeremy Corbyn, the Leader of the Opposition. Vasily Nebenzya's rational and witty address to the UN Security Council on Wednesday will have swayed a number of the more sensible MPs.

HMG at some point are going to have to start complying with international law. I heard an idiot former Director of GCHQ, if that is not a tautology (that nice man Sir David Omand excepted) on telly this week, suggesting that Russia is behaving like a rogue state and that we are playing by the rules. Nonsense! We have shown nothing but contempt for the CWC. We haven't even declared our small stockpile of Novichok precursors.

The Defence Secretary's education



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov made a perceptive comment this week about ambitious Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson's education, or rather the lack of it. Williamson was educated, if that is not too strong a word, with respect, at Raincliffe Comprehensive School in Yorkshire and Bradford University.

British Cabinet Ministers ought to be educated at Eton, Harrow or Marlborough. (Charterhouse and Winchester are perfectly acceptable for

junior ministers). Having under-educated Secretaries of State for Defence is not good, with respect.

MH17

In the 'debate' which followed Theresa May's silly speech to the Commons, some of the less well-informed members of the House sought to blame Russia for the shooting down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (9M-MRD) over the Ukraine on July 17th 2014. As with the Litvinenko affair and May's hysterical accusation against President Putin over the attack in Salisbury no credible motive for Russian involvement has ever been suggested.

As I have previously explained on these pages, MH17 was in fact shot down by the Ukrainian Air Force and a Chinese Buk battery, working in combination, having been directed into the kill zone by Kiev ATC. It was nothing to do with Russia.

A Ukrainian Su-25 was observed on radar, close to the 777, and the Buk, the Chinese version of which is known as the HQ-16 or 16A was fired from *Ukrainian* soil, not Russian. The aircraft was struck with *two* missiles, not one, accounting for the different types and locations of the fuselage damage and the varying injuries to the flight crew. Both pilots were killed by missiles, but only one, the co-pilot, was hit by the distinctive shrapnel from a Buk.



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The ChiCom Buk

It really is time, with respect, that MPs and journalists started to grapple with the facts, rather than ventilating absurd and offensive conspiracy theories involving Russia. The problem is that so many MPs and journalists are intelligence-illiterate. Most of them have never even heard of GO2 or the DVD.

The Tillerson firing

This was good to see. Rex Tillerson was a reasonable oil company CEO and he's probably a good golfing companion, but as Secretary of State he was hopelessly house-trained, no offense intended. There's an encouraging rumor that General McMaster will be the next firing, although he should be eased out and given a fourth star. I'm sure that they can find some suitable, less stressful role for him – SOUTHCOM maybe, or AFRICOM.

John Bolton is being talked about as a possible replacement. I like John and he would be a very good appointment, although I hope he doesn't have to lose the mustache! ,

Another welcome firing this week was that of Andrew McCabe at the FBI. The conspiracy theory about Russian interference in the 2016 election has reduced the Bureau and Robert 'von' Mueller in particular to an international laughing stock. The FBI needed a good smack and the President has given it to them. Hopefully 'von' Mueller will be next.