

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE  
WASHINGTON, DC

November 15, 2024  
DEOM-2021-00004

Jason Leopold  
6824 Lexington Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 10013  
[REDACTED]

Mr. Leopold:

This responds to your Mandatory Declassification Review (MDR) request received by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) on March 3, 2021, requesting a declassification review of the Intelligence Community Assessment prepared for House and Senate Intelligence Committees on the use of political assassinations as a form of statecraft by the Russian Federation since January 1, 2000.

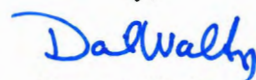
This request was processed in accordance with Section 3.5 of Executive Order (EO) 13526, *Classified National Security Information*. ODNI located and reviewed the document; and determined it may be released in part, with portions withheld under the following sections of the EO:


- 1.4(b), which protects currently and properly classified foreign government information.
- 1.4(c), which protects currently and properly classified intelligence activities (including cover action), intelligence sources or methods, or cryptology.
- 6.2(d), which applies to information exempt from disclosure by statute. Specifically:
  1. the National Security Act of 1947, as amended; Section 102A(i)(1), 50 U.S.C. § 3024(i)(1), which protects information pertaining to intelligence sources and methods; and
  2. the Freedom of Information Act, as amended; 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(7)(E), which protects information that would disclose investigative techniques or procedures.

Please be advised that the remainder of the request, relating to “any and all communications exchanged” between various ODNI components, does not meet the sufficient specificity criteria as required by 32 C.F.R. § 2001.33(a)(2)(i), the implementing guidance for the EO. This section of the CFR requires a request to be of sufficient specificity to allow an agency to locate the records sought with a reasonable amount of effort. Requests such as this, for broad types of information, are not valid MDRs and therefore cannot be processed. As such, ODNI did not process that portion of the MDR request.

If you are not satisfied with ODNI’s response to your request, you may administratively appeal this decision by submitting a written request to the Chief, Information Management Office, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Washington, DC 20511 or ODNI\_FOIA@odni.gov. The appeal correspondence should be clearly marked “Mandatory Declassification Review Request Appeal” and must be postmarked or electronically transmitted within 60 days of the date of this letter. If you have any questions regarding this response, you may contact ODNI IMO at ODNI\_FOIA@odni.gov or (703) 275-1313.

Sincerely,



 Gregory Koch  
Chief, Information Management Office

## National Intelligence Council Sense of the Community Memorandum

SOCM 2016-035C  
11 July 2016

(U) This is an IC-coordinated memorandum.



### 1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 **Kremlin-Ordered Assassinations Abroad Will Probably Persist**

1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 We assess that the Russian Government will continue to use its intelligence services and other loyal entities to assassinate suspected terrorists as well as individuals abroad whom it deems as threats to core national security interests or the security of President Vladimir Putin's regime. Our confidence level for this judgment is high, based on official Russian statements and the findings of foreign governments in countries where assassinations have taken place.

- 1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 Russia targets for killing those it considers terrorists—especially North Caucasus extremists—and select opposition figures. The first clear case in the Putin era of Moscow directing an assassination abroad occurred in 2004 in Qatar, where two Russian military intelligence officers were convicted of killing Chechen leader Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, designated by the United States and the United Nations as a terrorist.
- 1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 The Russian Government has been open about using assassinations as part of its counterterrorism policy. President Putin in June 2006 stated publicly that he had directed Russia's security services to kill the people who murdered four Russian diplomats in Iraq. Also in 2006, the Russian legislature amended the law on countering terrorism. Then Russian Defense Minister Sergey Ivanov publicly stated that the law gave the services a legal basis for killing terrorists outside of Russia.

1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 In addition, Moscow probably selectively targets individuals it perceives as political threats to Putin. Moscow almost certainly ordered the 2006 murder in London of former Russian Federal Security Service officer Aleksandr Litvinenko by means of the radioactive isotope polonium, the clearest example of a political killing. The official British inquiry into Litvinenko's death, which parallels the findings of the US Intelligence Community, concluded that Russian intelligence probably carried out the assassination. The Russian Government probably has been involved in targeting other high-profile figures for politically based assassinations, but we have only low-to-moderate confidence in this judgment because there is less direct and credible evidence of Kremlin direction than in the case of Litvinenko.

1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 An analysis of intelligence reporting on known and suspected Russian assassination attempts indicates that the Kremlin targets individuals from the following categories:

- 1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 **Intelligence defectors or dissidents** whose actions the Kremlin considers to have gone beyond acceptable limits or to have the potential to do so. Litvinenko, for example, was not only a

(U) This Sense of the Community Memorandum was prepared for the National Intelligence Council under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for Counterintelligence. It only addresses assassinations that have taken place outside of Russia since Putin took power in 2000. It was drafted by NCSC 1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1. Questions about this memorandum may be directed to the NIO for CI 1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1.

CL BY: 1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 | DRV FRM: 1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 | DECL ON: 1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1

1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1

traitor in Kremlin eyes but may have crossed a threshold by working with British and Spanish intelligence against Russia. Moreover, Litvinenko had publicly accused Putin of pedophilia, as well lodging accusations for years that Putin ordered the 1999 Moscow apartment bombings as a pretext to renew the conflict with Chechnya. Russian businessman Aleksandr Perepilichnyy was reportedly assassinated with a biological toxin in the UK in 2012 shortly before he was scheduled to testify about a Kremlin tax fraud network, according to press reports, suggesting that he may also fall into this category.

- **1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 Political and opposition leaders** in key former Soviet republics that are deemed a threat. A key example is former President of Ukraine Viktor Yuschenko, who suffered a near-fatal poisoning in 2004. His supporters concluded that Russian intelligence introduced the chemical dioxin into his food when he was a presidential candidate advocating Ukraine’s integration with the West, **1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1**
- **1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1 Insubordinate separatists in Ukraine.** At least some key separatist figures in Ukraine’s Donbas Region who resisted Kremlin orders, such as Oleksandr Bednov, have probably been killed at Moscow’s behest, reflecting Russia’s priority on maintaining control over the region.

**1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1** We assess that Putin probably authorizes assassinations of high-profile figures abroad. The official British inquiry into Litvinenko’s murder concluded that Putin “probably approved” it, based upon a review of physical evidence and decisionmaking on matters related to the security services. Putin’s role reflects concern over the potential for significant political repercussions.

- **1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1** However, Putin probably has given head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov—who is fiercely loyal to Putin—latitude to kill Chechens abroad. Most killings attributed to Kadyrov’s operatives have been shootings, whereas those we judge to have been conducted by Russia’s security services have involved a range of methods, including poisoning.

**1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1** We assess that Russia has the capability to assassinate individuals using chemical and biological agents **1.4(b), 1.4(c)** leveraging longstanding efforts dating back to the Soviet era. **1.4(b), 1.4(c)**

**1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1** The development of chemical or biological agents with lower risk of attribution might tempt the Kremlin to consider assassinating individuals **1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1, 2** Moscow tracks dissidents and defectors **1.4(c), 6.2(d) - 1, 2**