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Appendix A: 1999 Apartment Building Bombings

In early September 1999, less than three weeks after Putin was installed as Prime Minister, a large truck bomb destroyed a five-story apartment building in the Russian republic of Dagestan, killing 64 people.¹ A second, far more powerful bomb was found in a truck near a military hospital in the city, but was defused just 12 minutes before it was timed to explode, saving the city's center from being leveled.² As the bombings occurred in an ethnically diverse republic thousands of kilometers from Moscow, public outrage in the capital was limited. But five days after the bombing in Dagestan, a bomb struck an apartment building in Moscow, killing 100 and injuring nearly 700.³ The Moscow unit of the FSB revealed that evidence from the scene showed traces of TNT and a potent military explosive called hexogen (a substantial investigation of the crime scene was never carried out because the authorities razed the building just days after the blast and discarded its remnants at the municipal dump).⁴

Just four days later, another bomb went off in Moscow at 5 a.m., destroying a nine-story apartment building and killing 124 sleeping residents.⁵ Later that morning, the speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, the Duma, Gennady Seleznyov, announced that an apartment building had blown up in the city of Volgodonsk.⁶ But the bombing in Volgodonsk did not happen until three days after his announcement, when an apartment block was attacked in the city, again at 5 a.m., killing 18 people and injuring nearly 90.⁷ When a Duma member later asked Seleznyov on the Parliament floor to "please explain, how come you told us on Monday about the blast that occurred on Thursday?" his microphone was cut off and the Duma voted to revoke his speaking privileges for one month.⁸

¹David Satter, *The Less You Know, The Better You Sleep: Russia's Road to Terror and Dictatorship under Yeltsin and Putin*, Yale University Press, at 7 (2016); Scott Anderson, "None Dare Call it a Conspiracy," *GQ*, Mar. 30, 2017.

²Satter, *The Less You Know, The Better You Sleep*, at 7.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Scott Anderson, "None Dare Call it a Conspiracy," *GQ*, Mar. 30, 2017; Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 7.

⁵Satter, *The Less You Know, The Better You Sleep*, at 7.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Remarks before the Russian Duma, Sept. 17, 1999, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lf9r3DEY5UA> (translated from Russian). Some observers suggest that someone in the chain of command of the FSB botched the planned sequence of the bombings and gave the news to Seleznyov in the wrong order. Mikhail Trepashkin, a former FSB agent and lawyer who investigated the bombings, claims that Seleznyov was given an erroneous report by an FSB officer. Scott Anderson, "None Dare Call it a Conspiracy," *GQ*, Mar. 30, 2017.

Terrified residents began to spend the night outdoors rather than risk being blown up while sleeping in their apartments.⁹ Less than a week later, on September 22, a resident in the city of Ryazan, about 120 miles southeast of Moscow, called the police to report suspicious men going in and out of his apartment building. Police investigated and discovered what appeared to be a large bomb in the building's basement. The head of the local bomb squad disconnected a military-grade detonator and timer and analyzed the sacks of white powder they were connected to, which reportedly tested positive for hexogen.¹⁰

Two men matching the witnesses' descriptions were arrested; but both were found to be in possession of FSB identification, and the Moscow FSB ordered the Ryazan police to release them.¹¹ At the Kremlin, FSB director Nikolai Patrushev (now head of Russia's influential Security Council) announced that the whole thing was a training exercise, that the sacks of white powder were in fact only sugar, and that while similar exercises had taken place in other cities around Russia, only the citizens of Ryazan had been vigilant enough to detect the sucrose threat.¹²

Putin blamed the bombings on Chechen terrorists and immediately ordered Russia's armed forces to retaliate.¹³ Yet while Russian authorities said that there was a "Chechen trail" leading to the bombings, no Chechen claimed responsibility.¹⁴ In response to questions from the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee in February 2000, then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright wrote that "We have not seen evidence that ties the bombings to Chechnya."¹⁵ A State Department cable from the U.S. Embassy in Moscow relays how a former member of Russia's intelligence services told a U.S. diplomat that the FSB "does indeed have a specially trained team of men whose mission is to carry out this type of urban warfare," and that the actual story of what happened in Ryazan would never come out, because "the truth would destroy the country."¹⁶ The report of the British government's public inquiry into the murder of former FSB agent Alexander Litvinenko refers to the theory in Litvinenko's book that "the bombings had been the work of the FSB, designed to provide a justification for war in Chechnya and, ultimately, to boost Mr. Putin's political prospects."¹⁷ The inquiry's chairman, Sir Robert Owen, wrote that the book was "the product of careful research" and referred to the view that the book had "credibly investigated" the issue and "piled up the evidence pointing a very damaging finger at the FSB and its involvement in those explosions."¹⁸ In addition, U.S. Senators

⁹Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 8.

¹⁰*Ibid.* at 9-10.

¹¹*Ibid.* at 10.

¹²Amy Knight, "Finally, We Know About the Moscow Bombings," *The New York Review of Books*, Nov. 22, 2012.

¹³Scott Anderson, "None Dare Call it a Conspiracy," *GQ*, Mar. 30, 2017.

¹⁴Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 2 (citing Ilyas Akhmadov & Miriam Lansky, *The Chechen Struggle: Independence Won and Lost*, Palgrave Macmillan at 162 (2010)).

¹⁵U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 2000 Foreign Policy Overview and the President's Fiscal Year 2001 Foreign Affairs Budget Request (Feb. and Mar. 2000).

¹⁶U.S. Department of State Cable, Released via Freedom of Information Act to David Satter, Case No. F-2016-08858.

¹⁷United Kingdom House of Commons, *The Litvinenko Inquiry: Report into the Death of Alexander Litvinenko*, at 57 (Jan. 2016).

¹⁸*Ibid.*

John McCain and Marco Rubio, who both serve on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, have gone on the record pointing to evidence that alleges the involvement of the Russian security services in the bombings, with Rubio referring to “open source and other” reporting.¹⁹ The CIA, however, has not released any of its potential records relating to the bombings, stating that to do so would reveal “very specific aspects of the Agency’s intelligence interest, or lack thereof, in the Russian bombings.”²⁰

Attempts to investigate the Ryazan incident and the bombings were stonewalled by Russian officials or stymied by opponents in the Duma. Due to uniform opposition from pro-Putin deputies, several efforts in the Duma to investigate the Ryazan incident failed.²¹ Instead, a group of deputies and civilian activists created a public commission to investigate, led by Sergei Kovalev, a Soviet-era dissident who served for a time as Yeltsin’s human rights advisor (he resigned after accusing Yeltsin of abandoning democratic principles).²² In 2003, one of the Duma deputies and “most active” members on the commission, Sergei Yushkenov, was shot dead in front of his apartment building.²³ Another member of the commission, Yuri Shchekochikhin, died from a mysterious illness three months later, likely from thallium poisoning, just before he was scheduled to fly to the United States to meet with investigators from the FBI.²⁴ Others investigating the bombings, including former FSB agent Alexander Litvinenko and journalist Anna Politkovskaya, were also murdered.²⁵

Russian authorities held two trials in relation to the bombings. The first trial started in May 2001, and accused five men from the Karachai-Cherkessian Republic (about 250 miles west of Chechnya) of preparing explosives and sending them to Moscow “in bags similar to those used to carry sugar produced by a sugar refiner in

¹⁹ Senator John McCain, Press Release, “McCain Decries ‘New Authoritarianism in Russia,’” Nov. 4, 2003. McCain said that “there remain credible allegations that Russia’s FSB had a hand in carrying out these attacks.” *Ibid.* Senator Rubio said in January 2017 that “there’s [an] incredible body of reporting, open source and other, that this was all—all those bombings were part of a black flag operation on the part of the FSB.” Remarks of Marco Rubio, Nomination of Rex Tillerson to be Secretary of State, Hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Jan. 11, 2017.

²⁰ David Satter, “The Mystery of Russia’s 1999 Apartment Bombings Lingers—the CIA Could Clear It Up,” *National Review*, Feb. 2, 2017.

²¹ Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 21, 25; “Duma Vote Kills Query on Ryazan,” *The Moscow Times*, Apr. 4, 2000.

²² Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 25; Sergei Kovalev, “A Letter of Resignation,” *The New York Review of Books*, Feb. 29, 1996.

²³ Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 25, 31, 126-27; “Russian MP’s death sparks storm,” *BBC News*, Apr. 18, 2003. Russian authorities convicted Mikhail Kodanyov, the leader of a rival member of Yushkenov’s Liberal Russia party, with ordering the assassination. Prosecutors argued that Kodanyov ordered the murder because he wanted to take control of Liberal Russia’s finances. Kodanyov maintained his innocence throughout the trial. Carl Schrek, “4 Convicted for Yushenkov Murder,” *The Moscow Times*, Mar. 19, 2004.

²⁴ Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 31; Jullian, O’Halloran, “Russia’s Poisoning ‘Without a Poison,’” *BBC News*, Feb. 6, 2007.

²⁵ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/file_on_4/6324241.stm; “September 1999 Russian apartment bombings timeline,” *CBC*, Sept. 4, 1999.

²⁵ Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 36, 121, 127. After the 2003 trial, three years before she was assassinated, Politkovskaya said of the court proceedings that “This investigation hasn’t answered the main question: Who ordered the apartment blasts in Moscow and Volgograd. The accusations raised by some politicians that the FSB may have been behind the explosions have never been seriously considered by this investigation and have never been investigated at all. And it is quite clear that it will never happen. It remains up to independent journalists and a very small circle of independent politicians to continue to dig up this tragic riddle. The last politician in Russia who sincerely raised these hard questions was Sergei Yushenkov. But he was killed.” David Holley, “Separatists Tied to ‘99 Bombings,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 1, 2003.

Karachai-Cherkessian Republic.”²⁶ The trial was held 750 miles south of Moscow and closed to the public, including the press. The men were convicted of plotting terrorist attacks across Russia in 1999, but due to the lack of evidence, the trial investigators dropped the charges that the men were involved in the Moscow and Volgograd bombings.²⁷

The second trial, which occurred in 2003 and was also closed to the public, charged two other Karachai-Cherkessian men, one of whom said that it was the CIA, not the FSB, that was involved in the Volgograd bombing.²⁸ While he admitted his involvement in the Volgograd bombing, he said that he was given heavy narcotics, and he has maintained that he was not involved with the two Moscow bombings.²⁹

Two sisters who lost their mother in one of the Moscow bombings hired a lawyer and former FSB agent, Mikhail Trepashkin, to represent them at the second trial.³⁰ Trepashkin was also an investigator on Kovalev’s commission.³¹ According to the U.S. State Department, Russian authorities arrested Trepashkin one month after he published claims that the FSB was involved in the bombings and just one week before he was scheduled to represent the sisters in court and present related evidence. He was convicted of disclosing state secrets (Trepashkin maintains that FSB agents planted classified documents in his home during a search) and sentenced to four years in prison.³² With two members of the public commission dead, others threatened, and Trepashkin imprisoned and his life possibly at risk, its investigation stalled.

The Russian public continued to push for investigations and in 2009, a few dozen protestors held a demonstration demanding a new investigation into the bombings. During the protests against Putin in 2011 and 2012, some demonstrators carried signs referencing the attacks.³³ A public opinion poll conducted in September 2013 found that only 31 percent of Russians thought that any involvement of the special services in the explosions should be excluded.³⁴ Another poll conducted in 2015 found that only about 6 percent of Russians had clarity about who was behind the 1999

²⁶“Five Men Charged with Apartment Bombings in Moscow,” Strana.ru, May 11, 2001.

²⁷Oksana Yablokova & Navi Abdullaev, “Five Men Convicted for Terrorist Plots,” *The Moscow Times*, Nov. 15, 2001.

²⁸“Terrorist Adam Dekkushev Blames CIA for Preparations of Explosions in Volgograd,” *Kommersant*, Dec. 19, 2003 (translated from Russian).

²⁹Amy Knight, *Orders to Kill: The Putin Regime and Political Murder*, St. Martin’s Press (2017); “Terror Convict Asks Court to Reject \$900,000 Claim,” *RIA Novosti*, Mar. 3, 2006.

³⁰Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 29-30.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *2007 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Russia* (Mar. 2008). While imprisoned, Trepashkin complained of improper medical care for severe asthma, which resulted in his transfer to a harsher general prison regime. The European Court of Human Rights ruled in 2007 that the Russian government violated the European Convention on Human Rights due to his poor prison conditions. *Ibid.* As of September 2017, Trepashkin was representing plaintiffs demanding compensation from the Russian government for its use of disproportionate force in ending the Beslan siege in 2004. “Beslan siege: Russia ‘Will Comply’ with Critical Ruling,” *BBC*, Sept. 20, 2017; Scott Anderson, “None Dare Call it a Conspiracy,” *GQ*, Mar. 30, 2017.

³³“Russian Protesters Demand Investigation of 1999 Apartment Bombings,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Liberty*, Sept. 10, 2009; Satter, *The Less You Know, the Better You Sleep*, at 38.

³⁴Press Release, Levada Center, “Russians About Terrorist Attacks,” Sept. 30, 2013, https://www.levada.ru/2013/09/30/rossiyane_o_teraktah/ (translated from Russian).

bombings.³⁵ To this day, no credible source has ever claimed credit for the bombings and no credible evidence has been presented by the Russian authorities linking Chechen terrorists, or anyone else, to the Moscow bombings. As the public polling results show, there is still considerable doubt among the Russian public about who was responsible for the 1999 apartment building bombings, suggesting that further investigation into the matter is still required.

³⁵ Press Release, Levada Center, "The Tragedy in Beslan and the Apartment Bombings in Autumn 1999," Sept. 4, 2015 (translated from Russian).

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Appendix B: Alleged Political Assassinations

More than two dozen politicians, journalists, activists, and other critics of Mr. Putin's regime have died under mysterious or suspicious circumstances in Russia during his time in power.¹ A number of individuals, including vocal Putin critics, investigative journalists, and others in the Kremlin's crosshairs, have died beyond Russia's borders, often under similar mysterious circumstances. Many observers suspect that these deaths were at the hands or direction of the Russian security services. Such actions are officially allowed under a Russian law passed by the Duma in July 2006 that permits the assassination of "enemies of the Russian regime" who live abroad.²

The most infamous case in recent memory was that of Alexander Litvinenko, a career FSB officer. In the early 1990s, he investigated the Tambov group, an Uzbek criminal organization based in St. Petersburg that he found was smuggling heroin from Afghanistan to Western Europe via Uzbekistan and St. Petersburg. His investigation led him to believe that there was "widespread collusion between the Tambov group and KGB officials, including both Vladimir Putin and Nikolai Patrushev."³ He was also allegedly ordered to kill Mikhail Trepashkin (see Appendix A) after the recently resigned FSB investigator brought a lawsuit against the FSB's leadership and filed complaints that went all the way up to the director, Vladimir Putin. Litvinenko refused to carry out the order, became disenchanted with his assignment on a hit team, and held a press conference with four other colleagues, as well as Mr. Trepashkin, where they exposed the assassination plots they had been ordered to carry out.⁴ After the press conference, Litvinenko was fired from the FSB (Putin was then still FSB director), and he fled to the UK, where he was granted asylum and, eventually, British citizenship.⁵ He began to investigate the 1999 apartment building bombings and wrote a book, *Blowing up Russia: Terror from*

¹Oren Dorell, "Mysterious Rash on Russian Deaths Casts Suspicion on Vladimir Putin," *USA Today*, May 4, 2017; Committee to Protect Journalists, "58 Journalists Killed in Russia/Motive Confirmed," <https://cpj.org/killed/europe/russia/> (visited Dec. 5, 2017).

²Terrence McCoy, "With His Dying Words, Poisoned Spy Alexander Litvinenko Named Putin as His Killer," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 28, 2015; Steven Eke, "Russia Law on Killing 'Extremists' Abroad," *BBC News*, Nov. 27, 2006.

³United Kingdom House of Commons, *The Litvinenko Inquiry: Report into the Death of Alexander Litvinenko*, at 15 (Jan. 2016).

⁴*Ibid.* at 21.

⁵"Alexander Litvinenko: Profile of Murdered Russian Spy," *BBC News*, Jan. 21, 2016; Griff Witte & Michael Birnbaum, "Putin Implicated in Fatal Poisoning of Former KGB Officer at London Hotel," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 21, 2016.

Within, which accused the FSB of being behind the attacks on the apartment buildings.⁶

In November 2006, while reportedly investigating the death of Russian investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya as well as Spanish links to the Russian mafia, Litvinenko met two former FSB colleagues, Andrei Lugovoi and Dmitri Kovtun, for tea in London. Later that day he fell ill, his organs began to fail, and he died within a few weeks, killed by a rare radioactive isotope: Polonium-210.⁷ An investigation by the British authorities found that Lugovoi and Kovtun had poisoned Litvinenko. However, the Russian government refused to extradite Lugovoi, which led to a deterioration in bilateral relations, with the UK cutting off links to the Russian security services and diplomatic personnel being expelled by both sides (Putin would later award a state medal to Lugovoi, who is now a member of the Russian Duma).⁸ That deterioration of relations made the British government reluctant to accede to the coroner's request for a public inquiry into Litvinenko's death.⁹ In 2015, however, the British government began a public inquiry, which one year later concluded that "the FSB operation to kill Mr. Litvinenko was probably approved by [then FSB director] Mr. Patrushev and also by President Putin."¹⁰

In the decade between Litvinenko's death and the publishing of the results of the public inquiry, a number of potential "enemies of the Russian regime" died in Britain under mysterious circumstances. With decades of practice and the investment of considerable state resources, the Russian security services have reportedly developed techniques that a former Scotland Yard counterterrorism official characterized as "disguising murder" by staging suicides and using chemical and biological agents that leave no trace.¹¹ A former KGB lieutenant colonel told *The New York Times* that "The government is using the special services to liquidate its enemies. It was not just Litvinenko, but many others we don't know about, classified as accidents or maybe semi-accidents."¹²

One possible target was Alexander Perepilichnyy, a Russian financier who had reportedly helped Russian authorities engage in a \$230 million tax fraud scheme that was exposed by Sergei Magnitsky, a Moscow lawyer for the British hedge fund Hermitage Capital Management.¹³ After Magnitsky exposed the extent of the

⁶ *Ibid.*; see Appendix A.

⁷ *Ibid.* A British physicist who testified at the public inquiry into Litvinenko's death said that the polonium's poisonous effects would have to have been tested in advance to know the proper dosage to kill. He noted two unexplained deaths in Russia that occurred before Litvinenko's and with similar symptoms: the Chechen warlord Lecha Islamov and the one-time Putin associate Roman Tsepov, who both died in 2004. "Plutonium that killed Alexander Litvinenko Came from Russian Plant, UK Court Told," *Financial Times*, Mar. 11, 2015.

⁸ "Alexander Litvinenko: Profile of Murdered Russian Spy," *BBC*, Jan. 21, 2016; "Russia's Putin Honors Suspect in Litvinenko Poisoning," *Reuters*, Mar. 9, 2015.

⁹ Michael Holden, "Britain Says Ties with Russia Played Part in Litvinenko Ruling," *Reuters*, Jul. 19, 2013.

¹⁰ United Kingdom House of Commons, *The Litvinenko Inquiry*, at 244.

¹¹ Heidi Blake et al., "From Russia with Blood," *BuzzFeed News*, June 15, 2017.

¹² Andrew Kramer, "More of Kremlin's Opponents Are Ending Up Dead," *The New York Times*, Aug. 20, 2016.

¹³ Alan Cowell, "Another Russian Emigre Dies Mysteriously, But It's a Different Britain," *The New York Times*, Sept. 16, 2016; "Alexander Perepilichnyy Death: Russian May Have Talked to UK Spies," *BBC News*, Jan. 13, 2016; The founder of Hermitage Capital Management, Bill Browder, alleges that \$30 million of the \$230 million stolen in the tax fraud flowed into Britain. U.S. government investigators traced over \$7.5 million of the stolen funds to a British bank account tied to a Moscow-based investment. "U.S. Traces US \$7.5 Million from Russian Fraud Scheme Uncovered by Magnitsky," Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, Apr. 17,

tax fraud—the largest in Russian history—he was arrested and charged with the crime himself, then tortured and killed in prison by his captors. Magnitsky’s death reportedly led Perepilichnyy to turn against his bosses and cooperate with investigations—he fled to Britain and turned over evidence to Swiss prosecutors.¹⁴ In 2012, on the same day he returned from a short trip to Paris, he collapsed while jogging and died from what police said was a heart attack.¹⁵ Perepilichnyy’s death occurred shortly before he was apparently due to provide additional evidence to Swiss authorities in a “confrontation” setting with Vladlen Stepanov, the husband of a senior tax official who was a key player in the tax fraud that Magnitsky had uncovered.¹⁶ Because Perepilichnyy had received numerous threats, shortly before his death he had applied for several life insurance policies that required medical checks, the results of which gave him a clean bill of health and did not reveal any heart problems. After his death, one of the insurance companies ordered a new round of tests on his body and an expert in plant toxicology subsequently found that his stomach had traces of gelsemium, a rare Chinese flowering plant that, when ingested, triggers cardiac arrest. It is also “a known weapon of assassination by Chinese and Russian contract killers,” according to a lawyer for the insurance company.¹⁷

A high-profile Russian also died under mysterious circumstances in Washington, D.C. in 2015. Mikhail Lesin, founder of the Russian state-owned television network *RT* and formerly a close adviser to Putin, was found dead in his hotel room in Dupont Circle with “blunt force injuries to the head, neck, torso, upper extremities, and lower extremities.”¹⁸ A nearly year-long investigation by D.C. police, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for D.C., and the FBI concluded that “Lesin entered his hotel room on the morning of Wednesday, Nov. 4th, 2015, after days of excessive consumption of alcohol and sustained the injuries that resulted in his death while alone in his hotel room.”¹⁹ Lesin died the day before he was reportedly going

2017, <https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/6342-u-s-traces-us-7-5-million-from-russian-fraud-scheme-uncovered-by-magnitsky>; Neil Buckley, “Magnitsky Fraud Cash Laundered Through Britain, MPs Hear,” *Financial Times*, May 3, 2016.

¹⁴Mike Eckel, “U.S. Settles Magnitsky-Linked Money Laundering Case on Eve of Trial,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, May 13, 2017; Jeffrey Stern, “An Enemy of the Kremlin Dies in London: Who Killed Alexander Perepilichny?” *The Atlantic*, Jan./Feb., 2017.

¹⁵Alan Cowell, “Another Russian Emigre Dies Mysteriously, but it’s a Different Britain,” *The New York Times*, Sept. 16, 2016; “Alexander Perepilichny Death: Russian May Have Talked to UK Spies,” *BBC News*, Jan. 13, 2016.

¹⁶See United Kingdom Courts and Tribunal Judiciary, Inquest Into the Death of Alexander Perepilichny, Day 4 (Questioning of Russ Whitworth, Legal and General), June 8, 2017.

¹⁷Jeffrey Stern, “An Enemy of the Kremlin Dies in London,” *The Atlantic*, Jan./Feb. 2017.

¹⁸District of Columbia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, “Joint Statement from the District of Columbia’s Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the Metropolitan Police Department,” Mar. 10, 2016. The manner of death was undetermined.

¹⁹U.S. Department of Justice, “Investigation into the Death of Mikhail Lesin Has Closed,” Oct. 28, 2016. According to the D.C. police report of the incident, on November 4, a hotel security guard checked in on a “stumbling drunk” Lesin in his room at 2:23 p.m. and asked him if he needed medical help, to which Lesin responded “nyet.” At 8:16 p.m., another guard found Lesin face down on the floor of his hotel room, breathing but unresponsive. The next day, at 11:30 a.m., a security guard went to Lesin’s room to remind him to check out and found him still face down on the floor. The guard called 911 and Lesin was pronounced dead at the scene. Peter Hermann, “Police Report on 2015 Death of Russian Political Aide Details Days of Drinking,” *The Washington Post*, Dec. 4, 2017.

to meet with officials from the U.S. Department of Justice about RT's operations.²⁰

Some U.S. national security officials are now reportedly concerned that Russia's security services will start "doing here what they do with some regularity in London."²¹ The warning echoes a much earlier one, given in 2004 after two Russian agents killed a former president of Chechnya in Qatar, using explosives smuggled in a diplomatic pouch. In a telephone interview with *The New York Times*, a Chechen separatist leader said the killing "showed that Russia under Mr. Putin had reverted to the darkest tactics of its Soviet past" and that "if the international community does not give proper attention to what happened in Qatar," he said, "I am absolutely sure that these methods may be tried again in other countries, including Western countries."²² It is not inconceivable that the Kremlin could use its security services in the United States as it has elsewhere. The trail of mysterious deaths, all of which happened to people who possessed information that the Kremlin did not want made public, should not be ignored by Western countries on the assumption that they are safe from these extreme measures.

²⁰Jason Leopold et al., "Everyone Thinks He Was Whacked," *BuzzFeed News*, Jul. 28, 2017. In recent years, members of Congress had called for Lesin to be investigated for money laundering and sanctioned for human rights abuses. In July 2014, Senator Roger Wicker asked the Department of Justice to look into whether Lesin had violated the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and anti-money laundering statutes, citing Lesin's acquisition of a luxury real estate empire throughout Europe and the United States, including over \$28 million in southern California alone. Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and James McGovern wrote to President Obama in March 2014 requesting that Lesin be sanctioned under the Sergei Magnitsky Rule of Law Accountability Act for having "personally threatened the then-owner of NTV television, Vladimir Gusinsky, while Gusinsky was being held at the Butyrskaya Prison in Moscow, demanding that he transfer control of his media outlets (which had been critical of the government) to the state-owned company Gazprom in return for dropping the charges." Under the terms reportedly proposed by Lesin, Gusinsky was offered the option of selling NTV to Gazprom for \$300 million (far below its value) and a debt write-off, or sharing "a cell with prisoners infected with AIDS and TB." Letter from Senator Roger Wicker, to Attorney General Eric Holder, Jul. 29, 2014; Letter from Congresswoman Ros-Lehtinen to President Obama, Mar. 14, 2014; Arkady Ostrovsky, *The Invention of Russia: The Journey from Gorbachev's Freedom to Putin's War*, Atlantic Books, at 275 (2015).

²¹Jason Leopold et al., "Everyone Thinks He Was Whacked," *BuzzFeed News*, Jul. 28, 2017.

²²Steven Myers, "Qatar Court Convicts 2 Russians in Top Chechen's Death," *The New York Times*, Jul. 1, 2004.

Appendix C: Russian Government's Olympic Cheating Scheme

At two World Championships, in 2011 and 2013, and at the Olympics in 2012, Russian athlete Maria Savinova beat American sprinter Alyisia Montano for a spot on the medal stand.¹ However, investigations now show that Savinova's performance had been enhanced by a doping program directed by the Russian government. Other American athletes were also cheated, like Chaunté Lowe, who competed in the 2008 Olympic high jump, and moved from sixth place to third when, in 2016, the top three finishers—two Russians and one Ukrainian—were disqualified, eight years after they had stood on the podium and accepted their medals. Montano and Lowe are just two of many American athletes who the Russian state has cheated out of Olympic glory. Ms. Lowe believes she was robbed not just of the glory of the medal stand, but of the financial opportunity it would have brought: companies, looking to sponsor her, lost interest after she failed to medal, and, after her husband was laid off from his job in 2008, they lost their house to foreclosure.²

In 2014, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), an independent international agency that sets anti-doping standards, launched an investigation into Russian doping after a German TV station aired a documentary titled “The Secrets of Doping: How Russia Makes its Winners.” The documentary “alleged doping practices; corrupt practices around sample collection and results management; and other ineffective administration of anti-doping processes that implicate Russia, . . . the accredited laboratory based in Moscow and the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA).”³ The WADA report, released in November 2015, mentions secret recordings of Savinova which “show that [she] has an in-depth knowledge of doping regimes, dosages, physiological effects of doping and new [performance-enhancing drugs].”⁴ The report recommended a lifetime ban for Savinova and detailed the role of the FSB in the doping operation: it had set up extensive surveillance in Russia's main anti-doping laboratory in Moscow and had a significant presence at the testing laboratory in the Russian city of Sochi.⁵ As one laboratory worker told WADA investigators, “[in Sochi] we had some guys pre-

¹ Chris Perez, “US Olympian Wants Medal She Had Stolen by Russian Dopers,” *New York Post*, Nov. 9, 2015.

² Rebecca Ruiz, “Olympics History Rewritten: New Doping Tests Topple the Podium,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 21, 2016.

³ World Anti-Doping Agency, *The Independent Commission Report #1* (Nov. 9, 2015).

⁴ *Ibid.* at 262.

⁵ *Ibid.*

tending to be engineers in the lab but actually they were from the federal security service.”⁶

After a disappointing performance by Russian athletes at the 2010 Winter Olympics, and having spent over \$50 billion on infrastructure for the 2014 games in Sochi (with up to \$30 billion of that allegedly stolen by businessmen and officials close to Putin, according to a report authored by murdered opposition leader Boris Nemtsov), Putin needed good results to prove to the Russian people that they needed his “strong hand at the helm.”⁷ For the Olympic Games in Sochi, therefore, it was not enough for the Russian athletes to have been doping in the months leading up to the competition—they would also take performance-enhancing drugs during the games.

At the testing lab in Sochi, photographs show how the FSB drilled a hole through the wall of the official urine sample collection room and concealed it behind a faux-wood cabinet. The hole led to a storage space that Russian anti-doping officials had converted into a hidden laboratory. From there, the urine samples were passed to an FSB officer, who took them to a nearby building, where he unsealed the supposedly tamper-proof bottles and returned them with the caps loosened. The bottles were then emptied and filled with clean urine that had been collected from the athletes before the Olympics. Up to 100 urine samples of Russian athletes were removed in this way, allowing them to continue to use performance-enhancing drugs throughout the 2014 Winter Olympics. Of the 33 medals Russia won during the 2014 Olympics, 11 were awarded to athletes whose names appear on a spreadsheet detailing the Russian government’s doping operation.⁸

In December 2016, WADA released a second independent report that found that “[a]n institutional conspiracy existed across summer and winter sports athletes who participated with Russian officials within the Ministry of Sport and its infrastructure . . . along with the FSB for the purposes of manipulating doping controls. The summer and winter sports athletes were not acting individually but within an organised infrastructure.” Over 1,000 Russian athletes competing in the Olympics and Paralympics had been involved in the conspiracy.⁹ In an interview for the 2016 documentary *Icarus*, the former head of Russia’s anti-doping laboratory, Grigory Rodchenkov, estimated that of the 154 Russian medalists in the 2008 and 2012 Olympics, at least 70 cheated with performance enhancing drugs. He confirmed that Russia had “a state-wide systematic doping system in place to cheat the Olympics” and that Putin was aware of the program.¹⁰ In remarks that were later retracted by the Russian government, the acting head of Russia’s anti-doping agency admitted in 2016 that doping among Russian athletes was

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Alissa de Carbonnel, “Billions Stolen in Sochi Olympics Preparations—Russian opposition,” *Reuters*, May 30, 2013; Bo Petersson & Karina Vamling, *The Sochi Predicament: Contexts, Characteristics, and Challenges of the Olympic Winter Games in 2014*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, at 22 (2013).

⁸ Rebecca Ruiz et al., “Russian Doctor Explains How He Helped Beat Doping Tests at the Sochi Olympics,” *The New York Times*, May 13, 2016.

⁹ Professor Richard H. McLaren, *The Independent Person 2nd Report*, at 1, 5. (Dec. 2016).

¹⁰ *Icarus*, Bryan Fogel, Director (2017).

“an institutional conspiracy.”¹¹ Despite the tremendous amount of forensic evidence proving the conclusions of the WADA investigations, as well as the resulting decision by the IOC to ban Russia’s official participation in the 2018 Winter Olympics, Putin has steadfastly denied the existence of a state-sanctioned doping system.¹²

The scale of Russia’s cheating in the 2014 Winter Olympics led 17 of the world’s leading anti-doping agencies to request that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) ban Russia from the 2018 Winter Olympics, noting that “a country’s sport leaders and organizations should not be given credentials to the Olympics when they intentionally violate the rules and rob clean athletes.”¹³ In December 2017, Russia became “the first country in sporting history to be banned from sending athletes to an Olympic games for doping,” when the IOC declared that athletes could not compete under the Russian flag, Russian officials could not attend the games, and Russia’s uniform, flag, and anthem also could not appear anywhere at the 2018 games.¹⁴ In response, Putin implied the ban was tied to his still-unannounced reelection campaign, saying “When will the Olympics take place? February, isn’t it? And when is the presidential election? March. I suspect that all of this is done to create conditions on someone’s behalf to provoke sport fans’ and athletes’ anger that the state allegedly had something to do with it.”¹⁵

The Kremlin may have also ordered retribution against WADA and U.S. athletes, among others. Approximately ten months after the release of the first report, a group of hackers associated with Russia’s military intelligence, commonly known as Fancy Bear or APT28, broke into WADA’s databases.¹⁶ The hackers released medical information about several U.S. athletes, including gymnast Simone Biles and tennis players Venus and Serena Williams.¹⁷ Shortly thereafter, the same group of hackers stole emails from WADA officials and released selected conversations about Americans and other athletes.¹⁸ In April 2017, Fancy Bear hackers reportedly breached the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), which had voted to ban Russia from all international track and field events.¹⁹

After blowing the whistle on the scope of the Russian doping program, the former head of Russia’s anti-doping lab, Dr. Rodchenkov now appears to be a Kremlin target. Rodchenkov fled to the United States after resigning from his post in the wake of the second

¹¹ Rebecca Ruiz, “Russians No Longer Dispute Olympic Doping Operation,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 27, 2016.

¹² Marissa Payne, “Vladimir Putin Says ‘Current Russian Anti-Doping System Has Failed,’” *The Washington Post*, Mar. 1, 2017.

¹³ Sean Ingle, “Anti-Doping Agencies Call on IOC to Ban Russia from 2018 Winter Olympics,” *The Guardian*, Sept. 14, 2017.

¹⁴ Murad Ahmed and Max Seddon, “Russia Banned from Winter Olympics,” *Financial Times*, Dec. 5, 2017; Press Release, International Olympic Committee, IOC Suspends Russian NOC and Creates a Path for Clean Individual Athletes to Compete in Pyeongchang 2018 Under the Olympic Flag, Dec. 5, 2017.

¹⁵ Neil MacFarquhar, “Russia Won’t Keep Athletes Home, Putin Says After Olympic Ban,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 6, 2017.

¹⁶ Andy Greenberg, “Russian Hackers Get Bolder in Anti-Doping Agency Attack,” *Wired*, Sept. 14, 2016. Fancy Bear/APT28 were also behind hacks that targeted the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Sean Ingle, “Fancy Bears Hack Again With Attack on Senior Anti-Doping Officials,” *The Guardian*, Nov. 25, 2016.

¹⁹ Thomas Fox-Brewster, “Russia’s Fancy Bear Hackers are Stealing Athlete Drug Data Again,” *Forbes*, Apr. 3, 2017.

WADA report, where he is reportedly cooperating with federal investigators and the IOC. His whereabouts in the United States are unknown and the Russian government has announced that he will be arrested if he ever returns to Russia.²⁰ Rodchenkov's application for asylum in the United States is now complicated by the fact that Russian authorities charged him with drug trafficking (drug traffickers are not eligible for political asylum under U.S. law).²¹ The charge and accompanying arrest warrant were announced on the same day that Rodchenkov had an asylum interview with U.S. immigration officials, leading his lawyer, a former federal prosecutor, to believe that Russian law enforcement authorities may have been tipped off, stating "that is a coincidence too remarkable to believe. It seems fairly clear they were trying to influence the immigration process."²²

Putin has asserted, on live television, that Rodchenkov is "under the control of American special services" and asked "what are they doing with him there? Are they giving him some kind of substances so that he says what's required?"²³ According to the *Icarus* documentary and statements by Rodchenkov's lawyer, U.S. officials reportedly believe that Russian agents in the United States may be looking for Rodchenkov, and that "there may be a credible threat to his life."²⁴ Before he fled, Rodchenkov said that friends inside the Russian government warned him that the Kremlin was planning his "suicide."²⁵ Rodchenkov's lawyer believes that Russian officials are seeking to prevent him from providing further evidence and testimony regarding Russia's Olympic cheating, and asserts that Russian authorities "are lobbying U.S. government officials behind closed doors for his extradition back to Russia" and "if they succeeded, Dr. Rodchenkov would face death and torture at their hands."²⁶

Other Russian officials involved in the doping scandal did not live long enough to tell their role in it. One former head of RUSADA, Nikita Kamaev, was fired from his post in the aftermath of the first WADA report. Around that time, Kamaev approached a newspaper with an offer to "write a book about the true story of sport pharmacology and doping in Russia since 1987 while being a young scientist working in a secret lab in the USSR Institute of Sports Medicine," saying that he had "the information and facts that have never been published."²⁷ Such a book might have invalidated hundreds of Olympic medals won by Russian athletes over decades if it could prove their participation in a state-sponsored

²⁰ Oleg Matsnev, "Russian Court Order Arrest of Doping Whistle-Blower Who Fleed," *The New York Times*, Sept. 28, 2017.

²¹ "WADA Informant Rodchenkov Faces Drug Trafficking Charges in Russia," *RT*, Dec. 12, 2017.

²² Michael Isikoff, "As Putin Seethes Over Olympic Ban, Doping Whistleblower Fears For His Life," *Yahoo News*, Dec. 26, 2017.

²³ Des Bieler, "Vladimir Putin Suggests U.S. is Manipulating Key Whistleblower on Russian Doping," *The Washington Post*, Dec. 14, 2017.

²⁴ *Icarus*, Bryan Fogel, Director (2017); Michael Isikoff, "As Putin seethes over Olympic ban, doping whistleblower fears for his life," *Yahoo News*, Dec. 26, 2017.

²⁵ Grigory Rodchenkov, "Russia's Olympic Cheating, Unpunished," *The New York Times*, Sept. 22, 2017.

²⁶ Statement by Jim Walden, "Stop Russia's Retaliation Toward a Whistle-blower," *Walden Macht & Haran LLP*, Dec. 26, 2017, available at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GdkmE4Uwjyt-75BrHodpOTNG-ADtnEF3?usp=sharing>.

²⁷ "Late Russian Anti-Doping Agency Boss Was Set to Expose True Story," *Reuters*, Feb. 20, 2017.

doping program. Just a couple of months later, Kamaev was found dead from “a massive heart attack,” even though colleagues said he had seemed healthy and never complained about his heart.²⁸ A few weeks earlier, the founding chairman of RUSADA, Vyacheslav Sinev, also died unexpectedly of “unknown causes.”²⁹ The current head of RUSADA, Yuri Ganus, has expressed doubts that both men died of natural causes, saying, “it’s clear that two people could not just die like this I understand that there was a situation, and the entire anti-doping organization was disqualified, and in this regard, this is an extraordinary fact.”³⁰ While Kamaev was fired by Putin and lost his life shortly thereafter, his superior, Vitaly Mutko, the Minister of Sport who oversaw the entire doping conspiracy, was promoted to Deputy Prime Minister.³¹

²⁸“Russia Anti-Doping Ex-Chief Nikita Kamaev Dies,” *BBC News*, Feb. 15, 2016.

²⁹Andrew Kramer, “Nikita Kamayev, Ex-Head of Russian Antidoping Agency, Dies,” *The New York Times*, Feb. 15, 2016; Michael Isikoff, “As Putin Seethes Over Olympic Ban, Doping Whistleblower Fears For His Life,” *Yahoo News*, Dec. 26, 2017.

³⁰“Members of the RUSADA Leadership Died ‘Not Just So,’” *Pravda*, Sept. 20, 2017 (translated from Russian).

³¹Rebecca Ruiz, “Russia Sports Minister Promoted to Deputy Prime Minister,” *The New York Times*, Oct. 19, 2016.

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Appendix D: Russia's Security Services and Cyber Hackers

Russia's security services have worked with and provided protection to criminal hackers for decades, and, according to some experts, those same hackers are now responsible for nearly all of the theft of credit card information from U.S. consumers.¹ Despite a wealth of evidence, Putin has long denied any connection between Russia's security services and cyberattacks on foreign institutions, including the retaliatory hacks of WADA and the IAAF mentioned in Appendix C, which cybersecurity experts traced to hackers sponsored by the Russian government.² Various investigations have uncovered extensive proof that Russia's security services "maintain a sophisticated alliance with unofficial hackers," who are often offered a choice when facing charges for cybercrimes: go to prison, or work for the FSB.³ Some scholars also believe that groups of unofficial, "patriotic hackers" are guided not by the security services, but by the Presidential Administration itself.⁴

One of Russia's oldest and most sophisticated cybercrime groups is known as the Russian Business Network (RBN). Before it went underground in 2007, RBN was a global hub that provided Internet services and was "linked to 60 percent of all cybercrime."⁵ RBN is still involved in the full gamut of cybercrimes, including extortion, credit card theft, drug sales, weapons smuggling, human trafficking, prostitution, and child pornography.⁶ Verisign, a major internet security company, has referred to the RBN as "the baddest of the bad," and many researchers describe RBN "as having the best malware, the best organization."⁷ RBN is also rumored to have connections to powerful politicians in St. Petersburg and pos-

¹Interview with Cybersecurity Expert, Sept. 2017; Kara Flook, "Russia and the Cyber Threat," *Critical Threats*, May 13, 2009, <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/russia-and-the-cyber-threat#—ftnref18>. In 2016, more than 15 million U.S. consumers lost more than \$16 billion due to identity theft or credit card fraud. Al Pascual et al., "2017 Identity Fraud: Securing the Connected Life," *Javelin*, Feb. 1, 2017.

²"APT28: At the Center of the Storm," FireEye, Jan. 11, 2017, <https://www.fireeye.com/blog/threat-research/2017/01/apt28—at—the—center.html>; "Fancy Bears: IAAF hacked and fears athletes' information compromised," *BBC*, Apr. 3, 2017.

³Andrei Soldatov & Irina Borogan, *The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB*, PublicAffairs, at 227 (2010); "APT28: At the Center of the Storm," FireEye, Jan. 11, 2017, <https://www.fireeye.com/blog/threat-research/2017/01/apt28—at—the—center.html>; Kara Flook, "Russia and the Cyber Threat," *Critical Threats*, May 13, 2009.

⁴Andrei Soldatov & Irina Borogan, *The New Nobility: The Restoration of Russia's Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB*, PublicAffairs, at 223 (2010).

⁵Kara Flook, "Russia and the Cyber Threat," *Critical Threats*, May 13, 2009.

⁶Interview with Cybersecurity Expert, Sept. 2017.

⁷"A Walk on the Dark Side," *The Economist*, Aug. 30, 2007; Richard Stiennon, "Is Russia Poised to Retaliate Against Sanctions With Cyber Attacks?" *Security Current*, Aug. 7, 2014, <https://www.securitycurrent.com/en/writers/richard-stiennon/is-russia-poised-to-retaliate-against-sanctions-with-cyber-attacks>.

sibly now Moscow. In addition, one of its members is reportedly a former lieutenant colonel in the FSB.⁸

Cybersecurity experts have blamed Putin's government and the FSB for giving protection to the RBN,⁹ who, according to Verisign, "feel they are strongly politically protected. They pay a huge amount of people."¹⁰ Some analysts assert that the FSB's protection comes with a quid pro quo—when tasked, the RBN is expected to carry out the FSB's orders. In 2014, as the United States was considering sanctions against the Russian government for its illegal annexation of Crimea, one expert's sources told him there were indications that "the Kremlin will unleash the RBN if [U.S.] sanctions pass a certain threshold."¹¹

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, FSB officials and hackers worked together to steal data from approximately 500 million Yahoo accounts—a cybercrime that cost the American company hundreds of millions of dollars.¹² Instead of working with U.S. officials to target the hackers, the FSB officials—who belonged to a unit that is the FBI's liaison on cybercrime in Russia—worked with the hackers to target U.S. officials.¹³ They used the stolen account information to target Russian journalists critical of the Kremlin as well as American diplomatic officials, and gained access to the content of at least 6,500 accounts.¹⁴ The case was just one of many that showed how Russian intelligence agencies "piggyback" on hackers' criminal operations as "a form of cheap intelligence gathering."¹⁵

The FSB also reportedly received piggyback rides from Evgeniy Bogachev, whom the FBI calls the "most wanted cybercriminal in the world," and who was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department in December 2016 for engaging in "significant malicious cyber-enabled misappropriation of financial information for private financial gain."¹⁶ Despite his most-wanted status in the United States and several other countries, Bogachev is living openly in a Russian resort town on the Black Sea, from where he reportedly works "under the supervision of a special unit of the FSB."¹⁷ U.S. law enforcement has accused Bogachev of running a network of up to a million virus-infected computers, across multiple countries, which he has used to steal hundreds of millions of dollars.¹⁸ Cybersecurity investigators noticed in 2011 that infected computers con-

⁸Kara Flook, "Russia and the Cyber Threat," *Critical Threats*, May 13, 2009. <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/russia-and-the-cyber-threat#—ftnref13>

⁹Brian Krebs, "Wishing an (Un)Happy Birthday to the Storm Worm," *The Washington Post*, Jan. 17, 2008.

¹⁰"A Walk on the Dark Side," *The Economist*, Aug. 30, 2007.

¹¹Richard Stiennon, "Is Russia Poised to Retaliate Against Sanctions With Cyber Attacks?" *Security Current*, Aug. 7, 2014.

¹²U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Charges Russian FSB Officers and Their Criminal Conspirators for Hacking Yahoo and Million of Email Accounts (Mar. 2017); Ingrid Lunden, "After Data Breaches, Verizon Knocks \$350M Off Yahoo Sale, Now Valued at \$4.48B," *Tech Crunch*, Feb. 21, 2017.

¹³Aruna Viswanatha & Robert McMillan, "Two Russian Spies Charged in Massive Yahoo Hack," *The Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 15, 2017.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Michael Schwartz, "U.S. Accuses Russian Email Spammer of Vast Network of Fraud," *The New York Times*, Apr. 10, 2017.

¹⁶Michael Schwartz, "U.S. Accuses Russian Email Spammer of Vast Network of Fraud," *The New York Times*, Apr. 10, 2017; Press Release, U.S. Department of the Treasury, Treasury Sanctions Two Individuals for Malicious Cyber-Enabled Activities, Dec. 29, 2016.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

trolled by his network were being mined for information related to political events. For example, after the U.S. government agreed to arm Syrian opposition groups, computers in Turkey that were part of Bogachev's zombie network began to receive search requests for terms like "arms delivery" and "Russian mercenary."¹⁹ Later, searches related to Ukraine sought information on government security officials and even looked for documents that had the English phrase "Department of Defense." Given the stark difference from standard criminal searches on computers controlled by Bogachev and those searches, analysts believe that the purpose was espionage, and were likely a result of cooperation with Russian intelligence services.²⁰

Bogachev also sold malware on the dark web, which often functions as an underground marketplace for cyber criminals. The New York Times has reported that some of the Russian hacker forums on the dark web explicitly state what kinds of cybercrime—such as bank fraud, drug sales, and counterfeiting—are permitted, with the sole exception that no targets can be in Russia or post-Soviet states. The rule among Russian hackers is "Don't work in the .RU" (.RU is the top-level country domain for Russia, meaning firms and banks in the country are off-limits), and breaking that rule results in a lifetime ban from many of the Russian hacker dark web forums.²¹ One forum, for example, offered classes on how to steal credit cards, with "the strict rule that course participants do not target Russian credit cards."²² The FBI has found that, instead of closing down these forums, the FSB has infiltrated them. FBI agents have even seen a Russian hacker they were investigating give a copy of his passport to a suspected Russian intelligence agent, implying that the state was likely either recruiting or protecting the hacker.²³

Another notorious Russian hacker operating under the protection of the security services was Roman Seleznev, who targeted small businesses in U.S. cities like Washington, D.C., going after pizzerias, burrito shops, and bakeries. After U.S. law enforcement agents went to Moscow to present the FSB with evidence of Seleznev's crimes, his online presence vanished, suggesting that FSB officials had warned Seleznev that Americans were tracking him. U.S. prosecutors then concluded that "further coordination with the Russian government would jeopardize efforts to prosecute this case."²⁴

A few years later, Seleznev re-emerged with the launch of a website that U.S. officials say "reinvented the stolen credit card market" and offered millions of stolen credit card numbers that could be searched and selected by customers based on credit card

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ "America's Hunt for Russian Hackers: How FBI Agents Tracked Down Four of the World's Biggest Cyber-Criminals and Brought Them to Trial in the U.S.," *Meduza*, Sept. 19, 2017, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2017/09/19/america-s-hunt-for-russian-hackers>; Michael Schwirtz, "U.S. Accuses Russian Email Spammer of Vast Network of Fraud," *The New York Times*, Apr. 10, 2017.

²² John Simpson, "Russian Hackers Offer Courses in Credit-Card Theft on the Dark Web," *The Times*, Jul. 19, 2017.

²³ Michael Schwirtz and Joseph Goldstein, "Russian Espionage Piggybacks on a Cybercriminal's Hacking," *The New York Times*, Mar. 12, 2017.

²⁴ Goldman, Adam & Matt Apuzzo, "U.S. Faces Tall Hurdles in Detaining or Deterring Russian Hackers," *The New York Times*, Dec. 15, 2016.

company and financial institution. Seleznev was careful to travel only to countries without extradition treaties with the United States, but State Department diplomats convinced officials in the Maldives, where he was vacationing, to detain and transfer him to U.S. custody. Russia's foreign ministry labeled the arrest an "abduction," though the Russian government's true cause for alarm might have been for different reasons; in intercepted emails, Seleznev reportedly claimed that the FSB knew about his identity and activities and was giving him protection.²⁵

U.S. authorities found that Seleznev, while under the protection of Russia's security services, had breached point-of-sale systems (typically a cash register with a debit/credit card reader) at more than 500 U.S. businesses and had stolen millions of credit card numbers between 2009 and 2013, which he then bundled and sold on the dark web to buyers who used the card information for fraudulent purchases.²⁶ Another Russian hacker who stole credit card numbers, Dmitry Dokuchaev, reportedly had his prosecution in Russia for credit card fraud dismissed after he agreed to work for the FSB.²⁷ According to the U.S. Department of Justice, as an FSB officer Dokuchaev allegedly "protected, directed, facilitated, and paid criminal hackers" responsible for the breach of Yahoo customer data, which was also used to obtain credit card account information.²⁸ One expert asserts that hackers from Russia and Eastern Europe are now responsible for nearly 100 percent of all theft of consumers' payment card information at U.S. vendors' point-of-sale systems, and that 90 percent of that theft could be prevented by stopping only about 200 people, who are mostly hackers who got their start with the RBN in the late 1990s and act as force multipliers.²⁹

Hackers from Russia and Eastern Europe often target point-of-sale systems at small U.S. businesses, such as restaurants, retailers, and car washes. And the buyers of that stolen information are mostly here in the United States.³⁰ Once hackers steal the credit card information from these vendors, they bundle it together with other stolen cards and sell or auction them off on underground websites. For example, police in New England spearheaded an investigation that found that 40 car washes across the country had been hacked at their point-of-sale systems, resulting in the theft of "countless" customer credit and debit cards. The information from those cards were then sold to U.S. buyers, who used it to re-encode gift cards and make fraudulent purchases of several thousands of dollars at stores such as Target. According to one of the detectives leading the case, all of the suspects using the fraudulent gift cards

²⁵ "America's Hunt for Russian Hackers: How FBI Agents Tracked Down Four of the World's Biggest Cyber-Criminals and Brought Them to Trial in the U.S.," Meduza, Sept. 19, 2017, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2017/09/19/america-s-hunt-for-russian-hackers>.

²⁶ U.S. Department of Justice, "Russian Cyber-Criminal Sentenced to 27 Years in Prison for Hacking and Credit Card Fraud," Apr. 21, 2017. In April 2017, Seleznev was sentenced to 27 years in prison. *Ibid.*

²⁷ Andrew Kramer, "Hacker is a Villain to the United States, for Different Reasons," *The New York Times*, Mar. 15, 2017.

²⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, "U.S. Charges Russian FSB Officers and Their Criminal Conspirators for Hacking Yahoo and Millions of Email Accounts," Mar. 15, 2017.

²⁹ Interview with Cybersecurity Expert, Sept. 2017.

³⁰ Selena Larson, "Cybercriminals Can Take a Class on Stealing Credit Cards," CNN Tech, Jul. 19, 2017.

“are Blood gang members. And they’re starting to work smarter, not harder.”³¹

U.S. law enforcement officials and cybersecurity experts across the board have seen a large uptick in American street gangs using fraudulent purchases to fund their activities. According to the chief of the New York Police Department, “these gang members are tech-savvy.”³² As in the case above, stolen credit cards are used to buy gift cards and big-ticket items like large-screen televisions and iPads, which are then sold and the profits are used to fund weapon and drug purchases. In New York City in 2016, hundreds of gang members were arrested in possession of stolen credit card information, something that officials say “almost never happened” just five years ago, with “gangs using credit card fraud to finance their violent activity [becoming] more of a trend over the last five years.”³³ In one case, 35 people affiliated with a Brooklyn street gang were “arrested for allegedly financing violent crimes with elaborate credit card fraud schemes.”³⁵ The suspects reportedly purchased more than 750 credit card numbers from the dark web and used them to make purchases ranging from American Girl dolls to guns.³⁵

Cyber hacking facilitated by Russian security services enables a host of illicit activity and inflicts cascading harm on U.S. consumers and businesses. The FSB provides hackers with immunity from domestic prosecution in exchange for the occasional use of their computer networks and hacking expertise for espionage or information operations. Under this protection, the Russian hackers’ criminal activities include stealing the banking information of U.S. consumers with complete impunity and posting it for sale on the dark web. That information is increasingly purchased by U.S. street gangs, who use it to make fraudulent purchases that are, in turn, used to fund gang and other criminal activities. This sequence shows that the cyber hacking activities of the FSB, carried out with Putin’s knowledge and approval and often in concert with criminal hackers, are harming the financial and physical security of Americans in the United States.

³¹ “Card Wash: Card Breaches at Car Washes,” *Krebs on Security*, June 23, 2014.

³² Jonathan Dienst & David Paredes, “Violent Drug Gangs Increasingly turn to Credit Card Theft as Big Money-maker,” *NBC New York*, Feb. 7, 2017.

³³ *Ibid.*; Ida Siegal, “Brooklyn Gang Members Used Fake Credit Cards to Buy American Girl Dolls, Guns: Officials,” *NBC New York*, Dec. 13, 2016.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

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Appendix E: Attacks and Harassment Against Human Rights Activists and Journalists Inside Russia

Human rights activists and independent journalists inside the Russian Federation have often become the victims of violent attacks and harassment on account of their work. While a state role in individual attacks is not always visible, the general impunity with which these attacks have occurred reflect the government's failure to uphold the rule of law and ensure justice for victims. This climate of impunity perpetuates an environment hospitable to further attacks.

For example, in July 2009, Natalia Estemirova, a well-known researcher with the Russian human rights group Memorial, who had worked extensively on documenting human rights abuses in the North Caucasus, was kidnapped by assailants in front of her home in Chechnya and her murdered body was later found in neighboring Ingushetia.¹ Authorities later claimed they killed the perpetrator in a shootout, but Estemirova's family and associates have long questioned the evidence supporting the official version of events.² No individuals have been convicted in connection with her killing. In February 2012, Memorial activist Philip Kostenko was beaten by two unknown assailants in a park, suffering a concussion and a broken leg, and was reportedly pressured by police while en route to the hospital to sign a document pledging not to file a police report.³ In March 2016, two employees of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, traveling with foreign journalists on a monitoring trip through Russia's North Caucasus, were hospitalized after being beaten by masked men wielding baseball bats, who later set their bus on fire.⁴ The head of the Committee, Igor Kalyapin, was attacked a week later in the Chechen capital of Grozny, where local authorities investigated but never filed charges.⁵

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a U.S.-based NGO that analyzes attacks on the press globally, cites at least 58 jour-

¹"Russian Activist Natalia Estemirova Found Dead," *The Telegraph*, July 15, 2009.

²Eline Gordts, "Russia's Investigation of Opposition Murders Does Not Bode Well For Nemtsov Case," *Huffington Post*, Mar. 6, 2015.

³U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012: Russia*, at 4.

⁴"Russia: Journalists, Activists Attacked in North Caucasus," *Human Rights Watch*, Mar. 9, 2016.

⁵U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Russia*, at 6.

nalists killed in connection with their work in Russia since 1992.⁶ The murder in 2006 of *Novaya Gazeta* reporter Anna Politkovskaya is particularly emblematic of the threats that journalists in Russia face. Politkovskaya had written extensively on state corruption and human rights abuses in Chechnya, and before her death, had zeroed in on the torture and killings perpetrated by then Chechen prime minister Ramzan Kadyrov and his “Kadyrovtsy” personal security force. She had also written extensively on possible FSB connections with purported Chechen terrorists.⁷ Politkovskaya had reportedly been threatened directly by Kadyrov when she interviewed him in 2005, and before that was allegedly poisoned on a plane ride to cover the Beslan terror attacks in North Ossetia in 2004 and detained by security forces during a 2002 visit to Chechnya.⁸ After she was murdered in the lobby of her apartment building on October 7, 2006, *The New York Times* noted that Putin “sought to play down Ms. Politkovskaya’s influence” by describing her reporting as “extremely insignificant for political life in Russia” and saying her death had caused more harm than her publications.⁹ The investigation into her murder proceeded slowly, with a series of arrests, releases, and retrials. Eight years after her death, five Chechen men were convicted of killing Politkovskaya, with two receiving life sentences.¹⁰ A Moscow police officer pleaded guilty in 2012 to providing the murder weapon and surveilling the victim before her death, receiving a reduced sentence in exchange for cooperating with authorities. Nevertheless, many observers alleged that the government’s investigation of the murder stopped short of identifying—or punishing—the masterminds, and relatives of both Politkovskaya and the Chechen defendants criticized the trial as bogus.¹¹

Additional examples of violent attacks against journalists in Russia include that of Mikhail Beketov, the editor of a local newspaper in the Moscow suburb of Khimki, who was brutally attacked in 2008 by unknown assailants who left him with a crushed skull and broken hands and legs; Beketov was left in a coma and required a tracheotomy to breathe which left extensive scarring in his throat.¹² Prior to the attack, Beketov had accused the Khimki mayor of corruption in his decision to build a highway through a forested area of the city, and he had been targeted for harassment before, including his car being set on fire and the killing of his dog.¹³ Two years after the attack, no perpetrators had been ar-

⁶Committee to Protect Journalists, “58 Journalists Killed in Russia/Motive Confirmed,” <https://cpj.org/killed/europe/russia> (visited Dec. 5, 2017).

⁷Scott Anderson, “None Dare Call It a Conspiracy,” *GQ*, Mar. 30, 2017; Claire Bigg, “Politkovskaya Investigating Chechen Torture At Time of Death,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, Oct. 9, 2006.

⁸Ben Roazen, “The Great Cost of Journalism in Vladimir Putin’s Russia,” *GQ*, Jan. 13, 2017; Committee to Protect Journalists, “Anna Politkovskaya,” <https://cpj.org/data/people/anna-politkovskaya> (visited Dec. 12, 2017).

⁹Andrew Roth, “Prison for 5 in Murder of Journalists,” *The New York Times*, June 9, 2014.

¹⁰Sergei L. Loiko, “Five Sentenced In Slaying of Russian Journalist Anna Politkovskaya,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 2014. Bizarrely, one of the suspected Chechen gunmen was shot in the leg in 2013 on a Moscow street, in what his lawyer alleged was an attempt to silence him. “Russia: Chechen Man on Trial in Killing Of Journalist Is Shot on Moscow Street,” *Reuters*, Aug. 16, 2013.

¹¹Sergei L. Loiko, “Five Sentenced In Slaying of Russian Journalist Anna Politkovskaya,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 2014.

¹²Committee to Protect Journalists, “Mikhail Beketov,” <https://cpj.org/killed/2013/mikhail-beketov.php> (visited Dec. 12, 2017).

¹³“Russian Khimki Forest Journalist Mikhail Beketov Dies,” *BBC News*, Apr. 9, 2013.

rested—rather, it was Beketov who was convicted of libel and ordered to pay damages to the Khimki mayor, though the verdict was later overturned. Beketov died in 2013 of choking that led to heart failure, which his colleagues asserted was directly related to the serious injuries he sustained in the Khimki attack.¹⁴ In April 2017, veteran investigative journalist and co-founder of the *Novy Peterburg* newspaper, Nikolai Andrushchenko, died six weeks after he had been badly beaten by unknown assailants. His colleagues alleged the attack was related to his coverage of public corruption.¹⁵

Beyond violent attacks, criminal prosecutions have also been used to silence activists and Kremlin critics. In recent years, such prosecutions have targeted bloggers, filmmakers, and social media activists to signal that dissent is as risky online or in artistic contexts as it is over the air or in print. For example, blogger Alexey Kungurov was convicted in December 2016 of inciting terrorism and sentenced to two years in a penal colony.¹⁶ His arrest came after he posted a piece that criticized the Russian military's actions in Syria.¹⁷ Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, who had peacefully protested the Russian annexation of his native Crimea, was detained by Russian authorities in the occupied territory of Ukraine and transferred to Russia for trial on a range of terrorism-related charges. He was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in August 2015.¹⁸

¹⁴Committee to Protect Journalists, "Mikhail Beketov," <https://cpj.org/killed/2013/mikhail-beketov.php> (visited Dec. 12, 2017).

¹⁵Jon Sharman, "Russian Journalist and Putin Critic Dies After Being Beaten Up by Strangers," *The Independent*, Apr. 19, 2017.

¹⁶PEN America, "Alexey Kungurov," <https://pen.org/advocacy-case/alexey-kungurov> (visited Dec. 12, 2017).

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Sophia Kishkovsky, "Russia Gives Ukrainian Filmmaker Oleg Sentsov a 20-Year Sentence," *The New York Times*, Aug. 25, 2015.

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Appendix F: Flawed Elections in the Russian Federation Since 1999

The conduct of democratic elections inside the Russian Federation has steadily deteriorated since Vladimir Putin came to power in 1999, as documented by repeated international election observation missions to the country. Coupled with the Russian government's growing efforts to suppress dissent broadly, the right of Russian citizens to choose their own government in free and fair elections has been increasingly stifled. After the upheaval of the 1990s and the beginning of the country's post-Communist transition, observers from the OSCE's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) described the December 1999 Duma elections as "significant progress for the consolidation of democracy in the Russian Federation" and noted a "competitive and pluralistic" process.¹ Barely three months later, after President Yeltsin had resigned and handed the reigns to Putin as acting president, the ODIHR observation mission expressed concerns over improper campaigning by state and regional officials and the limited field of candidates.² By 2003, ODIHR noted the Duma elections "failed to meet many OSCE and Council of Europe (COE) commitments for democratic elections" and called into question "Russia's fundamental willingness to meet European and international standards for democratic elections."³ The assessment of the 2004 presidential election was equally bleak, finding that "a vibrant political discourse and meaningful pluralism were lacking" and citing problems with the secrecy of the ballot and the biased role of the state-controlled media.⁴ There was no ODIHR assessment for the 2007 Duma elections, in which the United Russia party won a two-thirds constitutional majority, because the 70 would-be observers were denied visas, leaving them with insufficient time for meaningful election observation and leading ODIHR to scrap its mission.⁵ Similarly, ODIHR said it could not observe the 2008 presidential election in Russia because of "limitations" placed by the government on

¹The International Election Observation Mission—Russian Federation, 19 December 1999 Election of Deputies to the State Duma (Parliament), Preliminary Statement, Dec. 20, 1999 at 1.

²The International Election Observation Mission—Russian Federation, 26 March 2000 Election of President, Statement of Preliminary Findings & Conclusions, Mar. 27, 2000 at 1.

³The International Election Observation Mission—Russian Federation, 7 December 2003 State Duma Elections, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, Dec. 8, 2003 at 1.

⁴The International Election Observation Mission—Russian Federation, 14 March 2004 Presidential Election in the Russian Federation, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, Mar. 15, 2004 at 7-8.

⁵"Election Observers Unwelcome," *Spiegel Online*, Nov. 16, 2007.

the planned observer mission.⁶ The U.S. State Department cited the Russian government's "unprecedented restrictions" on ODIHR and noted that international observers who did witness the poll deemed it unfair, given frequent abuses of administrative resources, a heavily biased media environment, and restrictive changes to the election code.⁷

The COE, the only outside body to field observers in the 2008 presidential election, heavily critiqued the election and lamented the absence of ODIHR observers. The COE called the 2008 poll "more of a plebiscite" than a genuine democratic exercise, citing the Kremlin's deliberate exclusion of the lone democratic challenger Mikhail Kasyanov, a former Prime Minister dismissed by Putin in 2004; the uneven media access favoring candidate (and Putin's preferred successor) Dmitry Medvedev; and the pressure placed by regional and local officials on public sector workers to vote for Medvedev.⁸ While ODIHR has since conducted election observation missions in Russia, the OSCE has assessed that "the convergence of the State and the governing party" in elections fails to reflect genuine choice.⁹

⁶Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, "OSCE/ODIHR Regrets that Restrictions Force Cancellation of Election Observation Mission to Russian Federation," Feb. 7, 2008.

⁷U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2008: Russia*.

⁸Luke Harding, "Russia Election Not Free or Fair, Say Observers," *The Guardian*, Mar. 3, 2008.

⁹The International Election Observation Mission—Russian Federation, 4 December 2011 State Duma Elections, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, Dec. 5, 2011 at 1.

Appendix G: Harsh Treatment of LGBT Individuals and Women in the Russian Federation

President Putin has fueled culture wars to draw a distinction between Russian “traditional values” and the purported decadence and corruption of the West. The results have been particularly acute in the state’s treatment of private and domestic life, including of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals and women. A series of anti-LGBT laws introduced at regional levels in Russia in 2003 and 2006 and at the federal level in 2013 essentially prohibit the public mention of homosexuality, including “promoting non-traditional sexual relationships among minors” and drawing a “social equivalence between traditional and non-traditional sexual relationships.”¹ Russia’s anti-LGBT law also inspired copycat legislation that has been adopted or is pending in Lithuania, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Moldova, and that was introduced but ultimately withdrawn or failed in Latvia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Kazakhstan.² In 2017, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia’s “gay propaganda” law, as it has often been called, was discriminatory and violated free expression.³

In the years since its passage, the gay propaganda law has fueled violent recriminations against LGBT activists in Russia. The Russian LGBT Network, an NGO, used Russian government data to calculate that 22 percent of all hate crimes in 2015 were directed at LGBT persons.⁴ Press reports after the passage of the gay propaganda law cited harrowing examples of “homophobic vigilantism” in which “emboldened” right-wing groups would lure LGBT individuals to trick meetings via social media and then attack or humiliate them on camera.⁵ One Russian LGBT activist noted that, of 20 such incidents his organization had tracked, only four were investigated and just one resulted in a court case.⁶ More recently, reports emerged in early 2017 of a systematic campaign to round up and repress gay men in Chechnya, allegedly at the instruction of

¹ Sewell Chan, “Russia’s ‘Gay Propaganda’ Laws Are Illegal, European Court Rules,” *The New York Times*, June 20, 2017.

² Human Rights First, “Spread of Russian-Style Propaganda Laws: Fact Sheet” July 11, 2016.

³ European Court of Human Rights, “Legislation in Russia Banning the Promotion of Homosexuality Breaches Freedom of Expression and is Discriminatory, June 20, 2017. Sewell Chan, “Russia’s ‘Gay Propaganda’ Laws Are Illegal, European Court Rules,” *The New York Times*, June 20, 2017.

⁴ Russian LGBT Network, “22% of Hate Crimes In Russia Are Committed Against LGBT,” <https://www.lgbtnet.org/en/content/22-hate-crimes-russia-are-committed-against-lgbt> (visited Dec 31, 2017).

⁵ Alec Luhn, “Russian Anti-Gay Law Prompts Rise in Homophobic Violence,” *The Guardian*, Sept. 1, 2013.

⁶ *Ibid.*

the powerful speaker of the Chechen parliament.⁷ Some NGOs estimate that as many as 200 individuals were detained in the campaign and subjected to various forms of torture, threatened with exposure to their families and honor killings, and pressured to give up the names of other gay men.⁸

The politicization of traditional family values in Russia has also influenced the state's policies regarding the treatment of Russian women. According to Russian government statistics from 2013, Russian women are victims of crime in the home at disproportionately high rates, while 97 percent of domestic violence cases do not reach court.⁹ Against this bleak backdrop, the parliamentarian who introduced the original 2013 gay propaganda law also introduced a law in 2017 dubbed the "slapping law" to reduce punishments for spousal abuse to a misdemeanor and administrative offense.¹⁰ The law was adopted by a vote of 380 to 3 in the Duma and signed by President Putin in February 2017, decriminalizing a first instance of domestic violence if the victim is not seriously injured; some observers have noted its passage was hastened by support from the Russian Orthodox Church.¹¹

⁷Human Rights Watch, *They Have Long Arms and They Can Find Me: Anti-Gay Purge by Local Authorities in Russia's Chechen Republic*, at 1, 16, 19 (May 2017).

⁸Interviews by Committee Staff with U.S. NGOs.

⁹U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016: Russia*, at 56.

¹⁰Sadie Levy Gale, "Russian Politician Behind Anti-Gay Law Wants to Decriminalise Domestic Violence," *Independent*, July 28, 2016.

¹¹Tom Balmforth, "Russian Duma Approves Bill to Soften Penalty for Domestic Violence," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Free Liberty*, Jan. 27, 2017; Claire Sebastian & Antonia Mortensen, "Putin Signs Law Reducing Punishment for Domestic Battery," *CNN*, Feb. 7, 2017.

Appendix H: Disinformation Narratives, Themes, and Techniques

The Kremlin promotes a variety of anti-Western and pro-Russian “master narratives” across its propaganda platforms, both within Russia and abroad. Russian government propagandists subscribe to these narratives and follow them to craft and frame disinformation campaigns that advance the Kremlin’s positions and interests. One study commissioned in 2012 identified several master narratives employed by Kremlin propagandists, including:

- *Savior of Europe*: Russia has been Europe’s savior for over 200 years, ever since Alexander II stopped Napoleon’s armies from dominating Europe in 1812. Russia also saved Europe from the Nazis, and Western nations tend to minimize this achievement. Russia should proudly assert its people’s heroism to get the recognition it deserves and be admired as a great power.
- *Eurasian Bridge*: Russia was founded as a great civilization that acted as a bridge between East and West. The collapse of the Soviet Union, which went from the Baltic Sea to the Bering Strait, created a vacuum in a region that it is Russia’s destiny to shape and lead. Russia has to advance its cultural, economic, and diplomatic relationships to forge a new regional union that can rival the other global powers.
- *Catching Up with Rivals*: In the 1990s, Russia tried to emulate the unfettered capitalism of the West, causing it to fall from its status as a global economic and cultural leader. Putin and Medvedev returned Russia to the path of prosperity and moved to modernize the economy beyond natural resources by harnessing the entrepreneurship and innovation of the Russian people. Russia must continue to follow this path toward a modern economy to remain strong and catch up to the other global powers.
- *Fortress Russia*: For centuries, Russia has been attacked on all fronts by imperial powers seeking to expand their borders, from Japanese fleets in the east to Nazi armies in the west. Now the United States, NATO, and Europe are conspiring to surround Russia and keep it from becoming an equal power. But Russia has and always will defend itself and will continue to hold its ground against aggressors that seek to weaken it.
- *Good Tsar*: Russia is at its best under the leadership of strong leaders like Peter the Great that bring order and stability. Western puppets like Boris Yeltsin were weak and let Russia descend into chaos during the 1990s. But after Putin came to power, order and stability returned. The Russian people should

place their trust in the Kremlin and be wary of its critics, who seek to return Russia to chaos.¹

Within these master narratives there are numerous prominent themes, which are adaptable to current events. A GAO analysis of over 2,000 Russian disinformation stories in Europe from November 2015 to December 2016 identified several commonly used narratives.² The examples below show that some of these narratives are explicitly pro-Russia, while others do not mention Russia at all:

- *Western entities are Russophobic:* The West banned Russian athletes from the 2016 Olympic as part of its hybrid war against Russia, and the United States and NATO are preparing to destroy Russia after successfully causing the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- *Russia is a victim of the West, and Western media are anti-Russian or purposely spread disinformation and propaganda:* Media in the West falsely accuse the Russian government of spreading disinformation, supplying the missile that shot down Malaysian Airlines Flight 17, killing civilians in Syria, and murdering Alexander Litvinenko. The West is also trying to provoke Russia into starting a new war and falsely blames Russia for acts of aggression.
- *Russia is the world's protector:* Russian soldiers came to the aid of Crimea's Russian-speaking people when they were threatened by Ukrainian soldiers, and by annexing the peninsula Russia saved Crimea from war. In Syria, Russia's military intervention made terrorists agree to a truce.
- *Some Western entities support Russia or Russia's positions:* One in three Europeans consider Crimea a part of Russia and some European countries recognize Crimea as part of Russia. The U.S. media revered the outcomes of Russia's military intervention in Syria.
- *Russia's boundaries are not accurately reflected on maps, and Russia owns additional lands:* Ukraine has always been a part of Russia and the Baltic countries and Belarus are also part of Russia.
- *Russia has not violated international agreements or international law:* Russia did not annex Crimea—Crimea was returned to its native land as the result of a referendum. Russian military aircraft did not break any rules when they buzzed the U.S. warship Donald Cook.
- *Western entities are trying to destabilize other regions of the world:* The United States led a violent coup against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, created ISIS, and orchestrated the migrant crisis in Europe.
- *The Ukrainian government is illegitimate and violent:* The Ukrainian government came to power through a coup and is il-

¹Monitor 360, *Master Narrative Country Report Russia* (Feb. 2012). Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Government Takes a Country-Specific Approach to Addressing Disinformation Overseas*, at 63 (May 2017).

²Government Accountability Office, *U.S. Government Takes a Country-Specific Approach to Addressing Disinformation Overseas*, at 67 (May 2017).

legitimate, and Nazis lead the Ukrainian government, which supports fascist policies and ideas.

- *EU and/or European governments are unable to manage the migration crisis or are manipulating the crisis for other purposes:* EU member states cannot protect their citizens from violent migrants, who are altering European culture. The EU is taking advantage of the migrant crisis to create an occupation army that will be authorized to take control of national borders without the permission of member states.
- *The West's values are evil, decadent, etc.:* The European Parliament promotes the gay movement in Europe and is trying to eliminate male and female gender identities. The sexual abuse of minors is a state-sponsored national tradition in Norway and the country's institution for the protection of children's rights supports this system.
- *The EU and/or European governments are American puppets:* The EU was created by the United States to take away sovereignty from European member states, and Germany facilitates U.S. hegemony over Europe.

Techniques

Russian government disinformation uses a wide variety of misleading propaganda techniques to persuade and convince audiences of its preferred narratives. The Center for European Policy Analysis has identified over 20 techniques commonly used by the Kremlin to spread disinformation.³ Often, several of these techniques will be used in combination for a single article or story that promotes the Kremlin's narrative on a particular event. These techniques include:

- *Ping pong:* uses complementary websites to raise the profile of a story and get mainstream media to pick it up.
- *Misleading title:* uses facts or statements in a story that may be correct, but the title is misleading.
- *Zero proof:* provides no sources or proof to validate a story's facts or statements.
- *False visuals:* similar to false facts, but uses doctored visual productions to give extra weight to false facts or narratives.
- *Totum pro parte or "the whole for a part":* for example, using the opinion of just one academic or expert to portray the official position of a government.
- *Altering the quotation, source, or context:* facts and statements reported from other sources are different than the original. For example, a statement will be attributed to a different person than who actually said it or a quote is placed out of context to change its meaning.
- *Loaded words or metaphors:* obscures the facts behind an event by substituting accurate words with more abstract ones, for example saying that someone "died mysteriously" rather than "was poisoned." The Western press has also aided the Krem-

³ Center for European Policy Analysis, "Techniques," <http://infowar.cepa.org/Techniques> (visited Dec. 31, 2017).

lin's narrative by using terms like "little green men" instead of "Russian troops" in Crimea, thereby maintaining a seed of doubt as to who they really were.

- *Ridiculing, discrediting, and diminution*: uses ad hominem attacks and mockery to sideline facts and statements that run counter to the Kremlin's narratives.
- *Whataboutism*: makes false equivalencies between two disconnected events to support the Kremlin's policies and promote its narrative. For example, comparing the annexation of Crimea to the invasion of Iraq.
- *Conspiracy theories*: use rumors and myths to anger, frighten, or disgust an audience. Examples include stories like "Latvia wants to send its Russian population to concentration camps," or "The United States created the Zika virus." Another version reverses the technique, by labeling factual stories as conspiracies.
- *Joining the bandwagon*: casts a certain view as being that of the majority of people, thereby giving it more credibility.
- *Drowning facts with emotion*: a form of the "appeal to emotion" fallacy, which drowns out facts by portraying a story in such a way as to maximize its emotional impact. The fake story of a Russian girl being sexually assaulted by Muslim immigrants in Germany is a good example, where, even though the story was proven to be false and widely discredited, it so inflamed people's emotions that they were distracted from the story's absence of facts.

Appendix I: Letter from Senator Cardin to European Ambassadors

The following letter requesting information on the Russian government's malign influence operations was sent to more than 40 ambassadors in Washington, D.C. who represent various European countries. Responses to this letter helped to inform the findings of this report.

June 13, 2017

DEAR AMBASSADOR, The U.S. intelligence community has assessed that the Russian government engaged in an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election, including sponsoring and exploiting cyber intrusions and creating and spreading disinformation. As you know, there are several investigations underway to determine the scope and impact of this interference in our democratic process.

However, the Russian government's recent actions were not the first time it has sought to interfere in the elections of other states. Over many years, the Russian government has developed, refined, and deployed its toolkit for malign influence in Europe and elsewhere. We believe that these efforts, which seek to erode citizens' confidence in the credibility of democratic institutions, pose a grave threat to the national security interests of the United States and our allies and partners around the world.

The United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee minority staff, as part of our oversight responsibilities, is conducting a study of the Russian government's malign influence operations throughout Europe and other key countries around the world. To better understand the scope of this threat, we respectfully request any relevant information from your government.

Specifically, we are interested in information related to any of the following activities:

- Acquisitions made in your state in economic sectors such as energy, finance, infrastructure, media, and real estate by individuals or entities controlled, financed or affiliated with the Russian government, and who are known to or alleged to have engaged in corrupt practices.
- Dissemination of disinformation with the intent to influence and confuse the public debate on issues of national importance in your state, including attempts to libel or compromise leading political figures, civil society activists, and others who the Kremlin may have deemed a threat to its interests, by individ-

uals or entities controlled, financed or affiliated with the Russian government.

- Expansion of media organizations into your state's media markets, including TV, radio, and the internet by individuals or entities controlled, financed or affiliated with the Russian government.
- Funding, organizational assistance, or other support of any political parties, civil society groups, or other non-governmental organizations in your state by individuals or entities controlled, financed or affiliated with the Russian government.
- Attempts to infiltrate the computer systems of the government, political parties, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations, or private enterprises in your state by individuals or entities controlled, financed or affiliated with the Russian government, especially with the intent to steal and disseminate information to influence public debate.
- Any other information that may be relevant or helpful to our study.

Finally, we are also interested in learning about any countermeasures that your country has taken to prevent or respond to these malign influence activities.

We greatly appreciate your assistance in gathering this information, which will help inform our study and shape our recommendations for a strong, coordinated response with our allies and partners.

Sincerely,

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN,
Ranking Member.

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