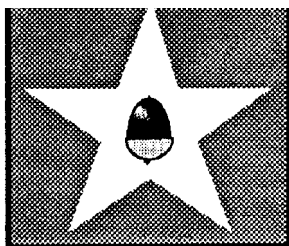


Conflict Studies Research Centre

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**S B Ivanov,
The New Russian Defence Minister**

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On 28 March 2001 President Putin appointed Sergey Borisovich Ivanov the new Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation. Ivanov's position as Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation was given to the Minister of the Interior, Colonel General Vladimir Borisovich Rushaylo. Rushaylo's position, in turn, was taken by a little known outsider, Boris Vyacheslavovich Gryzlov, as expert on space defence systems and the leader of the pro-Putin party "Yedinstvo".

Ivanov's nomination signalled Vladimir Putin's readiness to begin a major overhaul of the Ministry of Defence.¹ This nomination, in November 2000, of the former chief analyst of the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) to the position of First Deputy Minister of Defence became suddenly understandable. He was a bureaucratic "fighting patrol" for the future new minister. The two top positions in the Russian Ministry of Defence are now occupied by semi-outsiders, professional intelligence officers. Together with Ivanov, Putin made two more appointments at the top of the Ministry of Defence. For the first time in Russia's history a woman, Lyubov Kondrat'yevna Kudelina, became a deputy Minister of Defence. Mrs Kudelina has been responsible, for the last five years, for the Department of Military Complex and Law Enforcement Organisations in the Ministry of Finance. She will have the thankless job of unravelling the financial chaos in the Ministry of Defence but she is the best person to do so. Colonel General Igor Yevgenevich Puzanov, the commander of the Moscow Military District, filled another position as deputy Minister of Defence.²

Armed Forces' Bad Dream

Sergey Ivanov's links with the Ministry of Defence had until recently not gone beyond the standard contacts of an average student in the Soviet Union, then that of a KGB officer of the counterintelligence directorate at the end of the 1970s in a city, Leningrad, in which 70% of industry worked for the military-industrial complex and later those of an intelligence officer working abroad. In August 1998, less than a month after Putin's nomination as Director of the Federal Security Service (FSB) Ivanov was head-hunted, by Putin himself, as one of his deputies. The situation in Chechnya and the FSB counterintelligence work within the Ministry of Defence allowed him to see many military problems from close quarters. When on 15 November 1999 Yel'tsin nominated Sergey Ivanov Secretary of the Russian Security Council the chaos in the Russian Armed Forces was one of the most burning problems he had to address. By 29 March 2001, when he received access to the nuclear button he knew a lot about the military.³ He was also prepared

for most of the tasks now facing him in the ministry of defence and could count on full, long-term support from the Kremlin. Putin described Ivanov's and his deputies' appointments as "a logical conclusion of one of the stages in the military modernisation of the country" and a result of eighteen-month-long work on military reform.⁴

For the politicised, quarrelling and badly managed top brass of the Russian MOD this is not good news. Traditionally cautious of the "chekisty" they will now be scrutinised and reformed by the new minister and his first deputy, both of whom have a KGB background. To make matters worse the ministry finances will be controlled by a woman expert familiar with their every financial secret. They will not be able to reach the president through the back channels as their new boss has them all covered, and the Security Council under its new management retains a strong element of former KGB officers.

The Main Tasks

The new team faces several immediate and serious tasks. All previous attempts to reform the Armed Forces failed because of Yel'tsin's erratic leadership style and the resistance to changes at the Defence Ministry. In the first interview given after his nomination Ivanov said that the army must be "more professional, mobile and combat capable" although he did not say how he planned to achieve it.⁵ It is likely that:

- He will slowly begin fundamental streamlining of the armed forces. This process will have to go further than simply reducing in size the existing structures,
- His team will supervise the creation of a new service within the Armed Forces, the Space Forces. Its first commander is to be General Anatoliy Perminov.⁶
- With the assistance of Lyubov Kudelina, Ivanov will attempt to impose strict financial control over the expenditure of the ministry central apparatus and all its outposts around the country. Successes here will be almost immediately visible in the number of high-ranking officers fired, made redundant or even prosecuted.
- The new team in the Ministry of Defence will also attempt to improve co-operation with all Russian power structures. Ivanov's nomination clarifies the pecking order in Chechnya, where the FSB is responsible for the overall control of all operations and the Army and the Ministry of Internal Affairs are less than enthusiastic about the arrangement.

The Mystery Man

Sergey Ivanov is only 4 months younger than Vladimir Putin. He was born on 31 January 1953, like Putin, in Leningrad. Putin came from a poor blue-collar family. Both Ivanov's parents were educated. He refuses to say anything about his late father, which may suggest that either his parents divorced or that his father worked for the KGB or one of its predecessors. Ivanov's mother worked all her life as an optical engineer for the LOMO company in Leningrad.⁷ She insisted that her son should attend a special English language school. At the beginning of the 1970s Sergey Ivanov enrolled at Leningrad University to study English and Swedish. Both languages were very much in demand, and already at that stage, young Ivanov must have been looked at with interest by his future employer, the KGB. They must have liked what they observed because in 1974 he was allowed to study for four months in London.⁸ He graduated in 1975 and a year later completed a counter-intelligence course in Minsk.⁹ He was then given a job in the Leningrad KGB, where he served in the same subunit with Vladimir Putin.¹⁰ Like Putin, Ivanov was formed by his Leningrad boss, the experienced intelligence officer, Feliks Dmitryevich Sutyurin. Sutyurin taught them to think clearly and helped them with their intelligence careers.¹¹ Ivanov graduated from the Intelligence School near Moscow in 1982 and was sent to Helsinki. His career in the Scandinavian and UK Department of the 1st Chief Directorate of the KGB was interrupted in 1985 by the defection of Oleg Gordievskiy. Ivanov had to return to Moscow, was retrained and sent to Kenya. By the time he returned, the USSR was drifting and when in 1991 the KGB was disbanded he continued working for the SVR. He became a deputy head of the European Desk and later headed the Analysis, Prognosis and Strategic Planning Department, the same department which his present subordinate Lieutenant General Dimitriyev led several years later, before Dimitriyev transferred to the MOD. In August 1999 Sergey Ivanov became a deputy director of the FSB and on 15 November 1999 Secretary of the Security Council.

Private Life

Vladimir Putin's favourite, maternal, uncle was a navy captain. Ivanov's favourite, maternal, uncle was a captain in the Soviet merchant navy, one of the very few professions in the Soviet Union offering foreign travel and the perks associated with it. Young Sergey was a Beatles fan and his uncle must have been a supplier of music unobtainable in Russia. While young Vladimir Putin was investing all his energies in judo and paying little attention to his school work, his future colleague and subordinate, Sergey Ivanov, attended a special school with intensive English classes and learned the Beatles lyrics by heart.

Ivanov's favourite Russian writers are Viktor Kornetskiy and Valentin Pikul. He has a full set of Frederick Forsyth, and likes John Le Carre, Agatha Christie, Somerset Maugham and John Galsworthy.¹²

As a young man Ivanov played soccer, ice hockey and basketball. He married in 1976 but is reluctant to explain where and how he met his wife. She is an economist. They have two sons, aged 20 and 23. He refused an official dacha and lives in an apartment in Moscow. He has a country house 120 km from Moscow.¹³ Like the Putins, the Ivanovs used to have a dog but when it died they decided to get a cat which they called Motya. Sergey Ivanov likes fish dishes and pickled mushrooms, Chinese and Finnish food. His favourite films include A Fish Called Wanda.¹⁴

Ivanov's Views

On International Issues

The new Defence Minister is a pragmatic hard-liner when it comes to international affairs. He put his views clearly and succinctly at the 37th International Security Conference, on 4 February 2001 in Munich, in a speech "Global and regional security at the beginning of the 21st Century". In this speech he described Russia's security concerns and criticised the West's inconsistencies in its approach to his country's problems.¹⁵ Almost a year earlier he complained that the West had been treating Russia as nothing more than a raw-material appendage and strongly opposed the next stage of NATO enlargement.¹⁶

On Chechnya

In March 2000, Ivanov accepted that it might even take 10 years before Chechnya is stabilised but the Chechen fighters should not feel encouraged by his statement.¹⁷ Like Putin, he will not be moved on Chechen issues and his new responsibilities will make the life of the Chechen resistance much more difficult.

On Security and Special Services

Sergey Ivanov acknowledges that the main threats to Russia come from within the country, not from abroad.¹⁸ This does not make him a security-empire builder and he rejected any suggestions of merging the FSB, the Federal Border Guard Service and the Federal Protection Service, in a strongly worded statement at an early stage of his career in the Security Council.¹⁹ He regards MI6 and Mossad as the world's best intelligence services, claiming that the CIA has too much money and does not always use it productively.²⁰ Sergey Ivanov has publicly expressed his reservation about the Echelon global surveillance system.²¹

What Can We Expect From Sergey Borisovich Ivanov?

The new minister of defence will be most unlikely to "go native". He has the full support of the president and if the position of vice-president was to be re-established he would be the first candidate. In the preparation for his new nomination Sergey Ivanov resigned his military rank, Lieutenant General, in November 2000.²² His detractors suggested that with his

security services rank he would not feel comfortable among his new subordinates, most of whom would outrank him. The message for the generals in the MOD is that Ivanov does not pretend to be one of them and this is why they will have to take him seriously. His first meeting as Defence Minister with President Putin and Chief of the General Staff Kvashnin, during which planned reforms in the Ministry of Defence were discussed, took place the day after his nomination.²³ Ivanov spoke about what he thought should be changed in the Russian Armed Forces already at the beginning of 2000, saying that the military reforms should include:

- optimising the system of command and control organs, the structure, composition and numerical strength of the military organisation,
- reducing the number of ministries and departments which are allowed to maintain troops and military formations,
- improving the system of recruitment and draft,
- improving training and education of the MOD structures,
- improving social care for the military,
- enhancing the status of servicemen.²⁴

He indicated that reforms will be evolutionary and will take a long time.²⁵ However he will not be able to avoid almost immediate firing and hiring in the General Staff. Russia's partners will observe with great interest the fate of the General Staff's First Deputy Chief and ideologist Colonel General Valeriy Leonidovich Manilov and the competent ideological revisionist, the head of the Main Directorate of International Military Co-operation of the Ministry Colonel General Leonid Grigorevich Ivashov. In contrast with some of his predecessors, Sergey Ivanov does not need an in-house ideologist cum PR-man to sell the General Staff ideas to the President and his entourage. He may need General Ivashov for specific briefings on NATO but as the defence minister best informed on international affairs, possibly in the history of Russia, he will be his own foreign affairs man in the ministry. His understanding of strategic arms issues is considerable. His first important foreign meeting on the subject took place already in February 2000 when he visited the USA as Putin's envoy and was received in the White House. He became Putin's personal foreign minister and reconnaissance man. His tasks have ranged from a visit to the world's capitals as Putin's messenger, to meeting foreign VIPs or their advisers, both in Moscow and abroad. His reforms may be fraught with difficulties but his dealings with foreign partners and adversaries will be simplified by his competence and direct links to the Kremlin. The Ministry of Defence representatives abroad and their methods may also change dramatically. Further improvements in co-operation between the GRU and the SVR can also be expected.

Who Is Afraid of Sergey Ivanov?

Ivanov's nomination was endorsed even by the leader of the Russian Communist Party Gennadiy Zyuganov.²⁶ This could suggest that Ivanov will

be supported, at the beginning at least, by an overwhelming majority in the Parliament. His most difficult struggle will be with many top generals who are simply not capable of reforming but are collectively very good at obfuscating and blocking every new initiative. For that very reason better co-operation with other power structures may be fraught with difficulties. The contacts with the FSB and its director Nikolay Patrushev, with whom Ivanov worked for several years, can be expected to be smooth, but the MOD's links with the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) could be difficult, considering the latter's impending reforms and an outsider, Gryzlov, the first ever, put in charge of the ministry. The high-ranking MVD officials, unhappy with their new minister or his reforms, may attempt to seek the support of their former boss General Rushaylo, presently in charge of the Security Council Secretariat. However, the role of the Council will probably be downgraded, or reduced to monitoring and supervising the reforms in the power ministries. Both the new ministers have the full support of president Putin and direct lines to him.

The new defence minister can expect a less than friendly welcome from certain sections of the Russian media, by whom he is regarded as the father of the potentially restrictive Information Security Doctrine. If provided with controlled leaks by disgruntled officers they could become Ivanov's most difficult opponents. His low-key approach to problem solving – "I was told to be inconspicuous, that is my profession"²⁷ - could make Russia a better partner but also a more efficient opponent. Her neighbours, friends and adversaries should be prepared for both, not mutually exclusive, eventualities.

Endnotes

¹ Marshal Sergeyev, Ivanov's predecessor, became an adviser to President Putin on relinquishing the office.

² Lyubov Kondrat'yevna Kudelina was born in 1955 in Vladivostok. In 1977 she graduated from the Moscow Financial Institute and joined the Ministry of Finance. In 1996 she became head of the department of the Military Complex and Law Enforcement Agencies of the Ministry of Finance. In August 1999 she was nominated a Deputy Minister of Finances but retained responsibility for the finances of the power structure.

Colonel General Igor Yevgenevich Puzanov was born in 1947. After graduating from the Omsk Technical University, Puzanov enrolled at the Omsk Tank School and served in the Transcarpathian and the Central Asian Military Districts. In December 1979, after graduating from the Frunze Military Academy, Puzanov took part in the invasion of Afghanistan. In 1981 he was first a deputy commander then the commander of a division. In 1986 he began to study at the General Staff Academy, from which he graduated in 1988 and later served as the chief of staff and then commander of an army. In 1992 General Puzanov was nominated a deputy commander of the prestigious and politically important Moscow Military District. In April 1999 Puzanov was promoted Colonel General and nominated commander of the district.

³ ORT, 29 March 2001.

⁴ RIA, 28 March 2001.

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- 5 RTR, Moscow, 28 March 2001, BBC Monitoring.
- 6 RTR, Moscow, 28 March 2001, BBC Monitoring.
- 7 Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov also worked most of his life for LOMO.
- 8 Komsomolskaya Pravda, 9 November 2000.
- 9 Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Figury I Litsa), 30 November 2000, p11.
- 10 It is interesting that in numerous publications about Putin and interviews with him no mention is made of his KGB training prior to his enrolment at the Intelligence School in Moscow, at the beginning of the 1980s. Ivanov, fluent in English and Swedish could claim that he worked against foreigners. Putin's legal diploma meant that his work could have been far less glamorous and politically difficult to explain.
- 11 Komsomolskaya Pravda, 3 February 2000.
- 12 Nezavisimaya Gazeta (Figury I Litsa), 30 November 2000, p11; Komsomolskaya Pravda, 3 February 2000.
- 13 Profil, 3 July 2000, internet version.
- 14 Izvestya, 9 November 2000; Vek, 10 November 2000, BBC Monitoring.
- 15 <http://www.scrf.gov.ru>
- 16 Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 31 March 2000; Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye, No 20, 2000, p4.
- 17 Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 31 March 2000; Argumenty I Fakty, 26 April 2000.
- 18 RTR, 12 February 2000, BBC Monitoring.
- 19 Interfax, 3 February 2000.
- 20 Argumenty I Fakty, 26 April 2000.
- 21 Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye, No 20, 2000, p4.
- 22 Segodnya, 10 November 2000, p1.
- 23 RIA, 29 March 2001.
- 24 Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 31 March 2000.
- 25 RIA, 29 March 2001.
- 26 RIA, 28 March 2001.
- 27 Profil, 6 November 2000, BBC Monitoring.

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