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To Proudly Bear the Title of the Soviet Chekist, to Increase the Ideological Vigilance, to Strengthen the Discipline and Organization: Letter of the Collegium of the State Security Committee of the USSR made Public by the Order of the KGB Chairman

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Summary:

In a letter to its personnel and subdivisions, the Collegium of the State Security Committee of the USSR (KGB) urges operatives to become more vigilant in their work and personal conduct as the 27th Congress of the CPSU approaches and in light of raised international tensions.

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TO PROUDLY BEAR THE TITLE OF THE SOVIET CHEKIST ^[1], TO INCREASE THE IDEOLOGICAL VIGILANCE, TO STRENGTHEN THE DISCIPLINE AND ORGANIZATION

LETTER OF THE COLLEGIUM OF THE STATE SECURITY COMMITTEE OF THE USSR MADE PUBLIC BY THE ORDER OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE KGB OF THE USSR

September 10, 1984

Dear Comrades!

The Collegium of the State Security Committee of the USSR is addressing this letter to the personnel of the agency, troops, educational institutions and subdivisions of the central apparatus of the KGB of the USSR. The necessity of this letter is dictated by the directives of the Communist Party on the issues of strengthening order and discipline, as well as improving organization [in the KGB]. It is also dictated by the urgency and complicated nature of the current international situation, the scale and the challenges of the tasks related to the protection of the Soviet State and society from subversive activities of the class enemy, as well as by the increased requirements of the party towards the work of the *chekist* service.

Heading towards the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the Communist Party and its Leninist Central Committee are doing everything in their power to preserve and strengthen peace, and increase the economic and defense might of our Homeland. Great attention is being paid to the comprehensive improvement of developed socialism. Clear objectives for this work will be provided in the revised CPSU Program.

The process of achieving such complicated objectives places more and more at the forefront the issue of forming communist convictions, as well as increasing ideological vigilance, responsibility, and labor enthusiasm in each Soviet person.

The high requirements of the party towards the ideological, political, professional, and moral qualities of the Soviet people are, to even greater degree, applicable to the *chekist* personnel who are in the forefront of the struggle with the class enemy.

The objective of the *chekists* is to provide reliable security for the soviet Homeland by structuring their work in accordance with the requirements of socialist democracy, based on the laws of our state of the whole people and taking into consideration the foreign policy situation. This work has to be conducted based on the inviolable foundation of Leninist principles and in the spirit of outstanding *chekist* traditions.

Tightly united around our dear Communist Party, soviet *chekists* fully approve and support its Leninist course and actively assist in implementing its domestic and foreign policy in the conditions of intense class struggle on the international arena of a noticeably increased threat of war. They take necessary steps to provide reliable protection for the Soviet State and society against foreign encroachments.

State security agency personnel and troops of the KGB of the USSR work selflessly and hard to achieve further increases in the quality of operations, and tirelessly implement the decisions of the 26th Congress of the CPSU, the subsequent Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, as well as provisions of the May 1981 National Consultation Meetings of the Leadership of the Agency and Troops of the KGB of the USSR. The positive results in combating subversive activities of imperialist clandestine services and foreign anti-Soviet centers are quite obvious. We increased the effectiveness of protective measures for state secrets, of efforts for uncovering and thwarting the enemy's attempts to hurt the economy and the defense capability of our Homeland, as well as the interests of the soviet people. These successes have been achieved thanks to the teamwork and cooperation of all of the subdivisions of the KGB of the USSR.

The state security service personnel always remembers and observes in their work Lenin's commandment to "be in a constant state of alertness."

This commandment has become even more crucial in our time, when the intensifying struggle between capitalism and socialism comes amid increased efforts by the US clandestine services and their allies to undermine the political and economic foundations, as well as the defense capabilities of the Soviet Union and the socialist block as a whole. Subversive activities of the enemy are marked by the active use of agent networks, the use of technologies with a wide variety of capabilities, as well as the employment of sophisticated and dangerous forms and methods. Combating subversive acts of the enemy in political, economic, ideological and military areas has now acquired a particularly intense nature and requires the state security personnel to step up their work along every line and in every direction. **The most important thing is to step up the offensive mode and targeted character of all *chekist* efforts, and to not miss the real threat of a nuclear strike.**

The cornerstone of the state security service's work is the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Each one of us should remember that a *chekist* is, in the first place, the Party's political soldier. Lenin's postulate, that *chekists* are required to be decisive, quick, and, most importantly, loyal, has a special meaning today. This loyalty is proven and checked in everyday work, in all things big and small. Understanding your duty before the Homeland, your communist conviction, based on deep knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory, [your] active efforts to implement the party's policies, readiness to give everything you have to offer, and even life if needed, to its cause – without all of this there is no, and there can be no, such thing as a *chekist*!

The complexity of the struggle with the enemy obligates all of us to bring all of our knowledge and skills to the level of the highest professionalism, to perform work creatively, and to love our work. *chekists* are required to possess constant high combat and mobilization readiness, the ability to act covertly, the ability to independently, competently, and without delay, take measures to prevent and thwart a dangerous developing situation, and the ability to withstand high emotional and physical strain. We cannot be satisfied with the obvious facts lying on the surface. We have to be able to look at things from the class standpoint and uncover the substance of events to be able to give them correct evaluation.

Today, each of us has to clearly understand the urgency of the current international situation, to be informed of the most important political, economic, and other issues and objectives that are being accomplished in the country, in the republic, in the territory, in the region, in the city, in the district, as well as at the specific facility where we conduct operations. A close-knit connection with workers, which has always been the source of strength of the Soviet state security service, is the most crucial condition of our successful work.

chekists have to inherently possess a deep knowledge of soviet laws and understand their letter and spirit. We have to lead by example in compliance with law, and be law-abiding. To act differently means to commit a grave mistake and to cause irreversible harm to the work of the state security service.

To increase ideological vigilance, to strengthen discipline and organization! This motto is not just a 'motto of the day' for the state security personnel. It is a daily necessity dictated by the complexity of the task of protecting the Soviet State and society.

Each member of the personnel has to have a deep appreciation of the particular importance that steel-hard discipline of our troops, their high level of performance, exemplary attitude, and impeccable personal conduct have today!

The work of the KGB service is unconscionable without a high level of commitment to discipline based on the deep belief in the justness of the party's and the people's cause and loyalty to their interests and ideals. *chekists* can't just possess "outward" discipline, treated as a formality.

And this means that KGB operatives are required to not only strictly comply with all of the rules, but to display a constant Bolshevik ardor that manifests itself in the proactive and result-oriented attitude, initiative, and full commitment to their work. It is specifically this type of discipline, multiplied by the ideological superiority over the enemy, that gives us the advantage which will lead us to victory in the difficult confrontation with the enemy.

In all of their actions the personnel of the state security agency and the troops of the KGB of the USSR have to adhere to the norms of communist ethics, and to decisively fight everything that is foreign to the socialist way of life. Attempts to abuse power, misuse one's official position and the authority of the KGB office for personal gain, excessive vanity and immoral conduct outside of the office – all of this is incompatible with the title of the *chekist*.

The vast majority of the personnel of the state security service fulfill their duty towards their Homeland impeccably and in their actions live up to their high calling – to provide reliable state security for their socialist Homeland. A considerable number of operatives in the agency and the troops of the KGB of the USSR received awards and commendations for their courage, heroism, exemplary performance of government assignments, and achievement of high results in their operative work.

At the same time, some operatives do not fully measure up in their personal conduct to today's requirements, they perform their duties without the requisite initiative, they let down their guard, allow themselves to be negligent, have formal attitude to work, and violate professional and military discipline. And though such incidents are few compared to the general trend of the selfless work of the *chekists*, nevertheless in some agencies, subdivisions and military units they negatively impact the quality of operations and military service.

Every member of the state security service and KGB troops has to deeply appreciate that he is the bearer of our common standing in the society. The *chekists'* work and the *chekists* themselves are constantly in the spotlight of the soviet people. Placing the *chekists* in the forefront of the struggle against the class enemy requires that their conduct is so impeccable that it sets the standard for the Soviet people. They have to be highly competent, cultured, display erudition, breadth of knowledge and tactfulness not only when performing official duties, but outside of the job as well. **Each one of us is what the common folk form their opinion on about the personnel of the State Security Committee as a whole, and this places special responsibility on the *chekists*.**

Comrades!

Having stressed the utmost importance of party's increasing requirements, **the Collegium of the KGB of the USSR would like to draw the attention of the leadership** to the necessity of diligently developing high ideological and professional qualities in each serviceman, worker, and operative of the state security service and conducting ideological and political education work in accordance with the directives of the CPSU, with the tasks at hand, as well as with the current political and operational conditions.

With this respect, personnel development is of primary importance. We have to form in them intolerance towards deficiencies [in work] and a heightened feeling of responsibility for their professional and party duties.

Each manager has to skillfully lead their staff, constantly improve his work style, and lead his subordinates by personal example of the unity of word and deed, moral purity, and selflessness. [He has] to increase the effectiveness of control and oversight over the implementation, and study in depth personal qualities of staff members, and their conduct at work and outside of work.

The most crucial tool for strengthening discipline is working with individuals. Knowing your subordinates and showing constant care and attention to their needs and requests, combined with

insistence that they adhere to high standards – this is the primary responsibility of the most numerous class of managers – the heads of subdivisions, project managers, shift managers, group leaders, commanders of military outposts, ship captains, squadron commanders and such.

All managers have to establish transparency and objectivity in evaluating personnel, improve morale boosting techniques and financial incentives, as well as disciplinary practices and personnel assessment policies. We need to eliminate instances when personnel assessments do not reflect deficiencies in work and personal conduct, and occasionally even violations of discipline.

Treating *chekist* offices as education centers, the Collegium of the KGB of the USSR encourages management personnel to heed the opinions [of the *chekists*], to timely notice and support innovation, and to develop initiative. In the interest of our work we have to more fully utilize the educational potential of the offices, and maintain within them a spirit of organization, perfectionism and responsibility for assigned tasks. It is important that the [*chekist*] offices use their climate of healthy morale to favorably influence all staff members, without any exclusions, to help everyone achieve high results in their service or work as well as exemplary conduct.

We have to be realistic and understand that today we cannot expect success in the *chekist* work without the joint efforts of various branches – be it a directorate, a department, a division, a military unit, a border guard outpost, a squadron or a production team. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for us to have well-organized cooperation, teamwork, common concern for the interests of the cause, as well as a particular precision, speed and diligence in fulfilling orders.

Addressing the troops of the KGB, the Collegium would like to stress that all servicemen who are given the honor to guard the state border of the USSR and to fulfill challenging special operations are required to display great skill, perseverance and courage, stamina and cool composure, as well as unconditional loyalty to the Homeland. Each serviceman has to realize that service in the troops of the KGB of the USSR is his school of courage, military training, and exemplary order. They have to strengthen military camaraderie and serve as an example of organization and discipline for everyone.

Commanders and political officers, as well as commissioned staff, sergeants and petty officers of military commands, subdivisions and units are obliged to decisively implement the requirements of Soviet laws, the military oath and military code of conduct, as well as military regulations. We have to uncompromisingly fight against the completely intolerable facts of bullying and harassment among the servicemen, as well as against the violations of the chain of command, which quite often become the cause of other serious incidents.

Increased requirements are posed on the personnel development departments today to strengthen discipline and organization. They have to improve their work in the area of personnel selection, personnel placement, ideological and professional training, as well as study the morale and psychological climate and environment in offices, and react with heightened urgency to the slightest negative manifestations.

Important contributions to achieving the challenging objectives posed on the *chekists* are made by the educational institutions of the KGB of the USSR. The primary objective of their management and faculty members is to train ideologically seasoned political soldiers who are infinitely loyal to the Communist Party and Socialist Homeland and possess high professional skills and instill in them communist morality and uncompromising attitude towards the class enemy.

Success in the area of [personnel] conditioning and achieving strict order is in many ways dependent on the proactive attitude and enthusiasm of party organizations. **The Collegium of the KGB of the USSR is calling on the political branches, party organizations and bureaus, grassroots organizations and shop-level party branches and groups** to ensure the vanguard role of communists in achieving operational objectives. In light of the decisions of the CPSU Central Committee, [we have to] constantly improve all forms of party education and propaganda outreach,

and structure our work in such a way that every member of the workforce stays within the party's field of vision. Strengthening the ideological, military and morale conditioning of the *chekist* personnel, and their class-specific conditioning are the most important objectives of party organizations. It is important that the party is effective in its leadership over the *Komsomol* organizations and workers' unions, and that it is efficient in its work in the area of communist conditioning of the personnel.

The Collegium of the KGB of the USSR is calling upon local unions and *Komsomol* organizations to tirelessly improve the forms and methods of their activities, to develop a proactive outlook in the members of *Komsomol*, young people and union members, to ensure diligent attitude at work and outside of the office, to develop socialist competition for the unconditional and thorough completion of plans and tasks.

Only well-coordinated activities of the top managers at every level, of personnel development offices, of educational institutions, of the party, unions and *Komsomol* organizations, as well as a combination of large-scale and individualized approaches will ensure superior ideological and professional conditioning and high morale. Furthermore we should take into account the workers' educational background, the specifics of their work, and the working conditions and environment outside of work – all of which influence the choice of the most effective forms and methods of ideological education work.

Special attention needs to be paid to developing personnel in the glorious *chekist* and military traditions of the *VCheka-KGB*^[2] agency and troops, which were started by V.I.Lenin and F.E.Dzerzhinsky, and maintained and developed thanks to the invaluable contributions by Yu.V.Andropov. Our sacred duty is to carefully safeguard the rich legacy left behind by them and to creatively develop it and put it to practice.

Our veterans, and first and foremost, those who are currently working at the agency and in the troops of the KGB of the USSR, play a major role in personnel development. They serve as role models of selfless work and exceptional attitude to their professional and party duties. Their primary responsibility is to generously share their experience with the younger generation, help them sharpen their professionalism, and master the art of fighting the enemy and conducting *chekist* operations.

A great responsibility for ensuring state security is placed upon young *chekists*. Young age does not mean lower standards and is not the reason to lower requirements. In order to meet current political and professional criteria, young operatives are obliged to persistently study the *chekist* art of victory, to master professional skills in the shortest possible time, and from the very beginning to have a responsible and diligent attitude towards their assignments.

Comrades!

Today the word "*chekist*" embodies that original purity which V.I.Lenin and F.E.Dzerzhinsky have placed in it. This word is pronounced with respect by every honest person and is hated by the enemies. A Soviet *chekist* is the embodiment of party ideology, infinite loyalty and integrity, unbendable will and readiness to selflessly fight for the interests of our Homeland.

In the tough fight with the class enemy the agency and the troops of the KGB constantly feel the attention and care on the part of the Communist Party, its Central Committee, and they possess everything necessary to organize successful work in every area of operations. The Soviet *chekists* are expressing their deep gratitude to the Central Committee and to the Politburo of the Central Committee for their high level of trust and daily attention. The [*chekists*] will continue to dedicate their efforts and knowledge to the tasks of providing security for their beloved Homeland and of reliably protecting its sacred frontiers.

The Collegium of the State Security Committee of the USSR expresses its firm belief that

raised in this letter, the issues of personnel development, strengthening of discipline, organization and order, which are the foundation of high combat and mobilization readiness, will become a focus of constant and close attention of the collegiums and councils of the heads of the KGB directorates, military councils, all leadership, political offices and party organizations; that this effort will acquire a long-term, programmatic character.

We are also sure that every member of the state security agency, every serviceman of its troops, as well as every worker and employee will perceive this letter as directed at them personally and will do everything within their power to continue honorably and with dignity bear the title of a Soviet *chekist*.

[1] Translator's note: The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, VCheKa (or just CheKa), was the predecessor of the KGB. The nickname "chekist" comes from this acronym.

[2] Translator's note: VCheKa (or just CheKa) is the acronym for The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, which was the predecessor of the KGB.