

August 24, 1984

**Deputy Minister Markus Wolf, Stasi Note on Meeting
with KGB Experts on the RYAN Problem, 14 to 18
August 1984**

Citation:

"Deputy Minister Markus Wolf, Stasi Note on Meeting with KGB Experts on the RYAN Problem, 14 to 18 August 1984", August 24, 1984, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Office of the Federal Commissioner for the Stasi Records (BStU), MfS, ZAIG 5384, pp. 1-16. Translated from German for CWIHP by Bernd Schaefer.
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115721>

Summary:

Memorandum summarizing consultations between the Stasi and KGB over RYAN (Raketno-Yadernoe Napadenie, or "nuclear weapon attack"), an intelligence program initiated by the KGB to collect indicators of a potential nuclear first-strike by the US. The KGB had developed a new system for the early detection of war preparations for a first-strike attack, which should provide evidence of such preparations on the basis of "objective" indicators that would be hard to manipulate.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Deputy of the Minister
29 August 1984
VzGE A63184
ZAIG 9547/30 August 84

PRIVATELY!

Head ZAIG
Comrade Major General Irmeler

Attached I send you a note summarizing results of consultations with Comrade Major General Shapkin, Deputy Head of the KGB's 1st Main Directorate, on the subject of a surprise nuclear missile attack.

One copy each also went to Comrade Minister [Erich Mielke] and the Head of AGM [Working Group of the Minister].

[signed] [Markus] Wolf
Colonel General

Attachments
15 pages

Main Department A [HV A]
Berlin, 24 August 1984

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL!

N O T E

About the Results of Consultations with Comrade Major General Shapkin, Deputy Head of the KGB's 1st Main Directorate, and Two Experts on the RYAN Problem from 14 to 18 August 1984 in Berlin[1]

Comrade Major General Geyer thanked us at the beginning for the documents provided by the 1st Main Directorate of the KGB in preparation of consultations. He especially stressed the usefulness of the following material to define the emphases we need to concentrate on:

Letter by the Head of the KGB's 1st Main Directorate, Comrade Colonel General [Vladimir] Kryuchkov, to the Head of the HV A, Comrade Colonel General [Markus] Wolf

- . Orientation on timely detection of [Western] preparations for a surprise nuclear missile attack
- . List of indicators to detect preparations by the adversary for a surprise nuclear missile attack

□□

The HV A [Foreign Intelligence Division] is in full agreement with suggestions made in these materials on how to approach conceptual, organizational, and practical aspects when dealing with the RYAN problem.

Then Comrade Major General Shapkin gave an overview of developments so far concerning the RYAN issue, also based on results from the multilateral meeting of [Eastern European socialist countries'] heads of foreign intelligence in 1982 in Moscow. For this type of work many complicated aspects have to be taken into account. This issue requires in fact an entirely new framework with far-reaching consequences. It demands diligent theoretical reflection and an approach geared towards setting priorities. This is the reason why the KGB directed its primary attention to the most dangerous variation for launching a war, namely the imperialist surprise nuclear missile attack. This focus, however, does not mean to abandon observation of other possible variations used by the adversary to launch a war. Analyses so far have made it imperative to focus on such variations in a second step in order to arrive at qualified monitoring of crisis situations. The need for such approaches derives from the fact that a multitude of measures undertaken by the adversary do not allow advance determination which variation to launch a war the adversary will choose. In addition, we need to integrate experiences from analyzing the enemy's crisis management into a process of further perfecting the definition of indicators to detect the adversary's main measures for its acute war preparation.

Comrade Major General Shapkin explained the basic principles behind the comprehensive list of indicators to detect the adversary's preparations for a surprise nuclear missile attack. He made it clear that these indicators must be complemented, revised, and made more precise in an ongoing creative process. Also he drew attention to the problem of not getting deceived by a relative large number of measures by the adversary, and indicators hinting at those measures. In order to avoid drafting a hardly practicable document as the orientation for operative lines [of socialist intelligence services], the Soviet comrades tackled the problem from two angles: One of them is represented by the indicators, and the other concerns the question of what is to be expected from KGB foreign intelligence in the context of early detection of acute adversarial preparations for war. The latter usually come with a permanent high combat readiness of about one third of the enemy's nuclear forces. This means, a political decision by the enemy to launch a surprise nuclear missile attack will not necessarily result in the implementation of all potential measures and indicators we have defined. In practical terms: When we draft the list of indicators, we have to try to include only those who are indispensable for a surprise nuclear missile attack. This implies we re-emphasize the clear definitions required from the work of our foreign intelligence on the political front: It must focus on potential detection of a political decision made by the adversary to launch a surprise nuclear missile attack - as early as humanly possible. This assignment is different from the one given to military intelligence, which has to focus on permanent monitoring of combat level readiness of adversarial armed forces. Comrade Major General Shapkin stressed how imperative it is to obtain in time the documents worked out in the adversary's camp on the preparation and implementation of a surprise attack. Where it is not feasible, or not yet possible, to obtain such information, the list of indicators must be applied.

Comrade Major General Geyer confirmed that these basic thoughts also serve as guidelines to the HV A for its future approach to the RYAN problem.

Next, Comrade Major General Geyer asked what basic ideas the 1st Main Directorate has developed regarding uniform orientation for foreign intelligence services of socialist countries to detect adversarial intentions of surprise attacks early, and what assignment the HV A is supposed to take on in this context.

Accepting in principle a division of labor to tackle the RYAN issue, Comrade Major General Shapkin recommended as a next practical step to define exactly the current capacities of agent networks as well as other means and potentials, like for instance

MfS signal intelligence [SIGINT]. Then, in an ensuing step, we have to identify areas covered, and not covered, by the various socialist foreign intelligence services. Only with such basic information we then can determine which national intelligence services are to be in charge of which areas and fields, where we need "overlaps" and multiple safeguards, and where we have to build up additional potential in order to close still existing gaps. If we do not follow such a procedure, the existing potential of the fraternal services could be left untapped.

It must be our main priority to identify the full potential of fraternal intelligence services pertaining to detect [Western] political decision-making processes for a surprise nuclear attack, all the way up to details of its military execution. In the interest of efficiency, this process has to be combined with various required measures and tasks.

Comrade Major General Shapkin underlined the special importance of fast, effective, and concealed signal links and channels of information. For now, he recommended first to exchange information between the 1st Main Directorate of the KGB and HV A about the application of means and methods already available (for example, WTsch [2] and the news channel to SOUD[3] - with parallel information going to the KGB representation in the GDR).

Based on experiences made so far while working with selected legal [KGB] residents abroad, Comrade Major General Shapkin suggested to outline exact modes of cooperation on site and in detail for each individual case. Priority must be assigned to the fastest possible transmission of gathered insights and signals to the center [KGB].

In this context, Comrade Major General Shapkin stressed, the entire RYAN problem also bears far-reaching consequences for the function of advanced technology. Besides the means of SIGINT targeting the West, this also applies to the evaluation process of incoming information pertaining to RYAN. Using reliably working technology, both transmission and evaluation of respective information in real time must be guaranteed. Based on this urgent need, the KGB has revised its planning for scientific-technological research and industrial procurement. This was done under direct guidance by the scientific research board of the KGB leadership. The research institute of the 1st Main Directorate has been commissioned to support these processes undertaken.

Responding to a respective question, Comrade Major General Shapkin provided an overview of the state of organizational build-up already achieved within the KGB. According to a decision by a special commission chaired by Comrade Army General [Viktor] Chebrikov, a new division was established in July 1984 within the First Department (Information) of the 1st Main Directorate. It has to function as the point group for dealing with the RYAN problem for the entire KGB. Its tasks include: performing a coordinating function, constantly monitoring the situation, analyzing and processing incoming material and indicators, supporting operative units in directing and training unofficial collaborators and [KGB] residents abroad, working on further completion of documentations (like the list of RYAN indicators), organizing forces and means, and guaranteeing that the work is done. In order to perform these functions and make them efficient, the head of this new division serves simultaneously as a deputy of the head of the Information Department within the 1st Main Directorate, and as the secretary for the commission chaired by Army General Chebrikov. Moreover, this new unit applies broadly for its work theoretical parameters and practical recommendations developed by the 1st Main Directorate's research institute.

Comrade Major General Shapkin holds it necessary to implement a qualifying training process in order to secure uniform orientation, and a coordinated execution, of RYAN essentials by leaders and associates commissioned to work for the new division. The

issue of qualifying its members is first priority. Clear-headedness about the entire RYAN complex, also in theoretical regard, is a mandatory requirement for the successful implementation of this mission.

In a meeting with the head of [MfS] Main Department III [SIGINT], Comrade Major General [Horst] Männchen, issues were discussed on how SIGNINT can contribute in the future towards solving the problems of early detection of adversarial nuclear missile attacks. Comrade Major General Männchen gave an overview of the mission of Main Department III and discussed its possibilities he saw for RYAN.

Comrade Major General Shapkin mentioned in this context that the 16th Department within the 1st Main Directorate has been commissioned to work out special tasks for SIGINT pertaining to the RYAN complex. In order to address issues of technological implementation in the long run, collaboration between the KGB's 16th Directorate and the 16th Department of the 1st Main Directorate was intensified.

Comrade Major General Shapkin handed over an information about the SIGINT situation in the urban areas of Bonn/Köln[Cologne], Düsseldorf, and Oslo.

Comrade Major General Shapkin used the opportunity of his visit to get familiar with HV A computer applications. During the course of the presentation made to him, Comrade Major General Shapkin made suggestions how to create conditions needed to successfully implement such computer projects. In order to avoid conceptual errors from the beginning, it is essential to have a realistic blueprint for required basics, like for instance to develop an integrative basic system. If issues of implementing the project are not completely solved based on integrative mathematical logic, programming language (software), and comprehensive compatibility, Soviet experiences tell that there will a danger exist of computer application concepts not getting implemented.

During the meeting with HV A Head Comrade Colonel General Wolf, Comrade Major General Shapkin handed over the newly developed technology "RITM" ("rhythm"). We gratefully thanked for this technology. It will have major relevance to secure encrypted communication with selected agents, especially on problems of RYAN.

On 16 August 1984 the Minister for State Security, Comrade Army General Mielke, received Comrade Major General Shapkin. It was emphasized during their talk how our consultations have resulted in a first review of our joint efforts to address the RYAN problem, which is so extraordinarily important for securing the peace. This consultation process has to be continued. In this context, Comrade Major General Shapkin thanked for MfS contributions concerning RYAN.

It is highly important to further improve the analysis of documents obtained from the adversary, seeing them from the RYAN perspective. Ongoing attention must be devoted to the protection of our sources.

Comrade Army General Mielke hinted that early detection of a surprise adversarial nuclear missile attack is the most important question of all posed to us by the current state of class struggle. This is why indicator lists drafted by KGB and MfS appropriately focus on this mission. Despite this urgent need, however, we may not ignore at the same time other options for launching a war. The agents are, and remain, the most important factor to solve all pertaining questions in this regard.

The following conclusions concerning the RYAN issue will have to be drawn by HV A after these consultations with Comrades Major General Shapkin, Colonel Chomiakov, and Lieutenant Colonel Zhukov:

□□□

. The HV A catalogue of indicators will be revised in strict congruity with the list of the KGB 1st Main Directorate on the detection of adversarial preparations for launching a surprise nuclear missile attack. Attention will be paid to methodical suggestions made during consultations concerning the most sensible draft of such a document (priorities, clarity, limiting the length).

□□

□□ Further review of operative opportunities to obtain information on the RYAN issue - with the objective to get an overview which parts of the NATO command (in Western Europe) and in particular in the FRG/West Berlin can be covered. Thus conditions will be created that can serve at a given time as basis for decisions about the framework for a certain division of labor, respectively which open questions still need to be addressed.

□□

□□ Consultation with relevant intelligence units, and working out of regulations, in order to integrate according fields of the MfS into the RYAN mission to lead to a basic directive by the Minister [Mielke].

□□

□□ Establishing a working group within HV A according to capacities, and analogous to structures within the 1st Main Directorate of the KGB.

□□

□□ Gradual integration of legally covered residents:

□□

- In addition to those already existing in NATO countries, more legally covered residents capable to obtain information on the RYAN issue must be selected by Departments I, III, and XI of the HV A, and still in 1984.

- Concrete tasks have to be outlined for those legally covered residents.

- In a parallel process, the system for transmitting information is to be determined.

□□ From the side of the HV A there exists the interest to continue consultations with the KGB on the following issues:

□□

□□□

□□□ Questions of work organization in the areas of responsibility of the 1st Main Directorate of the KGB and the HV A of the MfS;

. building and providing technology to transmit information, including an encrypted network between the 1st Main Directorate and HV A exclusively on the RYAN complex (maybe using the link Elbe-Jausa);

. further joint perfection of the lists of indicators of the 1st KGB Main Directorate and the HV A of the MfS;

. specific information obtained on the RYAN problem, and documenting it with a guarantee of mutual exchange

. training material on the RYAN issue;

. operations concerning RYAN by legally covered residents in selected focus countries;

. exploring opportunities for the illegal lines of operation;

. methodical problems of monitoring and assessing crisis spots;

. work conducted by the research institute and its integration into dealing with the RYAN problem;

. experiences with the development of computer-based systems to assess the respective situation.

□□□□

24 August 1984

ATTACHMENT

About the Structure of the New Unit within the First Department of the 1st KGB Main Directorate

Following a decision by a special commission headed by Comrade Army General Chebrikov, in July 1984 a new division was established within the First Department (information) of the 1st Main Directorate. Its mission is to deal with, and take the lead on, all issues concerning the RYAN problem for the entire KGB.

In the current state of developments, and after major deliberations, they plan to build within this division four different sections:

- b-unit on respective duty
 - . Constant monitoring of indicators and problem analysis
 - . Constant situation review of military-political developments
 - . Coordination.
-

These still tentative terms result from the fact that the thought process within the KGB and the 1st Main Directorate has not been finalized yet.

ad 1.:

The reason to envisage such a unit is based on the idea that indicators for RYAN must be monitored constantly, and that this task cannot be solved without systematic work. In addition, quite a large number of symptoms/indicators is to be monitored. Since every 24-hour-shift needs two employees, this sub-unit will have to consist of about 15 positions.

The Soviet comrades think practical experiences will later on lead to an increase in the number of such positions.

ad 2.:

The complexity of the indicator problem shows how it will be necessary to monitor and control all dynamic global developments. This is the structural core element that will expand the entire indicator complex and keep it updated. Continuous analysis of new insights gained is needed (like, for instance, from new adversarial documents concerning political and military decision and consultation processes; from changes in NATO alarm plans and its system of crisis management; from research results of the institute of the 1st Main Directorate and analyses of other divisions of the First Department suitable for identifications of further indicator complexes as well as individual indicators). The core element of monitoring global development will also further the theory behind the overall problem, exert decisive influence on the outlines of training material, and guide the process of consultation with operative intelligence units and fraternal services (the latter in collaboration with the sub-division listed in the fourth place), etc. Incoming raw intelligence documents have to be assessed by evaluation units according to current situations and forwarded to this sub-division. In such cases, information will have to be neutralized so that any identification of sources is made impossible.

ad 3.:

Another part of the problem discussed above under "ad 2" is the need to constantly know about the actual situation. Constant and ongoing assessments have to be made whether certain developments actually constitute a crisis or not. Continuous analysis

is required to determine whether conditions for the brewing of a conflict are emerging, or whether they already exist.

ad 4.:

Coordination tasks derive from insights of the 1st Main Directorate on RYAN and from the activities of the special commission headed by Army General Chebrikov. The latter will be the actual partner for this unit within the new division.

Its main task is to generalize working results from operative intelligence units in RYAN and transform them into further qualification of the overall process. This includes the need to provide suggestions how work might be better organized.

The according quality of the overall guiding process on the RYAN problem is enhanced by this fact: The future head of this newly formed unit will be a deputy to the head of the First Department in the 1st Main Directorate, and at the same time secretary of the commission chaired by Army General Chebrikov.

Within the overall KGB structure 300 positions were earmarked for the RYAN issue and according funds provided. 50 of them have been reserved for now for the new division within the First Department of the 1st Main Directorate.

24 August 1984

ATTACHMENT

Issuance of Instructions to Legally Covered Residents (LCR) [Abroad]
Concerning RYAN

After reading the preceding scientific research on ways and options for operation of selected LCR, the comrades from the newly emerging division on RYAN in the First Department of the 1st Main Directorate of the KGB have worked out continuous instructions with operative departments concerned.

This instructional document has the following structure:

□□□□□out 5 explanatory pages on the RYAN problem, relevant to all selected LCR;

□□

□□□□□the mission of information gathering, which is still rather general due to a lack of experiences so far. One to two tasks each were assigned to five areas (politics, military, economy, civil defense, intelligence services).

□□

□□□□□tlining the reporting to the center for the LCR:

□□

- when is immediate reporting due?

- what has to be covered on RYAN in monthly reporting by the residents (using their code word and number)[?]

All reports go directly to the head of the 1st Main Directorate of the KGB and parallel to the unit guiding the LCR. This is said in the general text.

In order to maintain secrecy and avoid boilerplate language, operative units do not receive the list of indicators but the modified mission derived from that list.

In the short run the following two documents will be outlined for each individual LCR: □□□□
concrete instruction on the RYAN problem;

. instruction for crisis management (this will also contain assignments related to RYAN as there are unavoidable overlaps)

□□

Measures [for the MfS]:

□□ Identifying, together with Departments I, III, XI of HV A, those LCR defined as promising in terms of [RYAN] information in addition to those in NATO states

□□

Date: 1 November 1984

□□ For those LCR, concrete assignments are to be outlined according to the list of indicators.

□□

Date: 15 December 1984

□□ In a parallel process, the system of reporting back information has to be defined.

□□

[1] RYAN, "Raketno-Yadernovo Napadeniya" ("Nuclear Missile Attack")

[2] WTsch, German Acronym for the Russian term Vysokaya Tchastota, a Soviet encrypted secret phone network for GDR-Soviet leadership communication.

[3] Intelligence agencies of the Warsaw Pact countries formed a single system, which operated under the name System of Unified Processing Data about the Opponent [Sistema Obyedinyonnovo Uchota Dannych o Protivnike or SOUD]. Members of SOUD were the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland and Vietnam. Founded in 1977, SOUD became fully operational in 1979.