

Why it is worth to reconsider links between Kremlin and international terrorism

Marius Laurinavičius, Senior Analyst, EESC

It was all over the world news when Lithuanian president Dalia Grybauskaitė publicly stated that Russia was a “terrorist country”¹. She later explained that Russia “has attributes of a terrorist state”.

It's difficult to evaluate how much it helped the international community to take thought of what exactly they are dealing with. But this very loud wake-up call is a perfect opportunity to shed more light on this issue that has not been widely addressed either in Lithuania or worldwide.

Therefore this essay of the Putin's Russia series will be a bit unusual. In this case I decided to examine not the current Russian government structure, the interrelation of various clans and their influence to processes in Russia and worldwide, but rather focus on why Russia can now be reasonably called a country that sponsors terrorism². I will also discuss the very suspicious links between the current regime and international terrorism, and the historical role of Soviet Union's KGB (the foundation of Putin's regime) in developing an international terrorism network.

How to legally evaluate the aggression in Ukraine?

¹ The Baltic Times. “Lithuania President calls Russia ‘terrorist state’ “.

<http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/35799>

² State Sponsors of Terrorism.

<http://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/c14151.htm>

Grybauskaitė's public address about Russia being the “terrorist country” was undoubtedly related to the aggression in Ukraine. The objective of this essay is to put on the table much more disturbing and suspicious facts about Russia's relations with international terrorism. But let's start with Ukraine.

Alexander J. Motyl, in his essay "Putin's Russia as a State Sponsor of Terrorism"³, that was published in the World Affairs magazine this April, has substantiated that Russia can be legally considered as **sponsoring terrorism** based on its aggression towards Ukraine, and to be sanctioned accordingly.

Let me remind you that Motyl was using USA's and EU's publicly available legal definitions of terrorism, and official reports from EU and NATO officials on the affairs in Ukraine.

At the time, the Donbass plane crash was yet to happen- there were no reports from **US intelligence** that it was done by the so-called separatists⁴, no public announcements from US president **Obama** that the plane was shot down

³ Alexander J. Motyl. Putin's Russia as a State Sponsor of Terrorism.

<http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/blog/alexander-j-motyl/putin%E2%80%99s-russia-state-sponsor-terrorism>

⁴ US Analysis: Pro-Russian separatists likely fired missile that brought down Malaysian Airlines Flight 17. <http://whnt.com/2014/07/18/us-analysis-pro-russian-separatists-likely-fired-missile-that-brought-down-malaysian-airlines-flight-17>

from the area controlled by separatists⁵, and Russia⁶, not accidentally, provided separatists with modern weapons. There was no information about the research (carried by the independent group of journalists, the so-called **Bellingcat**) that drew the conclusions that the missile system that shot down the Malaysian Airlines plane was supplied to separatists by Russia. All of these reports were yet to come.

Apart from all this, there is now an official statement from Amnesty International⁷ that 'based on the collected evidence, Russia is fueling the conflict both by direct intervention and by supporting separatists in the East'. In the US more than 100 thousand people signed the petition⁸ that Russia, based on all facts, should be declared a state sponsor of terrorism with all the awaiting consequences.

However, the international reaction remains the same: headlines raise a question - **will Russia get away with this again?**⁹ Especially now, when the world's attention is drawn to the latest report from US Senate about the CIA prisons and torture in them.

Regarding Malaysian airplane shoot down, only the formal investigation could show whether Russia was involved in this, and if there is a

⁵ Obama says Malaysian plane shot down by missile from rebel-held part of Ukraine. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/missile-downs-malaysia-airlines-plane-over-ukraine-killing-298-kiev-blames-rebels/2014/07/18/d30205c8-0e4a-11e4-8c9a-923ecc0c7d23_story.html

⁶ Origin of the Separatists' Buk: A Bellingcat Investigation. <https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2014/11/08/origin-of-the-separatists-buk-a-bellingcat-investigation/>

⁷ Ukraine: Mounting evidence of war crimes and Russian involvement. <http://aimalaysia.org/ukraine-mounting-evidence-war-crimes-and-russian-involvement>

⁸ White House responds to petition asking to designate Russia as state sponsor of terrorism. <http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/12/06/white-house-responds-to-petition-to-designate-russia-as-state-sponsor-of-terrorism>

⁹ Amy Knight. "Flight MH17: Will Russia Get Away With It?" <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/nov/19/flight-mh-17-will-russia-get-away-it>

legal base to declare it a **state sponsor of terrorism**.

However, Western world is reluctant to officially declare that the so-called People's Republic of Donetsk and Lugansk are terrorist organisations. Obviously, it is a political decision in order to protect Russia from automatic recognition as a state sponsor of terrorism. This explanation was given by **Jewgen Worobyov**¹⁰, the famous expert of Ukraine's and Russia's affairs, during his interview with the Ukrainian news agency UNIAN. Worobyov is working at the Polish Institute of International Relations that is closely related to country's ministries of internal and foreign affairs.

State terrorism abroad

Legal basis for declaring Putin's Russia a **state sponsor of terrorism** was there well before the aggression in Ukraine. But the West then closed their eyes on what would otherwise guarantee a place among the states sponsoring terrorism for any other country.

I have in mind the two proven terrorist acts that Putin's Russia has performed abroad. They include the bombing of the former Chechnya's vice-president Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev in Doha, Qatar, in 2004, and the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko, a fugitive officer of the Russian FSB secret service, with radionuclide polonium-210 in UK in 2006.

US laws define terrorism as 'a conscious, politically motivated violence by the sub-group or secret agents carried out against civilian targets, mostly in order to influence the public'¹¹.

¹⁰ Polish expert explains why West refuses to declare Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics terrorist organizations.

<http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/10/30/polish-expert-explains-why-west-refuses-to-declare-donetsk-and-lugansk-peoples-republics-terrorist-organizations>

¹¹<http://www.nij.gov/topics/crime/terrorism/Pages/welcome.aspx#note1>

The prevailing definition of international terrorism defines it as 'terrorism carried out by governments or the one which is carried out directly or promoted and funded by state's legitimate government, or terrorist acts performed by the government against its own people or with support from international terrorism'¹².

Assassinations of Yandarbiyev and Litvinenko fall into both of these categories.

Let me remind you that Yandarbiyev was bombed in his SUV (sports utility vehicle) in Doha on February 13, 2004. Qatar's law enforcement then arrested three Russians - **Alexander Fetisov, the first secretary at the Russian embassy in Qatar, and two Russian military intelligence agents - Anatolij Jablochkov and Vasilij Pugachev.**

Fetisov had to be released due to his diplomatic immunity - he was sent out of the country. However, some authors argue that this diplomat regained freedom because of yet another Russia's action that had indications of terrorism. In Moscow's airport two members of Qatar's Olympic wrestling team¹³ were arrested and basically held hostage for completely inexplicable accusations. These men were not even traveling to Russia - they were on a transit to Serbia. Later they were allegedly exchanged for Fetisov.

Be that as it may, Jablochkov and Pugachev were found guilty of Yandarbiyev's assassination, attempted murder of his 12-year old son Dauda, and gun smuggling into Qatar. The verdict was reached by Qatar's court. The evidence was so strong that Qatar's public prosecution sought death penalty¹⁴. But again,

due to the alleged secret agreements with Moscow, the judge sentenced them to life imprisonment¹⁵. In his statement, the Qatari judge, Ibrahim Saleh al-Nisf, for the first time publicly accused senior Russian officials of orchestrating the killing of Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

Qatar soon agreed to extradite the prisoners to Russia where they would serve out their life sentence. The agents received a heroes' welcome on returning to Moscow in January 2005 but the Russian prison authorities admitted in February 2005 that they did not serve their life sentence after all.

There have been several public announcements that UK's law enforcement had incontrovertible evidence that Litvinenko had been poisoned by two **former KGB agents – Andreiy Lugovoy and Dmitry Kovtun**¹⁶. UK's authorities had no doubt that **Russian government was behind this** terrorist-like attack^{17 18}.

Truth be told, Russia refused to extradite the suspects to British law enforcement, and London itself had many doubts about holding a public hearing of the case at all¹⁹. Ben Emmerson, the lawyer of victim's widow Marina, had publicly accused British government of a possible conspiracy with

¹² Various Definitions of Terrorism. <http://www.azdema.gov/museum/famousbattles/pdf/Terrorism%20Definitions%20072809.pdf>

¹³ Спортсмены стали заложниками спецслужб. <http://www.newizv.ru/accidents/2004-03-01/4959-sportsmeny-stali-zalozhnikami-specsluzhb.html>

¹⁴ Russia 'behind Chechen murder'. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3852697.stm

¹⁵ У приговоренных в Катаре сотрудников ГПУ есть шанс вернуться в Россию в качестве "подарка" Путину.

http://newsru.com/arch/russia/01jul2004/could_be_may_be.html

¹⁶ Britain does U-turn on ex-KGB agent Litvinenko murder inquiry. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/07/22/uk-britain-russia-litvinenko-idUKKBN0FR0VX20140722>

¹⁷ Alexander Litvinenko murder: British evidence 'shows Russia involved'. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/dec/13/alexander-litvinenko-murder-british-evidence-russia>

¹⁸ Litvinenko inquiry: the proof Russia was involved in dissident's murder. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/11365730/Litvinenko-inquiry-the-proof-Russia-was-involved-in-dissidents-murder.html>

¹⁹ Litvinenko inquest in doubt after evidence ruling. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-22574761>

Russia to shut down the inquest into the death of Alexander Litvinenko to preserve trade interests²⁰.

Furthermore, in July 2006 Russia introduced a **statutory right for 'Russian officers and special units to kill extremists outside Russia'**²¹. Knowing that the definition of the extremist is left for Russian government to decide, this law is also consistent with the description of terrorism, but already legitimised by Russian government.

The warning from a former intelligence agent

On August 24, 2006, the website of US National Review magazine published a very important, yet seemingly unheard warning from **Ion Mihai Pacepa**, the former head of Romanian foreign intelligence. The publication was called "Russian Footprints"²².

Pacepa is the highest-ranking defector to the West from the former Eastern Bloc. Due to his rank, Pacepa had a lot of personal contact with **Yuri Andropov, the longtime leader of USSR KGB, and Alexander Sakharovsky, the head of KGB's First Chief Directorate (Foreign Operations)**. So Pacepa's warning should have been taken into account.

Truth is, this warning was not related neither to the aforementioned law, that was adopted in July, nor to the the future poisoning of Litvinenko which, of course, could not be predicted by Pacepa at the time.

The main thing that encouraged to react to Pacepa more seriously was the news **that Russia provides guns to terrorists**. Pacepa's

²⁰ Litvinenko inquest: UK, Russia 'conspiring for trade'. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-21583528>

²¹ Steven Eke. Russia law on killing 'extremists' abroad. BBC News, 27 November 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6188658.stm>

²² I.M.Pacepa. "Russian Footprints". National Review Online. August 24, 2006. <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/218533/russian-footprints/ion-mihai-pacepa>

article started with the public information that in the so-called Israel- Hezbollah war, the latter group (widely considered a terrorist organisation) used Russian weapons.

As a matter of fact, Kremlin would have explained this in the similar manner as it does now in Ukraine - ostensibly guns can be purchased in a supermarket. But one batch of weapons left on the battlefield by Hezbollah testified unequivocally. It had a label on it: 'Recipient - Syrian Ministry of Defence; the sender - KBP, Tula, Russia'.

There was no doubt that the guns were provided to Syria knowing that they **would end up in the hands of terrorist Hezbollah group**. But instead of explaining this in more detail, Pacepa for the first time ever decided to share publicly the personal knowledge he had from the time he worked for Romanian intelligence.

Pacepa started his reminiscence with the sentence that was constantly drilled in his head by Sakharovsky: **'In the modern world, where nuclear weapons made military force insignificant, terrorism has to become our main weapon.'**

Pacepa, based on his experience and knowledge, **explained how KBG built the modern Islamic terrorism**. Naming the operation codes and specific terrorist acts, he revealed how it was executed not only against Israel and Jewish community but also the targets in Western Europe.

According to Pacepa, in 1971 when he was visiting Lubyanka in Moscow, Sakharovskij drew his attention to the sea of red flags pinned to a world map. Each flag symbolised hijacking of an airplane. **'Plane hijacking is my invention' - he allegedly said proudly to his Romanian colleague.**

Aircraft hijackings that, as stressed by Pacepa, became the main terrorist weapons on September 11, 2001, were in fact included in KGB arsenal much earlier - in 1968.

All this information is explained more precisely in Pacepa's book *Disinformation*²³ released in 2013. The preface was written by James Woolsey, former Director of the CIA. In the aforementioned article, when the West had no idea about Russian threat, Pacepa's warning sounded prophetic.

'In the 1960s, when I was the head of Romanian foreign intelligence group in West Germany, I witnessed Hitler's Third Reich being destroyed, the war criminals facing trials, military and police forces disbanded, and the Nazis expelled from public and government posts. Nothing of the sort happened in the Soviet Union. No one faced trials, although Russian communist regime killed more than a hundred million people. Many Soviet institutions were renamed, but left operative, and are now managed by the same people who led the communist state. In 2000, former KGB agents and military officers of the Red Army occupied Kremlin and Russian government. **Germany would never have become a democratic state if Gestapo and SS had headed the parade,**' Pacepa urged the West to open their eyes.

He admitted that Putin was the first to offer help to US after September 11, 2001. But, according to Pacepa, who knows many KGB secrets, **'Putin started his country's comeback to terrorist affairs already in 2002'** - he quietly began to supply guns to Iran's terrorist regime, as well as the construction of a controversial Bushehr nuclear power plant which may have contributed to Iran's acquisition of a nuclear weapon.

Need more evidence?

It was never a secret for the West that at least a major part of Pacepa's statements were directly or indirectly based on official documents. I have

²³ Ion Mihai Pacepa. Ronald J. Rychlak. "Disinformation: Former Spy Chief Reveals Secret Strategies for Undermining Freedom, Attacking Religion, and Promoting Terrorism", 2013.

in mind the **'Mitrokhin archive'**²⁴ - a collection of handwritten notes made secretly by KGB Major Vasili Mitrokhin during his thirty years as a KGB archivist in the foreign intelligence service and the First Chief Directorate.

He offered all of these notes to UK when he contacted country's embassy in Riga in 1992. The US embassy in Tallinn had already refused the offer as they considered these documents forged. The mistake made by US diplomats was perfectly illustrated by the later public assessment made by FBI stating that 'Mitrokhin archive was the most comprehensive intelligence data ever received from any source'²⁵.

Exfiltrated by the Secret Intelligence Service in 1992, Mitrokhin and his documents were made available to **Cristopher Andrew, British historian**, after an initial and thorough review by the security services. Andrew was the first individual, not related to secret services, who was granted such unprecedented access. Based on this material, he released two books - **The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB** and **The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World**²⁷.

The book *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* basically backs up a big part of Pacepa's statements, and also states that the world

²⁴ <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/52/mitrokhin-archive>

²⁵ CAMBRIDGE SPIES: Secret KGB files unveiled at Churchill College reveal extraordinary details on Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, John Cairncross, Anthony Blunt and Kim Philby. <http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/CAMBRIDGE-SPIES-Secret-KGB-files-unveiled-Churchill-College-reveal-extraordinary-details-Guy-Burgess-Donald-Maclean-John-Cairncross-Anthony-Blunt-Kim-Philby/story-22370402-detail/story.html#ixzz3QIUMdFXk>

²⁶ Christopher Andrew. Vasili Mitrochin. "The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB", 1999.

²⁷ Christopher Andrew. "The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World", 2006.

famous terrorist Carlos Falcone was at the very least supported by KGB.

On November 23, 2007, a year after Litvinenko's poisoning - yet another article (**Terror's KGB roots**) was published in the influential newspaper - The Wall Street Journal - by one well-informed UK-based veteran of Russia's GRU military intelligence service - Boris Volodarsky²⁸.

In his essay Volodarsky not only openly **labelled Litvinenko's assassination a state-supported terrorist act**, but also warned once again that **'Russia, led by KGB's lieutenant colonel Putin, is turning back to its terrorist roots'**. In support of his key messages, Volodarsky reiterated a wide range of facts linking KGB to international terrorism.

Discussion goes beyond Soviet days

A bit earlier, on August 31, 2007, a warning called **Russia and Islam are not Separate: Why Russia backs Al-Qaeda**²⁹ was published by yet another former KGB officer Konstantin Preobrazhensky, who left Russia in 2003 and was granted the right of asylum in US in 2006. He has already written a couple of books about Russian secret service.

'The basic difference between Russia's and America's attitude towards Islamic terrorist is that America regards it as an external threat, **while Russia employs terrorism as an object and government tool both internally and abroad**. Islamic terrorism is only a part of international terrorism. KGB was using terrorism to spread communist regime principles all over the world, and it was well before Islamic terrorism became a global threat,' writes Preobrazhensky.

²⁸ Boris Volodarsky. "Terror's KGB Roots". The Wall Street Journal.
<http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB119578738628401849>

²⁹ Konstantin Preobrazhensky. "Russia and Islam are not Separate: Why Russia backs Al-Qaeda".
http://web.archive.org/web/20080627004546/http://cicentr.com/articles/kpk_russia_islam.html

And he was not talking about the past days. In this article, he recalled the story told to him personally by Litvinenko (the story was also published in Litvinenko's interview for Polish media in 2005). According to Litvinenko, **Ayman al-Zawahiri (the deputy leader of al-Qaeda at the time) was a long-time FSB agent**. In 1996 he was arrested in Dagestan where he arrived at the invitation of Russian secret services. He allegedly spent half a year in FSB training facilities, and was later sent to Afghanistan where he joined **Osama bin Laden**.

By the way, Preobrazhensky has significantly expanded Litvinenko's testimonies. He stated that, according to Litvinenko, in 1980's and 1990's FSB trained not only Zawahiri, but also the Uzbek Juma Namangoni who was seen a Bin Laden's right hand in the northern front of Afghanistan.

The information that Preobrazhensky provided about Namangoni could be known from personal experience. Ostensibly in 1989-1991, when Preobrazhensky himself was a KGB officer, Namangoni was the student of the **Saboteur training centre where KGB had been training terrorists for many years**.

Moreover, Preobrazhensky reminded the publicly announced information that **Mohamed Atta**, the terrorist who was piloting the hijacked plane who crashed into the World Trade Centre towers on September 11, was visiting Prague before these shocking events where he allegedly met with Iraq's intelligence officers. Preobrazhensky then added unambiguously: 'Iraq's intelligence was merely a client of Russian intelligence services.'

Preobrazhensky has also used the opportunity to present some never-before-published details about Litvinenko's mission providing smokescreen for Zawahiri's arrival to Russia. These controversial statements were finished with even more scandalous conclusion: **'It gives new meaning to the fact that president Putin was the first foreign leader to call president**

Bush on September 11. It can be assumed that he knew in advance what was about to happen.'

As a matter of fact, Russian secret services do not try to deny the information about Zawahiri's arrest in Dagestan³⁰. However, they claim they could not identify the globally wanted terrorist, did not try to decipher the information on his computer, and eventually, after six months of arrest, they simply let the suspects go without even identifying them.

'God has blinded them regarding our identities,' Zawahiri said later. But God had to blind FSB even more as it not only returned the cash to the terrorists, but also gave back their communication equipment, computer, and documents in Arabian that were allegedly not even read. Even more so, **after his release Zawahiri managed to spend ten more days with Islamists in Dagestan and even 'present them his product'**.

Interestingly, even Zawahiri's followers in international terrorist networks had lots of doubts about this story. Two reporters from The Wall Street Journal - Andrew Higgins and Alan Cullison³¹ - shed more light on this story in their essay **Saga of Dr. Zawahiri Sheds Light On the Roots of al Qaeda Terror** published in The Wall Street Journal in July 2002. They also argued that this journey basically changed Zawahiri's target country from Egypt to US.

Experts of international terrorism agree on the fact that the **plans of September 11 attacks against the US started when Zawahiri joined bin Laden**. Namely the deputy leader of al-Qaeda, not bin Laden himself, is widely considered to be the main executor and inspirer behind the horrible terror acts.

³⁰ Соратник бен Ладена был в руках ФСБ. <http://www.mk.ru/editions/daily/article/2003/04/29/137028-soratnik-ben-ladena-byil-v-rukah-fsb.html>

³¹ Andrew Higgins, Alan Cullison. *Saga of Dr. Zawahiri Sheds Light On the Roots of al Qaeda Terror*. The Wall Street Journal. <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB1025558570331929960>

Expert speaks out

However, neither this public information, nor Litvinenko's claims^{32 33}, nor Preobrazhenskiy's testimonies³⁴, nor the efforts of US right-wing reporters to highlight this topic every once in a while^{35 36 37}, encouraged the Western world to at least carry out a more careful **investigation of the possible contribution of the Russian secret services to September 11 tragedies or international terrorism in general**.

For a long time, even such considerations were seen as merely a conspiracy theory, and a complete waste of time. However, no one tried to answer the naturally arising question: if Russia's suspicious links to international terrorism is only a conspiracy theory, how can the consequent conspiracy theory be explained?

If that is the case, then it should be admitted that many former secret service officers, who know a lot of secrets of Putin's regime and KGB, have all conspired to '**demonise Russia**', and are urging the world to take a closer look to Kremlin's connection to terrorism³⁸.

³² Jamie Glazov. *The Putin-Osama Connection*. <http://archive.frontpagemag.com/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=29472>

³³ J.R. Nyquist. *Is Al Qaeda a Kremlin Proxy?* http://www.jrnyquist.com/nyquist_2005_0813.htm

³⁴ Konstantin Preobrazhensky. *Made in Moscow Terrorism. Communists and Muslims: The Hidden Hand of the KGB*. <http://leninandsharia.com/docs/preobrazhensky.pdf>

³⁵ JR Nyquist. *Ayman al-Zawahiri's Russian Adventure*. <http://www.financialsense.com/contributors/j-r-nyquist>

³⁶ Defector: Putin's KGB Trained Top al-Qaeda Terrorists. <http://www.thenewamerican.com/world-news/europe/item/15162-defector-putin-s-kgb-trained-top-al-qaeda-terrorists>

³⁷ Communists and Muslims: The Hidden Hand of the KGB! <http://teapartyorg.ning.com/profiles/blogs/communists-and-muslims-the-hidden-hand-of-the-kgb>

³⁸ Former KGB Colonel Kalashnikov on the Dangers of Putin Worship, Russia's Alliance With Islam. <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/bloggers/3028699/posts>

As a matter of fact, many former officers of secret services do not tend to make up such conspiracy theories. On the contrary, they were or still are seen as the credible field experts. They release popular books and are invited to advise Western special services.

In July this year, John Schindler, the **former analyst at US intelligence and the professor at the US Naval War College**, decided to put to an end this weird paradox of complete denial when it comes to Russia's potential links to international terrorism.

He carefully chose his words from the very beginning of his essay "Exploring Al Qaeda's Murky Connection To Russian Intelligence"³⁹, and stated that he only wanted to encourage discussion and further investigations. Schindler mainly focused on Zawahiri's mysterious arrest.

Still the expert draws the conclusion that **although the idea of Russia's intelligence connection to Zawahiri seems unbelievable to the West, this thought is far from incredible. Moreover - it complies perfectly with what we know about USSR/Russia's intelligence practice.** During the cold war KGB established strong connections with various terrorist groups, as well as the ones in the Middle East.

As if it wasn't enough, US intelligence analyst provides information about the relations between Chechnya's famous **terrorist Shamil Basayev's and Russian military intelligence GRU**⁴⁰. This information is often seen as a conspiracy theory in the West. However, Russian experts and political journalists has no doubt about it.

³⁹ John Schindler. Exploring Al Qaeda's Murky Connection to Russian Intelligence. http://www.businessinsider.com/exploring-al-qaedas-murky-connection-to-russian-intelligence-2014-6?utm_source=alerts&nr_email_referer=1

⁴⁰ Amy Knight. Finally, We Know About the Moscow Bombings. The New York Review of Books. November 22, 2012 Issue. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/nov/22/finally-we-know-about-moscow-bombings>

House bombings in Russia

Basayev's links to GRU indirectly lead to yet another mysterious terrorist theory (still considered conspiracy in the West) - house bombing in Russia in 1999. Schindler himself is hesitant to admit that these terrorist acts, that killed more than 300 people, were executed by FSB. But he claims that **'there has always been a solid basis for such allegations, and while they became even more reasonable during the last decade, it still is a taboo topic in Russia.'**

However, this topic is no longer forbidden in the West. Apart from Litvinenko and Feltshinsky, there are other experts who have written books about the mysteries behind the house bombing in 1999 and traces of Russian secret services.

Some of the investigations made by the acknowledged Western experts were turned into books: **David Satter** (former Financial Times and The Wall Street Journal correspondent in Moscow, currently senior fellow at Hudson University) published a book named **Darkness at Dawn: The Rise of the Russian Criminal State**⁴¹, and **John B. Dunlop**, a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, released a work **The Moscow Bombings of September 1999: Examinations of Russian Terrorist Attacks at the Onset of Vladimir Putin's Rule.**⁴²

Satter even testified at US Congress. **In 2003 former presidential candidate and influential senator John McCain** publicly stated that 'there is a basis for reliable suspicion that FSB contributed to these attacks'⁴³. All other information presented in this article is also

⁴¹ David Satter. "Darkness at Dawn: The Rise of the Russian Criminal State", 2004.

⁴² John B. Dunlop. "The Moscow Bombings of September 1999: Examinations of Russian Terrorist Attacks at the Onset of Vladimir Putin's Rule", 2014

⁴³ Floor Statement Of Senator John McCain On National Consumer Credit Reporting System Improvement Act of 2003.

<http://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/floor-statements?ID=01e8a6e7-f487-3dfe-a1c2-a8d45be2b8ab>

public. However, a more serious discussion about the connections between Putin's regime and international terrorism, which is posing huge threat to US and Europe, still hasn't started.

Therefore, I would like to go back to where I started this essay - Grybauskaitė's public statement that Russia is a terrorist country - as it might raise a question whether the discussion turned the right direction after this statement.

It is complicated to evaluate whether Lithuanian leader did a right thing when she has openly and not too diplomatically addressed this delicate matter while the West is still hesitant to dig deeper into the subject and start discussing or initiating some kind of transnational investigation that would admit or deny this potential threat, and finally put discussions to an end.

Especially now, when this problem is particularly relevant. Not only regarding Russia's aggression in Ukraine that caused the biggest crisis in relationship between Russia and the West since the cold war. In the context of Putin's presumable links to international terrorism there is a reason to take a closer look at the two Chechens in the government of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) that is considered the biggest threat to the West.

But that's a topic of another essay.