

# Half of the Russians in London are spies, claims new report

Former MI6 chief backs study that claims there are 75,000 informants

By Christopher Hope CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TENS of thousands of Russian spies are living in Britain, according to a report endorsed by the former head of MI6.

The study from the Henry Jackson Society think-tank said there were as many as 75,000 informants in London – half the 150,000 Russians who live in the capital – who are actively helping Moscow.

The study also warned of a huge increase of Russian case officers in the UK over the past eight years, with 200 officers handling an estimated 500 agents.

The report said the number of spies now comfortably outstrips Cold War levels. Oleg Gordievsky, the KGB colonel who was a double agent for MI6, estimated that in 1985 there were 39 Soviet case officers.

The modern spies could be either some of the staff working at the embassy in London, covert operatives such as those using false identities to pose as Britons or Russian nationals living openly in the UK.

The report said: “The primary task for Russia’s spies is to gather intelligence on individuals who currently occupy, or previously occupied, positions of influence and power, particularly those who are consequential to Russian affairs.”

It added: “Russia’s embassy in Kensington currently maintains a staff of 56 diplomats, around half of whom, government sources suggest, are believed to be

engaged in intelligence work – both declared and undeclared.”

The society called for the Government to redouble its efforts in combating the threat posed by Russia. It also asked ministers to examine whether the Government should assess whether to revoke the Parliamentary access of media outlets “playing host to Russian spies”.

Andrew Foxall, the report’s author, said the study “shines a light upon the activities of Russia’s cloistered intelligence agencies in Britain. The threat they pose harks back to a darker age”.

He added that the Russian spies are “not just engaged

**500**

The estimated number of Russian agents in the UK, who are handled by 200 officers

in assassinations” in the wake of the Skripal poisoning in Salisbury.

“Instead, they are busily delivering Russia’s full suite of ‘active measures’ as part of a broad and malevolent effort to undermine our society,” he said.

“This report shows that Russia’s spycraft is just as audacious as it has ever been.”

Sir Richard Dearlove, the former head of MI6, backed the report, saying that it “forcefully reminds us that Russian intelligence activity in the West is still large scale and intrusive, and that we need to devote significant resources and expertise ourselves to monitoring and blunting this threat to our national security.”

The Russian embassy in London dismissed the study as “political paranoia” in a posting on its Twitter feed.



**Naval gazing** HMS Grimsby, Hurworth, Enterprise, Cattistock and Ramsey seen from on high in Exercise Trident Juncture 18, a Nato-led multilateral joint forces deployment on land in parts of Norway, in its skies and off the Scandinavian coast.

## Defence spending black hole shrinks

By Dominic Nicholls DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT and Alan Tovey

THE Ministry of Defence’s spending plan for new equipment is “unaffordable and unsustainable” and leaves a £7 billion black hole, the Government spending watchdog has warned.

The National Audit Office (NAO) says the MoD’s £193.3 billion forecast comes in over budget, and under a “worst case” scenario, the funding gap could rise to as much as £14.8 billion.

However, the shortfall is down from the potential £20.8 billion the audit office warned of in its assessment of the previous spending plan, in January of this year.

The NAO acknowledged the MoD had become “more realistic” in assessing costs and welcomed a “more accurate use of US dollar exchange rates”.

Julian Lewis, chairman of the defence select committee, said: “We’ve made a little bit of progress in the

foothills, with an extra £1 billion from the Chancellor, but there is still a financial mountain to climb.

“Successful governments have clawed back, undermined and hollowed out the budget. The consequence is that the sums don’t add up.”

He added that “you should cut your cloth accordingly”.

Major projects covered by the plan include the new Dreadnought submarines that will replace the ageing Trident nuclear missile vessels, Type 26 frigates, F-35B stealth fighters, P-8 maritime spyplanes and new armoured vehicles for the Army. Costs have also been included for the Type 31e “budget frigates” that will bolster the fleet.

The MoD hopes to use the long-delayed Modernising Defence Programme review to help close the funds gap.

A defence source told *The Daily Telegraph* that the extra £1 billion from the Treasury would prevent the situation from being considerably worse.

## Village ‘doubly thankful’ to have no war casualties

By Anna Behrmann

A VILLAGE that welcomed back every troop it sent to both world wars has launched a campaign to be recognised as “doubly thankful” ahead of the Armistice centenary.

Historians in Butterson, Staffs, believe they have evidence that no one from their village died in the 20th-century’s two great conflicts.

The term “thankful” was first coined in the 1930s to describe the smattering of Britain’s 16,000 villages that lost no residents during the First World War.

While there are now believed to be around 54 such villages – once recognisable by

the absence of a war memorial – even fewer hold the title of “doubly thankful”.

This is reserved for villages where every soldier who fought between 1914-18 and 1939-45 survived. Butterson, with a population of 200, takes the total to 19.

Maggie Risby, the 67-year-old warden of St Bartholomew’s church in Butterson, has spent years researching and believes 15 men made it back from the horrors of the First World War, while 13 returned from the Second World War.

On Nov 11, Butterson will unveil a sign “doubly thankful” sign for the village, which has been sponsored by its parish council.

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