

Litvinenko's life as an intelligence officer and a Russian dissident

On 26 July 2002 the British Embassy in Moscow sent a report to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) about a video link discussion in which Alexander Litvinenko took part from London with an unofficial commission set up to investigate the 1999 apartment house bombing.

“Litvinenko repeated his claims to have been in contact with Achimez Gochiyaev, one of the suspects in the 1999 bombings.” He claimed that someone had contacted Felshtinsky (a writer who was taking part with Litvinenko in the video link) at the end of March 2002. A month later he and Litvinenko had travelled to an unspecified European country to meet a go-between and hand over a list of questions. A few days later in another country the courier handed over a letter, family photos of Gochiyaev and video footage. Although expected to show the video material, Litvinenko said they could not do so for technical reasons.

Litvinenko added that this had only been a first contact with Gochiyaev and he might be ready to give a good deal more information.

The Commission concluded that the new information was worth investigating, but noted that they could neither confirm nor deny it at this stage.

An FSB spokesman said that they would not engage in polemics with self-publicists such as Litvinenko. He added that “information circulated by Litvinenko is unfounded and cannot be taken seriously by investigators.”

An internal FCO report in May 2003 stated that:

“On 25 April, three days before Politkovskaya's article appeared, Aleksander Litvinenko – former FSB officer in England who claims i. a. that the FSB plotted the 1999 apartment explosions – said that he had met a Duma deputy, Sergei Yushenkov, in London in early April and had passed to him information about Khanpasha Terkibaev. Litvinenko claimed Terkibaev was an FSB (not GRU) agent who had taken part in the Dubrovka (theatre) siege but left shortly before it was stormed. Yushenkov said he would check these claims shortly before he was murdered in an apparent professional assassination.

A government briefing document dated December 2006 provided a background note on Alexander Litvinenko which states:

- After working in the KGB and its successor, the FSB, Litvinenko publicly accused his superiors of ordering the assassination of Russian billionaire Boris Berezovsky. Litvinenko was arrested by Russian authorities, released and later fled to the UK, where he was granted political asylum and citizenship.
- In the UK, Litvinenko published two books, *Blowing up Russia: Terror from Within* and *Gang from Lubyanka*, where he described Vladimir Putin's rise to power as a coup d'état organized by the FSB. He stated a key element of FSB's strategy was to frighten Russians by bombing apartment buildings in Moscow and other Russian cities. He alleged the bombings were organized by FSB and blamed on Chechen terrorists to legitimise reprisal through military force in Chechnya.