

The Moscow Coup 25 Years On

By Gordon Logan – 19th August 2016

It is now 15 years since my article entitled “Understanding the Moscow Coup of August 1991” was posted on Cryptome.org, and 25 years since the unsuccessful coup itself.

The article summarized the bulky ‘Markov File’, which deals with the Moscow Coup, and the murders of Georgi Markov in 1978 and Robert Maxwell in 1991, and was placed as a deposited paper in the House of Commons library in London in early 2000 by Sir Teddy Taylor MP.

The file, which began in late 1999 as series of postings on David Shayler’s now defunct website, describes in detail with documentation how the Chairman of the KGB, Vladimir Kryuchkov, succumbed to weeks of incremental psychological warfare, and launched the hard-liners’ coup prematurely without having made any plans (by his own admission).

*The Moscow Coup of August 1991 was precipitated two days **prior to** the Union Treaty by the removal of the Director and Deputy Director of the Bulgarian Intelligence Service, Generals Toshkov and Raikov by the new pro-western Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev. He fired them as a result of information that I gave him to the effect that Toshkov and Raikov had concealed from him the role of MI6 in the notorious ‘Bulgarian umbrella’ murder of Bulgarian writer and dissident Georgi Markov in 1978. Zhelev had been steered into a confrontation with the British Government owing to his insistence that the killing be fully investigated – something the British didn’t want. From the point of view of KGB chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, the removal of Generals Toshkov and Raikov was a gross violation of the agreement made in 1989 in Malta between Bush and Gorbachev that Bulgaria would remain in the Soviet sphere of influence.*

In his memoirs (p. 146), Zhelev writes ‘And now something happened that I would never have believed in my wildest dreams. Fate offered me the opportunity not only to be present at, but to take part in the destruction of the Soviet Union’.

The publication of the Markov File and the Cryptome article had several notable consequences.

1. The British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook was interested in the file, according to Home Secretary Jack Straw, and Cook decided to make deposited papers available to journalists in the House of Commons Library. As British Foreign Secretary, Cook would have been able to get confirmation of the file’s veracity from MI6 – hence his interest in the file.

2. The Cryptome article was copied to www.infowarrior.org – the website of Richard Forno, former special consultant to the Office of the US Secretary of Defense. Forno was also President of the Potomac Chapter of the National Military Intelligence Association. His high level contacts and high level of security clearance probably gave him prior knowledge of the inside story of the Moscow Coup.

3. In a paper published on the NATO website in November 2002, the Romanian Ambassador to Switzerland, Dr Ionel Sava, cited me as an authority on the role of the KGB in the Moscow coup and gave a link to my article on Forno’s website. Sava is another insider, who was probably in a position to confirm the veracity of the story from the Romanian intelligence

service. At about the same time, the Romanians named their new car, formerly the X90, the Dacia Logan.

4. On 17th August 2001, on the 10th anniversary of the Moscow coup, the heavyweight Moscow weekly, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, owned at the time by Yeltsin's eminence grise Boris Berezovsky, ran a long article in its military section giving my account of the coup.
http://nvo.ng.ru/spforces/2001-08-17/7_step.html

5. Robert Eringer, journalist and covert FBI officer sent me an e-mail with a book proposal that I didn't take up. Eringer knew Kryuchkov very well, having spent weeks discretely debriefing him in retirement in Moscow after the coup.

6. In Bulgaria, where it all started, I met former President Zhelyu Zhelev for two hours in 2001. A few weeks previously, the Bulgarian press had been full of stories about my account of the killing of Georgi Markov in 1978 and its role in the Moscow events of August 1991.

After returning to Moscow in August 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev famously said that the truth about the coup would never come out. Ten years later, after my revelations, he continued the cover-up with a one liner, saying that Kryuchkov had launched the coup because he was worried about getting fired.

After the Markov File was deposited in the House of Commons Library in early 2000, the former Director General of MI6, Sir Richard Dearlove, ordered my assassination not once but twice. The first attempt was by poisoning in Saudi Arabia in November 2000, and the second was an attempted vehicular homicide in Abu Dhabi in December 2002. I forced his resignation in August 2003.

It is perhaps interesting that novelist and former MI6 officer, Alex Dryden, in his best selling novel 'Moscow Sting' names his hero – a renegade spy – Logan! "Some said Logan had been the best intelligence officer[...]in Europe's south-eastern sector – the 'Balkan beat' as the British called it." p. 21.

As regards my present views, the British government needs to understand that the doctrine of 'mutually assured destruction' or deterrence has been abandoned by the Washington neocons and replaced by 'first strike capability'. With NATO's expansion to the Russian border, deterrence has reached the end of its shelf life. Britain's nuclear weapons, far from being a deterrent, are magnets for nuclear targeting. There are experts at the Royal Institute for International Affairs who believe that a nuclear war is not only possible but probable. Lord Rothschild has said that the geopolitical situation has not been so dangerous since 1945. George Soros has been calling for war on Russia [sic]. The UK has no civil defence to speak of. The bases at Holy Loch and Lakenheath must be closed down immediately.

UNDERSTANDING THE MOSCOW COUP OF AUGUST 1991

Revised August 19th 2016

By Gordon Logan

The most important facts about the coup are:

1. that KGB Chairman Kryuchkov was the key figure and initiator of the coup, and triggered it in a fit of pique against the better judgement of his closest advisers (who were *not* members of the GKChP). The decision to launch the coup was taken 2 days *prior to* the publication of the new Union Treaty. The members of the GKChP were roped in at the last moment, using various pretexts, the main one of which was the forthcoming Union Treaty, which was published as a deliberate provocation. A victim of psychological warfare, Kryuchkov was unable to provide any planning or leadership
2. that Gorbachev knew that Yeltsin had brought key figures of the military over to their side, and that the coup would probably fail (see Chernyaev, Anatoli. *Six Years with Gorbachev*. Chap. 9). However Gorbachev did not realize that Yeltsin would be the new master after the failure of the coup. A key Yeltsin ally was the commander of the Soviet air force, Marshal Yevgeni Shaposhnikov, who threatened to bomb the Kremlin during the coup, and a few months later betrayed Gorbachev by transferring the Soviet nuclear deterrent to the President of Russia, which was the Soviet Union's real coup de grace.

Remnick, *Resurrection*. p. 6 "According to leaders of the failed coup in 1991, the real coup, the undermining of Soviet power, was an intricate plot devised by Gorbachev and Yeltsin with help from 'foreign agents' in the West."

One of the plotters, Gen. Varennikov, had insisted on being tried and in early August 1994 was found not guilty. At the time of Varennikov's acquittal, Yeltsin said that "the full truth about the coup cannot be told". Communist leader Gennadi Zyuganov also talks of the coup being 'orchestrated' by someone from the West (in his book Understanding Russia - in Russian). General Lebed has written: "There was no putsch as such, it was a provocation, planned with genius, carried out brilliantly, large-scale and unprecedented, where roles were set down for both the clever and the stupid."

THE RUN-UP TO THE COUP - JUNE 1991

DUMA 8.6.91 p. 1

US VICE PRESIDENT DAN QUAYLE STOPS FOR A FEW HOURS IN SOFIA

Front page photograph of Quayle in front of Alexander Nevsky cathedral

Caption: 'US Vice-President Dan Quayle maintained total neutrality during his meeting with some of the people of Sofia'.

The communist 'Duma' report says that Quayle was whistled by opposition supporters when he said that the communist-dominated Parliament "represented unity and strength". People had no doubt been hoping that he would express political support for the opposition, which were facing elections four months later. The report of Quayle's neutrality, combined with the fatal medical certificate that I had been given, caused me to write the letter dated 10th June

1991 revealing the involvement of new, squeaky clean communist leader and KGB appointee, Alexander Lilov, in the murders of Georgi Markov and Lyudmila Zhivkova. (There had been an understanding between the KGB and the West that Lilov should remain in charge behind the scenes in Bulgaria and be responsible for covering up for both himself and British double agent, Mercia Macdermott). The letter was faxed to Britain and intercepted by both sides, thus causing a highly personal, and secret, confrontation between the West and KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov. In Sofia, people who had associated with me behaved as if in a state of severe shock after the 10th, presumably because of interrogation by the State Security, which would have wanted me to know who had tipped me off about Lilov. In fact, nobody had: it had been a shrewd guess, which was to be confirmed by subsequent investigation and tip-offs.

PODKREPA 11-18.6.91 p. 1

Front page story about Quayle's visit beginning with the following sentence:

“With his Bulgarian visit the American vice-president belies the joke that Americans don't know their geography, and leaves us with *the hope that Malta is a only a port, and not a promise.*”

The reference to Malta concerns the secret agreement made at the Malta summit of December 1989 between Bush and Gorbachev to leave Bulgaria in the Soviet sphere of influence.

FAKS 14.6.91 p. 1

STATE DEPARTMENT FLATTERS GORBACHEV

Soviet Television announced that Secretary of State James Baker had told the US Senate that Perestroika was “perhaps the biggest revolution of the twentieth century, which was why it needed the support of the United States”.

Baker was pouring oil on very troubled waters. On 17th June, KGB Chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov made an exceptionally inflammatory secret speech to the Supreme Soviet to the effect that CIA agents were undermining the Soviet Union (a strange claim since Aldrich Ames was giving Kryuchkov full information on CIA agents and operations). The real reason for Kryuchkov's anger was elsewhere. Kryuchkov, as head of the First Chief Directorate of the KGB in 1978, had personally persuaded Yuri Andropov to agree to the Bulgarian request for technical help in the murder of Georgi Markov. This resulted in the use of the tell-tale poison pellet that pointed to the KGB - a blunder that Kryuchkov was extremely sensitive to, and for which he demoted Kalugin. He believed that the British had given me Lilov's name as a tit-for-tat because the KGB had confirmed to me that Georgi Markov's murder had been initiated by the British double agent, Mercia Macdermott. Kryuchkov's speech set the stage for the attempted 'constitutional coup', when Prime Minister Pavlov attempted to convince the Supreme Soviet to give him some of Gorbachev's powers.

On 20th June, James Baker had a secret meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Bessmertnikh in Berlin and told him to warn Gorbachev of the danger of a coup. Gorbachev addressed the Supreme Soviet on 23rd June and mollified the hardliners.

On 21st June, Soviet Ambassador to Sofia, Viktor Sharapov, sends Col. Arkadii Nikolov to deliver a packet and a bundle of letters from Bulgarian army officers to Soviet Defence Minister Yazov. Yazov meets Nikolov and provides him with assurances. Nikolov reports that 'Bulgaria's future is assured' when he returns to Sofia, but refuses to give any further details. In early August, Bulgarian Chief of Staff Gen. Radyu Minchev plots to take over from the Minister of Defence, Gen. Mutafchiev. His plot is nipped in the bud by President Zhelev, who fires him.

24 CHASA

THE SEVEN OFFER A SEAT TO THE SOVIET PRESIDENT

British Prime Minister John Major has invited Soviet President Gorbachev to attend the G7 meeting in London. Major also announced before Parliament that he had invited Gorbachev to remain in London for bilateral meetings after the discussions with the leaders of the Seven.

The purpose of keeping Gorbachev in London, after the rejection of his request for financial aid for his country's uncertain economic reforms, may have been to provoke Kryuchkov into triggering the coup, on the understanding that Gorbachev could return to Moscow after Yeltsin, Shaposhnikov et al had restored the President's authority.

EVENTS IN SOFIA AND MOSCOW IN AUGUST 1991

On the morning of Monday, August 5th, the author announced publicly at a press conference that socialist/communist leader Alexander Lilov was responsible for the murders of Georgi Markov and Lyudmila Zhivkova. (reported in *Demokratiya* 6.8.91 p. 1-2 under the headline 'Englishman accuses Lilov of involvement in the Markov murder'). Lilov responded on page 6 of 'Duma' the next day with a long letter to the editor of *Demokratiya* complaining that my 'evil libel was a part of the 'personal war' against the BSP'.

Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*. p. 448

On August 6th, after Gorbachev and his family had flown to the Crimea for their summer vacation, Kryuchkov called two of his top aides and told them to write a detailed memorandum analyzing the situation in the country in terms of instituting an immediate state of emergency. The two KGB officials were joined by General Pavel Grachev of the Ministry of Defence. After two days at the KGB's posh recreation and work complex in the village of Mashkino, the working group told Kryuchkov that a state of emergency would be an extremely complicated affair politically and might even cause further disorder in the country.

On 9th August, there was a TV debate between Lilov and Dimitrov in which my accusations were raised. Lilov did not defend himself well, his oily smile being wholly inappropriate in view of the nature of the accusations, which were not only true, but extremely plausible to the Bulgarian public.

On Monday 12th August I circulated an inflammatory leaflet in Bulgarian 'proving' Lilov's role in the Markov murder to journalists. I delivered copies to Les Buchanan, Deputy Head of Mission of the British Embassy, and Doug Smith, Political Officer of the US Embassy, and

to the Socialist Party, and faxed an English translation to several numbers in Britain on the 14th and 15th. The leaflet contained the following remark:

“Vice President and former Minister of the Interior, Atanas Semerdzhiev states that people from his ministry may have been involved, but that they were not the organizers of the murder.”

with the inflammatory comment:

“Vice President Semerdzhiev’s remark is very important and means that the organizers (or the organizer) were up in the Politburo and not in the State Security.”

Of course, Semerdzhiev really meant that the organizers were MI6 and Mrs. Macdermott. I was rewarding his relative discretion by threatening to decapitate both his intelligence service and the Socialist Party, which was what happened, the following day, and on December 12th, respectively.

On Tuesday, 13th August, at 2 p.m. I visited Philip Dimitrov, President of the Coordinating Council of the opposition in his office and placed a piece of paper on the coffee table in front of us. The paper had the following written on it: “Lilov is responsible for the murders of Georgi Markov and Lyudmila Zhivkova, and for the campaign to change Turkish names. but behind him is British double agent Mercia Macdermott.” I told Dimitrov that the information could be used to tame the communist intelligence service.

That week, and probably on that day, President Zhelev confronted his two intelligence chiefs and fired them. Rumours of political crisis swept the capital that week.

DEMOKRATSIYA 2.9.91 p. 1

DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE MAY BE CHANGED

*“During the last few days it became clear that the change could no longer be kept secret from journalists, there was a ‘leak’ to the effect that dismissals were going to take place because President Zhelev had learned about the Moscow coup from his wife, and not from the security services. The problem with that idea, is that *the changes in the National Intelligence Service were planned before the events in the Soviet Union.*”*

It is worth noting that Demokratsiya was the newspaper that was closest to the presidency. In a recent interview with Hristo Hristov, when asked about the firing of his intelligence chiefs, former President Zhelev said he was not sure when it happened, and would have to check his files. He did however concede that it was before the Moscow coup, and not after.

DEMOKRATSIYA 4.9.91 p. 1

“Much speculation has been caused by the slow reaction of the Chief of the President’s office, who did not inform [journalists] of the changes in the Intelligence Service at the time they occurred.” (The newspapers ‘Demokratsiya’, ‘24 Chasa’ and ‘Faks’ reported the changes, before they were announced officially. The presidential decree appointing the new intelligence chief is dated 30th August.)

168 CHASA 20.8.91 p. 20

Interview with Alan Weinstein of the Center for Democracy

“In some of the new democracies of Central and Eastern there is hardly adequate oversight of the intelligence services. The President of Bulgaria himself, Zhelyu Zhelev complains that he doesn't know whether the KGB is still at work in Bulgaria.”

Translation of interview by David Aikman from Time magazine.

Weinstein's comment is remarkably well timed, in the light of President Zhelev's removal of the intelligence chiefs.

24 CHASA 31.8.91 p. 3

CHANGE OF LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

“The Director Rumen Toshkov and the Deputy Director Radoslav Raikov are on leave. A decree is expected from President Zhelev announcing their dismissal. Sources within the National Intelligence Service say *that the reason lies* not only in their insufficient competence, but also *in serious doubts about their loyalty. Mr. Toshkov had close connections with his Soviet counterparts and with certain people in the leadership of the Bulgarian Socialist Party.*”

Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*. p. 448

On August 14, Kryuchkov called the working group together once more and told them to work out documents for a state of emergency. They had no time to lose. By the 16th, a draft of the first declaration of the State Committee for the State of Emergency was on Kryuchkov's desk. At two o'clock that afternoon, Kryuchkov called in his deputy Genii Ageyev and told him to form a group to go to Foros in the Crimea to plan the disconnection of Gorbachev's communication system with the outside world.

In Gorbachev's memoirs he states that Yeltsin phoned him at Foros on 14th August. Yeltsin discussed the hardliners' intentions and may have signalled that the coup was now on.

VECHERNI NOVINI 6.1.92 p. 7

Extracts from interview in Paris Match with Ulysse Gosset And Vladimir Fedorovski, authors of 'The Secret Story of the Coup d'Etat'.

P.M. In your book you hint that a man from the KGB informed you about the coup. How did that happen?

U.G. The KGB agent warned us on 14th August that Gorbachev would be removed by the party hardliners. He was a high-ranking KGB officer in plain clothes [...] he didn't want to be recognized so he wore an anorak with the hood over his head, which concealed his face. Like the secret services, he fixed a meeting with us in a well-known public place, where he turned up and we followed him. This informer had told Alexander Yakovlev (Gorbachev's former adviser), and a year earlier he had warned Edward Shevardnadze of preparations for

seizure of power. During the coup, he continued to inform the reformers of what was happening in the conspirators' camp. He wasn't the only one. Boris Yeltsin also had KGB informers in the army and the state bureaucracy. He was informed of the movement of the military units. [...] There was to be no mass repression until the coup was legally confirmed by the Supreme Soviet, which was dominated by conservatives, and its slippery President Lukyanov.

On Friday 16th August the US Mediterranean Fleet docked in the Bulgarian port of Varna for the first time in history. Somebody in the State Department had decided that Uncle Sam should join the party...

OTECHESTVEN VESTNIK 24.10.91 p. 1

“Yeltsin answered that on the 19th August, during the most dramatic hours for Russia, the world and democracy, the first person to call on Yeltsin's only working telephone was, unexpectedly, [Bulgarian President] Zhelyu Zhelev. [...] Yeltsin said that this was the beginning of a personal friendship, and called the visit a historic occasion. [...] From Boris Yeltsin I heard words that one doesn't hear every day. [...] The two emphasized that direct contacts between them had begun on 19th August with their first telephone conversation.

If one knows the background, it is not at all surprising that Zhelev was the first foreign statesman to call Yeltsin.

Remnick, *Resurrection*.

p. 15 "The Soviet Union was doomed to collapse as a multinational empire. But it was an entirely different matter when this historical moment would happen," said Galina Starovoitova. "My feeling is that the disintegration was inevitable but *the historical moment, the timing, was accidental*. If it hadn't been for *a number of subjective factors* -and not just the personal feud between Yeltsin and Gorbachev - it all could have happened thirty or fifty years later than it did!"

Starovoitova says the timing was accidental. That is a clear rejection of the idea that the union treaty had precipitated the coup. What are the 'subjective factors'?

RUSKA PRESA No. 1. 6-20th April 1992 p. 8

Headline: ***POLITICAL PRISONER No. 1***

Translation from Russian into Bulgarian of extract from interview with Lyudmila Lukyanova, wife of Anatolii Lukyanov. Interviewer was Yuri Izyumov of 'Glasnost', where the interview first appeared. Lukanov had been a prisoner in 'Matroskoi tishine' since August 1991, and no journalists had been allowed to see him.

Yuri Izyumov: There is a theory that the August events which led to the temporary removal of the CPSU from the political scene and to the coup d'état were a well worked out operation. Some people believe that the nerve centre of the operation was the democrats, others say it was the Western secret services. What is your opinion on the matter?

Lyudmila Lukyanova: I don't exclude the theory that the appearance of troops in Moscow was planned by Gorbachev himself, as a reaction to his deteriorating relations with Yeltsin. So as to put pressure on him. But events didn't work out as Gorbachev had planned. They think that the end result wasn't at all what he had expected. It is difficult to believe that a person like Kryuchkov would undertake such a major operation without the help of Gorbachev. *There is also a belief that at the bottom of the whole operation lies another person, who has remained in the shade. It is very likely that it was he that caused the GKChP to do what it did.* Time will clarify the roles of the others.

Jeff Trimble of Time magazine wrote after the coup that "*Boris Yeltsin talks enigmatically about a 'ninth' participant in the coup*".

Vladimir Solovyov and Elena Klepikova. *Boris Yeltsin. A Political Biography*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. London. 1992. p. 267

This chapter contains more questions than answers.

The Gorbachev drama has had a happy ending: finally free, he returned late at night to a liberated Moscow.

The plotters have been arrested, and Gorbachev is testifying, either as a victim or as a witness – it is not clear which.

He has set up his own presidential commission to investigate the "coup" and insists that the trial be held behind closed doors, lest State secrets be divulged.

In the Russian White House, the subject is taboo. Even talkative Sukhanov refuses outright to discuss those three days, though he spent them at Yeltsin's side. We feel we have run into a wall. But there is plenty of curiosity: the putsch chapter, yet unwritten, was the main reason Yeltsin asked to see our manuscript [...] finally one of Yeltsin's supporters, unable to hold back, remarked on the "mad theory." "In America, your guys know everything better than we do. Bush knows everything. He knew from the start that the coup was doomed. Just be patient – it's not time yet."

So our plot has a happy ending without a real *dénouement*. It's not time yet.

We know who the hero of August was – Boris Yeltsin. His triumph over the conspirators exceeded even his election victory and endowed his reign with an extra dose of legitimacy. Henceforth his real inauguration date would be the 19th of August. The country had voted for a President and a knight in armor had shown up in addition.

Who then was the villain, if villain there was?

Whatever his name was, he was, without realizing it, "part of the power that would alone work evil, but engenders good." A midwife to history, a catalyst to wreck stagnation, a street sweeper for the nation, he ended up by wrecking everything he had launched a coup to retain: the Empire, the ideology, the Party, the KGB."

Who is the villain, if not one of the eight conspirators? The description best fits Soviet Ambassador, KGB General Viktor Sharapov, who in spite of the fact that he spent two days

visiting Bulgarian politicians to enlist their support during the coup, was the only Ambassador not to be recalled to Moscow, in order to cover up his no doubt crucial role in the coup itself. I was as surprised as anybody else when the coup was announced. I called the Deputy Head of Mission, Les Buchanan on the Monday and apologized for the mess. He said it came as a surprise to him, but sounded strangely unconcerned. Since I had kept him and the Americans informed, I concluded that something had been cooked up behind the scenes.

Bulgarian politicians argued well into 1992 about the Bulgarian connection with the Moscow coup, and a parliamentary inquiry was set up to investigate the link. The Russians got KGB generals Bakatin and Kalugin to deny it. They even sent a delegation to Sofia to deny it, but the speculation continued, with repeated demands for the recall of Soviet ambassador Sharapov, who had kept his job because of the cover-up, much to the anger of many Bulgarians.

It is notable that since the author started making the above revelations, the decade of whining in Moscow about a 'Western conspiracy' being behind the coup has ceased, and was noticeably absent during the last few days, which were of course the tenth anniversary.

FAKS 13.9.91

WHY DID KRYUCHKOV MAKE SUCH A MESS OF HIS COUP?

Telegraf 5.12.91 Interview with Vladimir Kryuchkov

“We strengthened our forces round the Kremlin. That was on the 19th. But we simply weren't prepared and in the morning we hadn't given any orders. After that, everything went wrong. What we should have done on the 19th didn't happen.”

On the day of the Moscow coup, 19th August, Bulgarian President Zhelev and British Prime Minister, John Major, were the first two foreign heads of state to phone Yeltsin in the White House in Moscow. On 1st September, Major was the first foreign head of state to visit Moscow after the coup. Three weeks later Zhelev visited Washington and met President Bush. A few weeks later Zhelev visited Moscow and was the first foreign head of state to establish diplomatic relations with Yeltsin.

After the defeat of the coup, John Major sent a message of sympathy to President Zhelev because of the turmoil I had caused, stating how he ‘sympathized with you and the Bulgarian people during the recent events’. Major’s message is strange – given the fact that officially almost nothing had happened in Bulgaria. The firing of the intelligence chiefs hadn't yet been announced, nor was Gen. Radyu Minchev's thwarted attempt to take over the Bulgarian Defence Ministry ever officially acknowledged although it was reported in the press, and he was prematurely pensioned off.

I could have got out of Bulgaria in May – a former ambassador had offered me a one way ticket back to London – but I reckoned that I had a window of opportunity that it would be a pity to waste. My sudden death would have been too high profile for the KGB to try again, though I was told in August, just before the coup, that they dearly wanted to. I availed myself of the offer of the ticket a year later.

The last word goes to John Dickie, one of the innumerable MI6 denizens of Britain's media. (Incidentally, for a description (in conversation) of when and how they began to be infiltrated, I am grateful to Mr. D. Keddie of Edinburgh.)

“The dossiers of the Bulgarian Secret Service revealed that the poison used in the umbrella ferule to murder the dissident writer Georgi Markov in London in 1978 was supplied by the KGB. Gorbachev's glasnost not only transformed the atmosphere inside the Soviet Union, enabling people to talk freely to one another and say what they thought in public for the first time since 1917. Travellers from the West also enjoyed new freedom to talk to people and acquire information. Diplomats, businessmen and journalists were able to mingle freely with ordinary citizens who were no longer scared to speak their minds. One dramatic event changed the East-West power struggle in terms of espionage and diplomacy: the coup that failed in Moscow on 19th August 1991. The KGB bungled the operations designed to topple Gorbachev and turn back the clock on reform. Vladimir Kryuchkov, the KGB chairman who was one of the leaders of the junta, failed to silence Boris Yeltsin and Eduard Shevardnadze at the outset.”

John Dickie, *Inside the Foreign Office*. p. 220

The above quotation from Dickie's book is curious and revealing. It is curious because it jumps from 1978 to 1991, from the Markov murder to the Moscow coup, via a remark about 'travellers from the West' acquiring information. Clearly someone has told Dickie something. If that sentence about 'acquiring information' is supposed to apply to me, it is only partly correct. Certainly, I had freedom in that I was operating in a new, transitional society in which there were political alternatives and choices, which allowed me to split the communists, but information didn't fall in my lap. Getting it involved two attempts to liquidate me – in 1984 when MI6 tried to trick the Bulgarians into killing me, and in 1991 when the KGB intended to kill me after confirming that Mrs. Macdermott had been a double agent. These incidents yielded crucial information. Note that Dickie's first line is incorrect: almost nothing has come out of the Bulgarian dossiers that he refers to, other than the fact that Markov was murdered, and about 25 documents indicating that as a dissident he was deemed to be a major problem.

G.L.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

REFERENCE: MR GORDON LOGAN

Mr Logan has high general abilities and is a skilled linguist and teacher. I came to know him well during the three years (1986-89) of my appointment as British Ambassador to Bulgaria. Mr Logan himself spent some twelve or more years in Bulgaria, at first teaching in an English-medium school under the auspices of the British Council, then later in a French-medium Lycée run by the French Embassy, and latterly as a free-lance teacher and translator, at times on behalf of Sofia University. He did not have an easy time in Bulgaria, as his independence of mind made him unpopular with authority, but he overcame his difficulties with courage and tenacity. He was liked and respected by his pupils. He is adaptable, and a

quick learner. I can recommend Mr Logan for any post for which his teaching experience or his excellent knowledge of French and Bulgarian may render him eligible.

[Signature]

J.H. Fawcett