

Gloves Off: Russia Names CIA Station Chief in Moscow

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Earlier this week, the [CIA's Russian outpost](#) was deeply humiliated when (in a calculated move following accusations that the US had not gotten appropriate Russian information on the two Boston bombers, and following the visit of John Kerry whose primary objective was to, unsuccessfully, get Russia to relent on Syria) Russia's FSB exposed and broadcast on live TV the arrest of its agents caught while attempting to recruit a Russian spy.

Back then we suggested to "expect a prompt retaliation by the US" however it turns out Russia was not nearly done with embarrassing the US in what is becoming an obvious campaign to humiliate the US intelligence service, this time by going where very few clandestine operations go, at least during peacetime detente: by publicly exposing the head counterparty US spy. As [Telegraph](#) reports, "Russia's Federal Security Service **has publicly revealed the identity of a man it calls the CIA station chief in Moscow, in what experts say is a serious breach of intelligence protocol.**"

Speaking to Russian media about the recent capture of an alleged CIA spy in a wig in Moscow, an FSB spokesman named the CIA "resident", or station chief, in the capital.

A diplomat of the same name is listed as a Counsellor in the US Moscow embassy in the autumn-winter 2012-13 edition of a directory of foreign diplomatic, media and business offices in the city.

With tensions between the US and Russia already at high levels, and with both countries having sent naval support in the vicinity of Syria which is increasingly looking like the next powder keg, the US will not be happy with this dramatic and unexpected escalation in diplomatic warfare:

The naming of the top CIA figure working in Russia is likely to provoke an angry response in Washington, and damage important bilateral links in the struggle against global terrorism.

It is common practise for US and Russian intelligence agencies to identify to each other their top officials in their respective embassies, but they are not identified publicly.

The exposure appears to be a calculated snub to Washington, a month after the two countries agreed to share intelligence over the Boston Marathon bombing, which was allegedly carried out by two men with roots in Russia's North Caucasus region.

RT has more on the [official statement](#):

As early as by autumn 2011, the FSB was aware that the CIA was pursuing a goal to get an informer within the Russian special services, the agent told RT.

“Those were not one-off events, which caused our concern,” the operative pointed out. “Therefore, we decided to warn our American colleagues and ask them to stop these activities.”

At a time, the FSB did not make public any information they knew about the CIA operations in Moscow, but held a meeting with the head of their station’s chief in Moscow, Stephen Holmes.

“We hoped our American colleagues would hear us, given that we also presented to them precise information about CIA officers making recruitment attempts in Moscow and who exactly was doing that,” the source added.

In particular, back then, the FSB named such American agents as Benjamin Dillon, third secretary of the American Embassy in Moscow. Last year, “Dillon got into the same story as Fogle” and was expelled from Russia in January, the source said.

“Hoping that the CIA would make necessary conclusions from the incident, we did not make that case public,” he said. Apparently, the Americans did not appreciate the FSB’s “correct attitude towards professional ethics.”

The FSB was aware that Ryan Fogle worked for the CIA since his arrival in Moscow in April 2011. Russian intelligence, “keeps an eye on” representatives of all foreign special services and the American intelligence agency is no exception to the rule, the source noted.

“The point of such an approach is to terminate all possible actions by foreign intelligence that could pose a threat to Russia’s security,” the operative said. **“This, certainly, does not refer to diplomats who do their duties on behalf of the US State Department.”**

Curiously, and hinting that this action was in response to recent escalations in Syria, the language used by Russia was a carbon copy replica of that used by Obama recently to decry Syrian use of chemical weapons, which is the populist lynchpin of the US narrative in obtaining public support for eventual military escalation:

An FSB spokesman told the Interfax news agency on Friday that **the US had “crossed a red line” with Mr Fogle’s actions**, because the CIA had already been warned to stop trying to recruit Russian citizens.

“In October 2011, the FSB officially warned the station chief of the CIA in Moscow, that in the case of continuing provocative recruitment actions with regard to employees of the Russian special services, the FSB would take symmetrical actions with regard to CIA officers,” the spokesman said.

A spokesman for the US embassy in Moscow was not immediately available for comment on Friday afternoon.

Just like Israel continues to bombard Syria without any consequences, so Russia continues to use the US State Department as a punching bag without fear of retaliation.

Will the US continue taking it, or will it, as the Telegraph suggests, “provoke an angry response in Washington, and damage important bilateral links...” And how long until Israel conducts another overnight raid in Syria, only this time a Syria which as the [NYT reported](#) has now received advanced Russian Yakhonts missiles whose main difference from all prior Syrian armaments is that they are outfitted with “offensive radar” and can be used for more than just self-defense.

Unlike Scud and other longer-range surface-to-surface missiles that the Assad government has used against opposition forces, the Yakhont antiship missile system provides the Syrian military a formidable weapon to counter any effort by international forces to reinforce Syrian opposition fighters by imposing a naval embargo, establishing a no-fly zone or carrying out limited airstrikes.

So with Israel suddenly facing the prospect of actual casualties should it engage in more air raids over Syrian airspace, just what avenues are left for telegraphing superiority and supremacy in the latest middle eastern hotbed of future escalation? Or does this mean the days of foreplay are over.

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