

# Shadow Politics and the “Kremlin’s Hand”, To Whom Does It Belong? The Historic Role of Sergei Shoigu

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*A fair face may hide a foul heart. This idea will never lose its relevance, especially when it comes to the appearance of public officials – senior executives, businessmen and presidents. Their appearance, or rather their image, is what we picture to ourselves when reading news publications and television reports. However, there are things that it is customary to stay quiet about.*

Putin’s country got its name “Russian Federation” only under President Yeltsin, who had brought an aura of “trash” to the Kremlin and the White House, which people keep recalling either with a smirk or with regret. But more importantly, Yeltsin brought a team of new managers with him, some of whom were destined to preserve the new Russia and accompany it into the new millennium.

And here everyone will certainly spare a thought for Vladimir Putin, whom Yeltsin handed over his post to exactly ahead of the millennium, on new year’s eve 1999, because since then he has ceaselessly been in power and is the country’s image.

But everyone is sensible of the fact that there is a decision-making center and influence mechanisms behind this person – anything that is in the shadow of flashbulbs and lights of TV cameras.



Getting a good look at the shadow side of Kremlin’s policy, one can rightfully though with amazement trace the personality of current Defense Minister and former Emergencies Minister Sergei Shoigu, who has been heading a separate direction of Russian politics since the early 1990s. This spring marked 28 years of Sergei Shoigu’s

holding senior government positions. In terms of modern Russia, this is an all-time record for a government job.

Is it by chance that such a long-liver has managed to survive in the “Kremlin jungle”?

Many of Shoigu’s surroundings have noted his demonic aggressiveness and determination, as well as his inexplicable gift of the gab bordering on hypnotism that helped him push his line and affect the outcome of many situations.

There is a good reason that behind the scenes Sergei Shoigu is referred to as “the one who addresses the issues.” It has become obvious during the 28 years of his work in the country’s top state agencies. On the surface it may seem that countering disaster consequences, whether natural, man-induced or political, is his lifetime mission.

It all started way back on April 17, 1991, when a decree of the Council of Ministers of the RSFSR appointed Sergei Shoigu, a native of a small Asian province at the border between Russia, Mongolia and China, where most of the people are Buddhists by faith with traditional shamanic cults preserved, Chairman of the Russian Rescue Corps.

This service was destined to become one of the world’s best. It was at that time when he developed his own, trademark management approach. He was often called “the Minister without a tie and portfolio” because thanks to his huge life experience he always run operations not from the office with a high chair in the capital city, but on the ground where it was necessary to deal with the rigorous force of nature and at the peril of life. But why was it him whom Moscow always sent to “address issues”?

Earthquakes, landslides, avalanches, floods and fires have become Shoigu’s everyday life. He happened to “extinguish” the fire of strife in the hot spots as well. In 1992, Shoigu was tasked to reverse the effects of the Ossetian-Ingush conflict in the Caucasus. The ability to find a common language with each of the parties and to show true grit at the same time, helped resolve this situation, as well as many other similar challenges in the future. Sergei Shoigu became not just Russia’s chief rescuer, but also a peacemaker.

At the height of the Georgian-South Ossetian war, Shoigu arrived unguarded in the battle-torn South Ossetian city of Tskhinvali and ended the bloodshed. In Transnistria, he headed a Russian humanitarian expedition. And then there was Tajikistan with the need to evacuate the Russian-speaking population. Chechnya, Abkhazia, the Balkans. Shoigu assisted at all the hot spots of modern Russia and acted everywhere not only as a rescuer, but also as an agent of the country’s highest state interests.

Apart from the wars, the Minister established contacts with high-ranking officials of foreign countries, which ran far beyond his formal power. In various photos, he can be seen in an informal setting with former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi or former Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

These meetings reflect only a tiny bit of all the assignments carried out abroad on behalf of the Kremlin by “direful” minister Shoigu, because such visits typically go unnoticed by the media. The minister does not wear his usual military uniform, but it is this deceptively relaxed “home” atmosphere that life-changing events are formed against.

We will never learn about the subject of Shoigu’s conversations with them, but the fate of

these politicians was rather thorny, and the Russian minister was but a few steps to them. Maybe in those cases he was also needed to help in an emergency, to cast aside an imminent peril and offer help. After his visits, help from the Kremlin comes to these regions through channels both official and unofficial; a Russian intelligence network is gradually emerging there, as well as peacekeeping and sometimes military contingent, or even the “non-existent” Russian private military companies. In each case, Shoigu tried to prevent the emergence of another “color revolution” by means of implementing Moscow’s “hybrid policy”.

Provided that we are talking about countries being a bur in the throat for Russia’s Western opponents, one may talk of success achieved by the Kremlin, which implicitly but confidently holds out its hand to the key spots of countering the threats to Putin on the global stage.

The events of recent years prove yet another confirmation of Shoigu’s super-awareness. There is a photo where he shakes hands with Defense Minister of the Republic of Zimbabwe Sydney Sekeramayi. Back then, Zimbabwe either did not believe Sergey Shoigu or waived his services, thinking that they would deal with the problems singlehandedly, but just a couple of years ago the country experienced a coup and regime change.

Shoigu also met with Vietnamese leader Trần Đại Quang, who died a month after the meeting of an unknown cancer type. Aren’t there too many coincidences?

The contents of Shoigu’s meeting with Portuguese Prime Minister Guterres are also a mystery, but the latter did eventually go for promotion and became Secretary General of the United Nations. Following Russia’s further actions in foreign affairs, we can see that the UN has become the main platform for disclosing Russia’s stance to the global community. This was especially important to the Russians during the information blockade.

For the time being, Shoigu as Defense Minister keeps communicating with numerous representatives of foreign countries. Over the past year alone, the minister has taken part in more than 50 meetings at the international level, at least a dozen of which have proven crucial for current world processes and reinforced positions of top international officials whom Shoigu communicated with. For instance, a split occurred in NATO recently, when the Russian minister convinced the Turkish side of the need to cooperate in the military sphere and arranged S-400 system supplies.

In October 2018, Shoigu was accepted by Chinese leader Xi Jinping. And now we have witnessed joint Russian-Chinese military exercises that are going to remold the entire balance of power in the world!

But how did the country’s leadership know where to send Shoigu? How could Moscow predict the deaths of various states’ leaders, as well as conflicts, coups, enemy strikes based on intelligence alone? There is an answer to these questions. As it turned out many years later, Moscow had had its own special units to predict various kinds of events.

After the manner of America, which in 1972-95 began developing its top-secret CIA spy program called “Stargate” engaged in the psywars, Moscow had launched its self-design project in this sphere. In contrast to the overseas Stargate, December 15, 1989 witnessed the Soviet Union create a secret think tank for unusual human abilities and special weapons. The so-called “Military Unit 10003” was headed by Lieutenant General Alexei Savin, doctor

of technical and philosophical sciences.

There were many unusual experiments, sometimes bordering on fantasy. Not so long ago, General Savin gave an interview to a Russian media source, partially pulling back the curtain on secret developments of the USSR, namely the work of Military Unit 10003 in the poorly studied area of the so-called “torsion fields”. Besides, officers of this unit had to analyze psychological warfare programs of the United States and other NATO countries, to hammer out methods of energy and informational influence on the enemy, protection of our leaders from enemy psychological attacks and lots more. At the secret center they studied various human engineering methods in Asian, South American, European, African, Altai, Siberian, Tibetan cultures, altered states of consciousness, and scrutinized the nature of the phenomenal human abilities.

Working for the unit there were over 120 organizations of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and Academy of Medical Sciences, the Ministry of Defense, as well as industry and education, including the Moscow State University, the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, the Russian Academy of Sciences’ institutes of philosophy and psychology, etc. Of course, they did not know the one who requested this research; each performed its part of experimentation and analysis. The military unit’s documents were notable for their highest secrecy.

The tactical unit was able to characterize people visually, by photos, personal belongings, initial letters, recollections of their acquaintances; to read out information from the human brain; to learn the contents of books without opening them and those of secret documents without reading them. Officers were taught to evaluate enemy plans and intentions, to predict the way combat operations were going to develop, to reveal facts of the enemy’s intelligence activities, to determine coordinates of safe houses, caches, hideouts and many other things. In his interview, Savin dwells on some special operations like the one when their unit helped conveying information about the target of US strikes against Yugoslavia.

However, after the USSR collapsed, Military Unit 10003 ceased its activities like many other covert research organizations. Or did it? Has this research really come to an end? And what happened to military parapsychology after Sergei Shoigu was appointed Defense Minister?

According to the Russian media, this topic has long been familiar to the new defense department head. Work turned out to have resumed in the recent years. One of the 2019 editions of the Russian Defense Ministry’s official magazine *Army Digest* featured an article on the Russian military knowing combat parapsychology methods enabling to penetrate the enemy thoughts and hack computer programs. The February edition article titled “Super Soldier for the Wars of the Future” by reserve Colonel Nikolai Poroskov reports on parapsychology methods the Russian military have a decent grip on.

The article claims the Russian special forces used “military parapsychology techniques” in Chechnya. The one who mastered the metacontact skill can, for example, take witness’s evidence in nonverbal ways. He sees the captured enemy soldier through, namely what kind of person he is, what his strengths and weaknesses are, whether he could be won over, etc. The reliability of such an interrogation is virtually one hundred percent. “Special forces soldiers are taught the technique to counter this kind of interrogation in case of being captured, and the country’s top officials or leaders of large industrial and banking structures – to protect state or commercial secrets,” the article says.

Assessing the contents of the publication in the Defense Ministry's official magazine, analytical department chief of the Soldiers of Russia magazine Anatoly Matviychuk has said combat parapsychology is "not a fantasy" and keeps being developed today.

Among other things, a successful accomplishment has been reached as regards such experiments as reading documents inside the safe, definition of persons being part a terrorist network, exposure of terrorist groups' potential candidates, the article states. Moreover, it proved possible to influence even the technical equipment. By force of thought, one can, for instance, off-tune computer programs, burn generator crystals, monitor conversations or disrupt television and radio transmissions and communications.

It is perhaps due to these practices that the world has got obsessed with cyberphobia caused by the activity of unknown hackers whom international research agencies associate with Russia and Shoigu's team. It's kind of amazing that despite the United States' total control over the global software industry and the Internet, the country appeared so vulnerable to hostile attacks. What if Shoigu has never wrapped up activities of Military Unit 10003 and just reinterpreted it into new organizational forms, as private companies, providing them with a new focus area? And while earlier the Kremlin had to send Shoigu abroad to establish contacts and solve various issues, today the minister uses cyber weapons to convince those unwilling to communicate with him personally.

Ultimately, it is surprising how Russia, with its military budget 12 times smaller than that of the United States, is aggressively extending its influence in various regions of the world. Why haven't US expeditionary bases around the world, particularly in Europe and the Middle East, secured control of the "Russian bear"? Why is Russia successfully thwarting CIA plans to orchestrate "color revolutions" in its territory? Why isn't it possible to stop the flywheel of international cyberwarfare.

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