
BULGARIA SUSPECTS THIRD SUSPECT IN U.K. EX-SPY POISONING ALSO ATTACKED ARMS DEALER IN 2015

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11.02.2019

Japan Times (11 January 2019)

Bulgaria plans to investigate reports that a third suspect in the nerve agent poisoning of a Russian ex-spy in England allegedly was involved in a 2015 poisoning in Bulgaria, a Bulgarian party official said Sunday.

Tsvetan Tsvetanov of the ruling GERB party said the probe was being coordinated with foreign partners. He told Bulgarias bTV channel that intelligence officials plan to present evidence on the topic Thursday to a parliamentary homeland security committee.

I am certain that the necessary coordination has already been set up between the Bulgarian, British and European authorities on the case and they are working actively on it, Tsvetanov said.

Investigative group Bellingcat has reported an alleged Russian military intelligence agent arrived in Bulgaria in April 2015, a few days before Bulgarian businessman Emilian Gebrev was poisoned by an unidentified substance.

Gebrev, an arms industry executive, survived but authorities still dont know who poisoned him.

Bellingcat said on its website the 45-year-old Russian agent traveled under the alias Sergei Vyacheslavovich Fedotov and had been conclusively identified as an agent of Russian military intelligence for Moscows GRU agency.

Bellingcat said Fedotov also was suspected of being involved in the Novichok nerve-agent poisoning of Russian ex-spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, in the English city of Salisbury. He arrived in Britain two days before the March 2018 attack.

Both Skripals survived after weeks in the hospital and after their release were taken to an undisclosed location for their safety, the British government has said.

British officials have blamed the attack on the GRU and charged two Russian suspects. The men traveled under the names Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov.

Russian authorities denied involvement and Moscow refused to extradite them to Britain.

Britains Metropolitan Police said its investigation team continues to pursue a number of lines of inquiry, including identifying any other suspects who may have been involved in carrying out or planning the attack.

We are not prepared to discuss further details of what remains an ongoing investigation, the force said in a statement.

The Skripal poisonings set off a wave of recriminations between Britain and Moscow, prompting the expulsion of dozens of diplomats from Russia, the U.K. and countries that are Britains allies.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/02/11/world/crime-legal-world/bulgaria-suspects-third-suspect-u-k-ex-spy-poisoning-also-attacked-arms-dealer-2015/#.XGFGAFUzaUk>

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