EK Strategic Communications Center

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Moscow against London: the Kremlin's anti-British campaign

How the Kremlin escalated from insults to threats of sabotage against Britain

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Over the past two months, the Kremlin has sharply escalated its anti-British rhetoric, increasingly portraying the United Kingdom as a direct adversary.

The campaign has coincided with suspected Russian intelligence activity and public targeting of British defense infrastructure, raising the risk of sabotage and other hybrid operations in the UK.

Key topics:

1. Officials: intimidation of a Britain that is no longer “Great”
2. Stoking tensions: “Kyiv vs. London”
3. The Z-community: “We need to bomb London”

Executive Summary

Since mid-summer, Russian officials have steadily hardened their rhetoric toward the United Kingdom, moving from the traditional insults directed at London to explicit threats of strikes on the British Isles. Russia's official propaganda apparatus and mid-level officials have traditionally driven the anti-British agenda as part of the broader anti-European rhetoric.

> **The current campaign is notably different, however, because key regime figures are participating, including both members of the foreign-policy establishment and the security services.** This points to a growing risk of provocations and other hybrid operations against the United Kingdom by Moscow, activities that have been documented with increasing frequency elsewhere in Europe in recent months.

The campaign became especially visible after the change in prime minister. In response to new Prime Minister Andy Burnham's pledge to stand firmly by Ukraine, **Dmitry Medvedev** called the United Kingdom "Petty Britain" and proposed making life on the "island that has not yet sunk" as unbearable as possible, preferably with the Poseidon nuclear-powered unmanned underwater vehicle.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov, A Just Russia leader Sergey Mironov, and Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova then successively joined the campaign. Ambassador **Andrei Kelin** was recalled from London after seven years in post, and the Presidential Administration-linked Telegram channel Nezygar explicitly described the move as pressure on London to reconsider its support for Ukraine.

> **The campaign culminated in Vladimir Putin's September 1 response to a question about British military factories as possible targets:** "That's a secret, a military secret," which hinted at an expansion of the sabotage campaign.

A few days later, on September 4, UK counterterrorism police arrested Joshua Cammidge in Swindon. He is believed to be linked to the GRU Volunteer Corps. According to investigators, he researched four local drone-manufacturing sites and, between August 28 and September 3, over the same period as Putin's statement, contacted an intermediary from the GRU Volunteer Corps at least 58 times.

That same day, Viktor Medvedchuk, a former pro-Russian Ukrainian politician known for his close personal ties to Putin, who is godfather to Medvedchuk's daughter, published an article[1] on UK-Ukrainian defense cooperation in his outlet The Other Ukraine. It listed 21 exact addresses of British offices, production sites, and testing centers associated with defense facilities (Appendix), as well as the names of owners and directors.

> **That level of detail suggests that information originating with Russian intelligence services was being laundered into the public domain to intimidate the United Kingdom,** in a format similar to the Russian Defense Ministry's publication in April of addresses of European defense production sites.

Moscow responded to the Cammidge case on the day of his first court hearing. On September 10 the FSB announced that it had foiled a terrorist attack against British Ambassador Nigel Casey and accused the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) of recruiting Marat Droganov, an employee of the company guarding the embassy. Droganov had previously been arrested several times for petty hooliganism and over a Ukrainian trident tattoo, and he had been held in pretrial detention since July 24, a month and a half before the press release.

> **Taken together, this points to an opportunistically fabricated case tailored to the needs of the campaign.**

Its purpose is apparent in the FSB's claim that Kyiv, in order to preserve itself, was prepared to commit terrorist attacks "even against its strategic allies." National TV-channels Channel One and Rossiya aired a segment in which an anonymous FSB officer called Ukraine a "homunculus" created by British intelligence "in its own image and likeness." Peskov said London had "lost control" of Kyiv.

State Duma deputy and former security services officer Andrei Lugovoi, whom the United Kingdom has accused of poisoning Alexander Litvinenko, called for the embassy to be closed and said British diplomats in Moscow should "look over their shoulders." Together with Senator **Vladimir Dzhabarov**, he also hinted that British intelligence services themselves may have been involved in the provocation.

The campaign did not stop there and is continuing. On September 17, Dmitry Polyanskiy, Russia's Permanent Representative to the OSCE, stated[2] that Ukraine's use of British drones is interpreted "as direct participation in the war against our country, with all the consequences that entails."

> **On September 18, the Russian Foreign Ministry summoned the United Kingdom's Chargé d'Affaires in Russia, Daini Dolakia,** who was told during the démarche that "the Russian side reserves the right to take the necessary retaliatory measures in exercising its right to self-defense."[3]

The Z-community supports escalation and demands that it go further. Yulia Vityazeva, reposting material by propagandist Vladimir Kornilov, calls for the destruction of British ships and tankers and for helping the "freedom fighters of Northern Ireland and the Malvinas Islands." The Z-channel Two Majors, which is close to the security services, suggests that Russia should "not spare the apartments of respected people in London." The Z-channel Donetsk Infantry states bluntly that "London needs

to be bombed," but then answers itself in frustration that this will not happen because top United Russia figures have "children, real estate, and bank accounts" there.

Two Majors expresses the same frustration, repeatedly criticizing the authorities and the Foreign Ministry for ritual warnings unaccompanied by action. Fighterbomber, by contrast, hopes that everything will be "limited" to statements because a strike on British facilities would amount to a de facto war with NATO.

> **The stage-managed nature of the campaign is evident in identical text published on August 19 and 24 by the channels Military Chronicle and Russian Legion Z.** It lays out an escalation ladder against London, ranging from hybrid pressure below the threshold of open war, including sabotage, cyberattacks, and influence operations, to "military/sabotage measures targeting the British system for supporting Ukraine," for example action against British reconnaissance and electronic-warfare aircraft transmitting data to Ukraine.

Officials: intimidation of a Britain that is no longer "Great"

Symbolically, the current campaign began with the change of UK prime minister from Keir Starmer to Andy Burnham in July 2026. In response to the new prime minister's pledge of "steadfast and resolute support for Ukraine"[4], on July 26 Deputy Chairman of Russia's Security Council Dmitry Medvedev, who traditionally voices some of the most hawkish positions in the Russian establishment, called[5] the United Kingdom "Petty Britain" and said Russia's task was to

> "continue doing everything to make life on the island that has not yet sunk as unbearable as possible. Anything will do: economic crises, social upheaval, garbage collectors' strikes. Anything at all. Although the Poseidon system [a nuclear-powered unmanned underwater vehicle] is still the best option."

From mid-August, the campaign became more visible and officials' statements more radical. On August 18, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said[6] that "we have the right to regard the proudly announced direct involvement of British missile forces in strikes against the Russian Federation as participation in the war, with all the ensuing consequences." On August 24, Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov said that the United Kingdom "is participating in this war on the side of the Kyiv regime."[7] Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova continued the same line on August 27[8], calling on London to "unequivocally renounce this aggressive, hostile course" and stressing that "We have repeatedly warned that British military assets, both in Ukraine and beyond, could be targeted in reprisal for any attacks conducted using UK weapons." The recall of Russian Ambassador to the United Kingdom **Andrei Kelin**, after more than seven years in post, can also be seen as part of the campaign.

> **According to the insider Telegram channel Nezygar[9], which is linked to the Presidential Administration, by recalling him** "the Kremlin is trying to force London to reconsider its support for Ukraine," while the delay in appointing a new ambassador "may indicate that Russia no longer believes the United Kingdom merits political representation at the highest level."

The campaign culminated in statements[10] by Vladimir Putin himself. On September 1, when asked whether "British military-industrial facilities could become military targets," he replied, "That's a secret, a military secret."

> **The remark can clearly be read as a hint that the geographic scope of sabotage, which** EK Stratcom has previously covered[11], could expand to include the United Kingdom.

On September 4, Joshua Cammidge[12], who is believed to be linked to the GRU Volunteer Corps, was arrested in Swindon by officers from Counter Terrorism Policing London on charges of assisting a foreign intelligence service. According to investigators, he "researched four drone manufacturing sites in the town and carried out reconnaissance" while preparing acts of sabotage[13]. Between August 28 and September 3, over the same period as Putin's statement, he communicated with an intermediary from the GRU Volunteer Corps at least 58 times.

That same day, September 4, Viktor Medvedchuk published an agenda-setting article[14] in his outlet The Other Ukraine. Medvedchuk is a former leader of Ukraine's pro-Russian Opposition Platform – For Life party and is also known for his close personal ties to Putin, who is godfather to Medvedchuk's daughter. The article was titled "Britain is preparing to breach Moscow's air-defense network with massed ballistic missiles and long-range drones." Referring to Putin's words about a "military secret," it delivered a clear

warning: "the collective West should heed these words of the Russian leader."

The article provides a detailed analysis of UK-Ukrainian military cooperation, naming specific British defense companies, their owners and board members and, most notably, giving the addresses of head offices, pilot-production sites, training centers, and testing facilities. It lists 21 exact addresses in the United Kingdom. Facilities still under construction that lack addresses are described in ways that make them fairly easy to identify on the ground. At the same time, the location of a major British factory in Abu Dhabi is described only in broad terms and without details.

> **This strongly suggests that the article is laundering data originating with Russian intelligence services into the public domain for another Kremlin attempt at public intimidation,** this time directed at a specific country, the United Kingdom. This format is not unprecedented. In April, for example, the Russian Defense Ministry directly published a list[15] of 21 European defense-industry facilities cooperating with Ukraine.

Moscow's response to the charges against its alleged agent in Swindon was not long in coming. On the day of Joshua Cammidge's first court hearing, the FSB issued a press release claiming that it had foiled a terrorist attack against UK Ambassador to Russia Nigel Casey.

Stoking tensions: "Kyiv vs. London"

On September 10, the FSB accused[16] **Kyiv and the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) of recruiting Marat Droganov**[17]**, an employee of an organization that provides security for the British Embassy in Moscow,** and linked him to Ukrainian blogger Dmitry Karpenko, known for his interviews with Russian prisoners of war. It is known, however, that before being detained on treason charges, Droganov had been subjected to a series of arrests for petty hooliganism and because of a Ukrainian trident tattoo on his right shoulder. He was sent to pretrial detention as early as July 24[18], a month and a half before the press release.

> **It is highly likely that the combination of his workplace and a tattoo considered "extremist" by the Russian authorities struck FSB officers as an opportunity to fabricate a case that could be used to accuse Kyiv as needed,** which is what they later did publicly during the anti-British campaign.

According to the FSB statement, Kyiv allegedly planned "sabotage and terrorist acts against the head of the British diplomatic mission and other diplomats" as a provocation designed to blame Russia and "draw the United Kingdom into a direct armed conflict with the Russian Federation." The purpose of the statement is to sow distrust between London and Kyiv, which is clear from the wording that "to preserve themselves, the Kyiv authorities are prepared to commit sabotage and acts of terrorism even against their strategic allies."

Domestic propaganda actively spread narratives about "a terrorist attack against the British ambassador, organized by the SBU and foiled by the FSB." On the evening of September 10, nationwide Channel One aired a segment in which the detainee confesses that his Ukrainian handler allegedly told him directly that "the Ukrainian authorities are very interested in information about the embassy in order to carry

out a terrorist attack against the British ambassador in Moscow."[19] The segment also shifts responsibility for any potential attack onto London itself.

> "The zeal with which British intelligence services set about turning Ukraine into a kamikaze state is now backfiring on the Crown's subjects. In general, British intelligence should have expected betrayal and a knife in the back from the Ukrainians, since it created this homunculus in its own image and likeness," an unnamed FSB officer says in the propaganda segment while sitting with his back to the camera. The same clip appeared in the Sunday news roundup on Rossiya 1.[20]

Russian officials actively promoted the same narratives. Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov said that the United Kingdom had "lost control" over the actions of the Ukrainian authorities and that this "should be cause for serious concern in European capitals".[21]

> **Andrei Lugovoi, a State Duma deputy well known in the United Kingdom and accused by British authorities of poisoning Alexander Litvinenko with polonium-210[22], also commented twice on the issue.** He said that "British diplomats should walk the streets of Moscow and look over their shoulders"[23], and that the British Embassy should be closed because "the presence of the British Embassy creates the threat of any kind of provocation against us."[24]

Former security services officer Lugovoi also hinted that British intelligence services were complicit in the provocation: "British intelligence is prone to this sort of thing. One need only recall the poisoning of the Skripals."[25]

Vladimir Dzhabarov, deputy chair of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs, repeated the same narrative:

> "Ambassador Casey (if he himself is not involved) should ask himself: were the Ukrainian intelligence services the only ones that could have been interested in this provocation? <…> After all, a terrorist attack against the British mission in Moscow fits perfectly into the logic of inflating the 'Russian threat,' which in turn justifies increased military spending at the expense of social spending during the upcoming consideration of Britain's autumn budget."[26]

He also placed the "foiled terrorist attack" in the context of what he portrayed as a series of European provocations and a campaign against Russia:

> "The incident in Leipzig and the provocation in Moscow are, of course, connected. Kyiv is counting on a further worsening of the conflict between its main sponsors, Germany and Britain, and Russia. Kyiv's operation against its immediate allies once again confirms that the Kyiv regime will stop at nothing."[27]

The Z-community: "We need to bomb London"

The pro-war Z-community traditionally calls for escalation against the West, so the Kremlin's clear turn toward escalation in recent months has been widely supported by Z-authors. The United Kingdom, cast as Moscow's "historical adversary," receives particular attention. For example, ultrapatriotic Z-blogger **Yulia Vityazeva**, by reposting material from propagandist Vladimir Kornilov, calls for a "mirror response" and the "destruction of British ships and tankers"[28], as well as interference in British domestic politics: "it is time to help the freedom fighters of Northern Ireland and the Malvinas Islands."[29]

The same narratives are systematically promoted by the Z-channel Two Majors, which is close to the security services and indirectly calls for a strike on London:

> "It is clear who in this situation is pushing the world toward the open phase of a major war. We have only one option: make this venture unprofitable for Western power brokers. But to do that, we must not spare the apartments of respected people in London."[30]

The smaller Z-channel Donetsk Infantry states it explicitly while criticizing the inaction of the Russian elite:

> "If we want to win this war, we need to bomb not Epitsentr stores in Kyiv. We need to bomb London. But United Russia's top people have children, real estate, and bank accounts there. That is why this war will never end."[31]

This line of criticism of the Russian leadership for insufficient escalation against the United Kingdom is consistent. Two Majors has repeatedly expressed its frustration. Responding to news

that London was transferring missile technology to Ukraine, the channel wrote[32] that

> "this is the result of endlessly announcing gray-brown-crimson lines, incoherent diplomatic outrage, and the absence of a direct threat to the Western states aiding the terrorist regime of the proxy territory called 'Ukraine'," while "the 'coalition of the willing' jamboree in Kyiv should have ended in a mass grave for the foreign delegates."

The same idea appeared in other posts by the channel: "the circumstances that have come to light change nothing; naturally, no one is going to strike drone production in Britain, the United States, or the EU."[33] The channel also directly criticized the Foreign Ministry for ceremonially repeating "warnings to London": "if they do not understand on the other side, then it is perfectly logical to move on to action" and "it is extremely interesting whether the Foreign Ministry coordinates its statements about strikes outside the 'special military operation' zone with the Russian Defense Ministry, or whether our military department also learns about them from the news."[34] However, some authors doubt the prospects for escalation. In response to Foreign Ministry statements about British military facilities as potential targets, the Z-channel Fighterbomber said:

> "These include, for example, ships, aircraft, and naval and air bases outside the United Kingdom. But it's still fucking unclear how this can be done without effectively starting a war with the United Kingdom itself, and therefore with NATO. <…> I hope that in the end it will all be limited to this, and perhaps another couple of hundred similarly meaningless statements."[35]

One clear sign of the stage-managed nature of the current anti-British campaign is the following. On August 19 and 24, two Z-channels, **Military Chronicle**[36] and **Russian Legion Z**[37], published identical text under the headline "Can Russia punish the United Kingdom for fighting on Ukraine's side?"

> **It sets out several levels of escalation against London:** (i) "expanding pressure below the threshold of open war," that is, intensifying hybrid warfare through "cyberattacks, influence operations, and sabotage against infrastructure and democratic institutions"; (ii) "an asymmetric response against British interests outside Britain itself," meaning expanded military cooperation with London's adversaries; and (iii) "military/sabotage measures targeting the British system for supporting Ukraine." The post calls the last level "a serious step up the escalation ladder" and gives an example of concrete action: "This could involve a British reconnaissance or electronic-warfare aircraft operating in international airspace and transmitting data to Ukraine for a specific operation. In such a case, the Russian response could range from a demonstrative interception and escort to electronic-warfare measures disrupting its operations."



Example of content from the current anti-British campaign in the Z-community. Image accompanying the post "Hello, Foggy Albion calling. The British want to talk to Russia" (38) Z-channel Russian Legion Z, 16 August 2026

Appendix: Addresses of British defense sites published by The Other Ukraine, 04.09.2026

1. Milanion Group Ltd – 65 Delamere Road, Hayes, UB4 0NN
2. Destinus UK Ltd – 21 Holborn Viaduct, London, EC1A 2DY
3. MBDA UK (Bolton) – Lea Field Way, Bridgewater Ave, Bolton BL5 1EE
4. MBDA UK (Stevenage) – Six Hills Way, Stevenage SG1 2DA
5. MBDA UK (Filton/Bristol) – Golf Course Lane, Filton, Bristol BS34 7QS
6. MGI Engineering Ltd – Unit 7, The Gateway, Windrush Park Road, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX29 7EY
7. Rotron Aerospace Ltd – Unit 9, Chaldicott Barns, Tokes Lane, Semley, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 9AW
8. Thales Air Defence Ltd – 1 Alanbrooke Road, Castlereagh, Belfast, BT6 9HB
9. Callen-Lenz Associates Ltd – 3 The Old Barns, Manor Farm, Turnpike, Chilmark, Salisbury, SP3 5AF
10. Callen-Lenz (production site under construction) – former RAF airfield, Boscombe Down, Wiltshire; along the A345, between the Chemring Countermeasures plant to the west and The Stones Hotel to the south
11. Uforce Global Ltd and Uforce Trading Ltd – 5 New Street Square, London, EC4A 3TW
12. Uforce (production/test range) – Defence BattleLab, Dorset Innovation Park, Winfrith Newburgh, Dorset, DT2 8ZB
13. Ukrspecsystems Ltd – 5th Floor, 167–169 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 5PF
14. Ukrspecsystems Ltd (production site) – Galaxy Building, Hampstead Avenue, Mildenhall, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP28 7AS

15. Ukrspecsystems Ltd (test center) – Elmsett Airfield, Whatfield Road, Elmsett, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP7 6LN
16. Skyeton Prevail Solutions Ltd – 2 Winchester Place, North Street, Poole, BH15 1NX
17. Skyeton Prevail Solutions Ltd (serial production site) – Beaumont Way, Langage, Plympton, Plymouth, PL7 5FN
18. Trypillian Ltd – 10 Orange Street, London, WC2H 7DQ
19. FAC Technology Ltd – 53 Lydden Grove, Wandsworth, London, SW18 4LW
20. Evolve Dynamics Ltd (registered office) – Redhill Chambers, 2D High Street, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 1RJ
21. Evolve Dynamics (production) – Unit 8, Northbrook Business Park, Farnham, GU10 5EU

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31. https://t.me/infantry_1/26207
32. https://t.me/dva_majors/97895
33. https://t.me/dva_majors/97580
34. https://t.me/dva_majors/98082
35. https://t.me/bomber_fighter/26361
36. https://t.me/Warhronika/15541
37. https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/53527
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