

Questions related to Pavel Voloshin on Ryazan

1. How long did it take before Russia FSB put out its official version of what had happened in Ryazan? What had Ryazan FSB already reported?
2. Name four governmental entities in Ryazan that, by order of Moscow, were no longer allowed to have contact with the press.
3. Did Russia FSB and Ryazan FSB agree that the case was closed? Briefly explain.
4. Give six reasons why it's extremely likely that the bags contained hexogen.
5. What did the experts who neutralized the bomb have to say about the fuse?
6. The police officer, who was the first person to enter the basement, referred to "sacks of sugar." Does this mean he didn't believe it was a real bomb? Explain.
7. How does Ryazan fit in with the pattern of the previous bombings?

8. Aleksey Kartofelnikov, the resident who had noticed the suspicious Zhiguli and called the police, summed up the situation by saying, "If something is blown up, it means a terrorist attack. If the mines have been cleared, exercises..." What did he mean?

9. By the evening of September 23, the Ryazan police had arrested two suspects. The suspects produced identification showing that they worked for the FSB and, on orders from Moscow, were soon released. Acknowledging the involvement of their own agents, Russia FSB announced on September 24 that what had occurred in Ryazan had been a training exercise.

Besides releasing all documentation and allowing all interviews related to the Ryazan operation, what does Voloshin specifically propose regarding the "perpetrators"?

10. Voloshin doesn't discuss it, perhaps because it was something his readers would have been well aware of, but the apartment bombings happened at a pivotal moment in Russian politics. President Boris Yeltsin had appointed Vladimir Putin head of the FSB on July 25, 1998, and then, on August 9, 1999, made Putin acting prime minister of the Russian government. Yeltsin also announced on August 9 that he wanted Putin to be his presidential successor. Putin was practically unknown to the Russian people at the time, but this would change dramatically over the next few weeks. The government would use the apartment bombings of September 1999 as justification to launch a new war in Chechnya, with the support of the Russian people. While Yeltsin had been appearing weak for some time, Putin spoke out forcefully in response to the apartment bombings: He said they would pursue and "rub out" the terrorists wherever they go, even "in the outhouse." Putin soon became the most popular politician in the country. On December 31, 1999, Yeltsin resigned and Putin became Acting President; that same day Putin signed a decree granting immunity from prosecution to Yeltsin and his family, as they had been under investigation for corruption. Putin went on to win the next presidential election on March 26, 2000, after which existing corruption charges against Putin himself would be dropped as well. Going forward, Russia would complete the transition to Putin's one-man rule, and widespread corruption would continue.

In your opinion, how high is the probability that the Russian regime was behind the apartment bombings, and how high is the probability that Putin was in the loop?