

# THE SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARIAT LEADERSHIP & ORGANISATION

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## Takeaways:



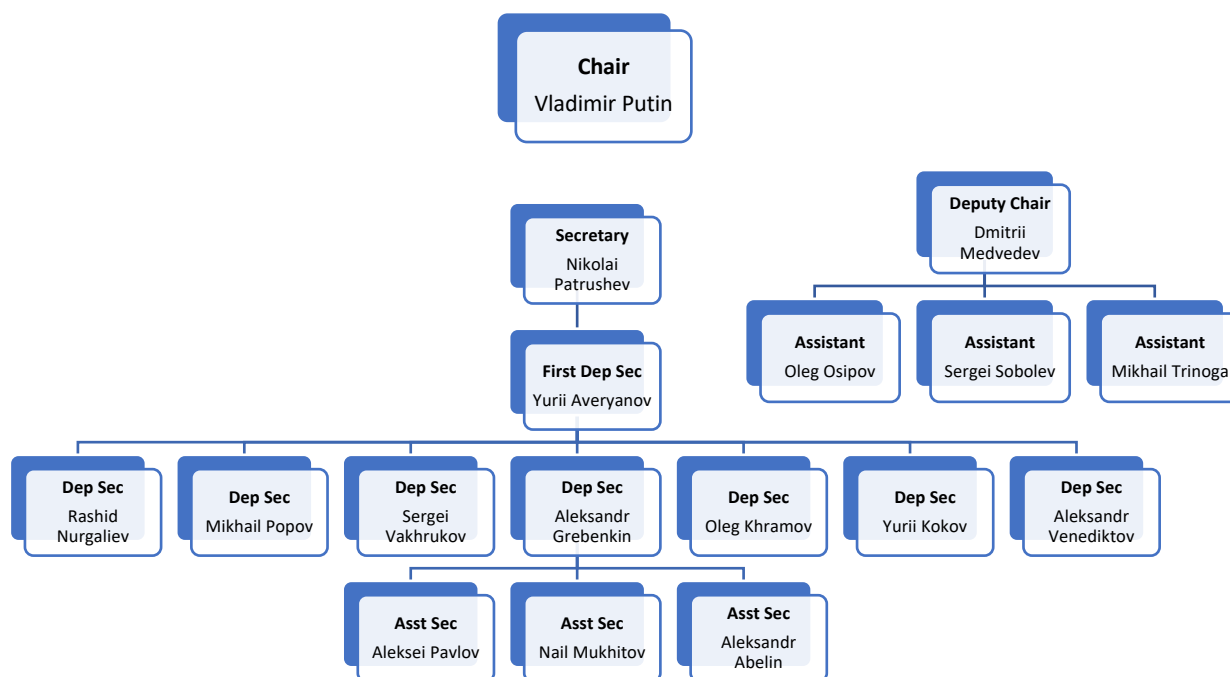
- The Secretariat of the Security Council represents the key civilian agency shaping security policy, in some ways analogous to the US National Security Council Staff, with its Secretary, Nikolai Patrushev, being the closest thing to a National Security Adviser.
- The Secretariat has considerable power within the system, not least over information flows to the president and as the body charged with coordinating policy across multiple ministries and agencies.
- There is no comprehensive guide to its organisation and staffing, and this note provides the best outline of its structure and senior leadership currently available to Mayak Intelligence.

The Secretariat of the Security Council (SB: *Sovet bezopasnosti*) represents the key civilian agency shaping security policy, in some ways analogous to the US National Security Council Staff. Although formally part of the Presidential Administration, in such a personalised system, though, it has particular autonomy, especially given the stature of Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev.

To a large extent, the real power of the SB is to be found in the Secretariat, with Patrushev being the closest there is to a National Security Advisor in Putin's Kremlin. Its staff, a mix of civilians and officers seconded from the military and security structures, plays a crucial role drafting the main security-related laws and documents, brokering consensus across the security community, briefing the president and other key policymakers and enforcing unity, dealing with the more toxic of the numerous inter-agency disputes which arise.

This paper offers an introduction to the structure and personnel of the Secretariat. Much of this, it must be stressed, is tentative or unclear. The Secretariat is secretive by culture, and largely operates out of the public gaze. Its own telephone book is classified as 'Completely Secret' (SS: *Sovershenno sekretno*), the equivalent of a US SECRET classification, and while key figures are named in the Russian media and in publicly-available documents, this is rarely with any detail and consistency.

## A: LEADERSHIP



The Chair of the SB is the president, ex officio. The Secretary, Nikolai Patrushev, reports directly to the Chair, even though formally the SB Secretariat is part of the Presidential Administration. In 2020, Putin gave his outgoing Prime Minister, Dmitri Medvedev, the position of Deputy Chair, even though this was a new position. Its role has not even been fleshed out, with no amendment made to the Regulations on the Security Council of the Russian Federation as outlined in Presidential Decree No. 590 of 6 May 2011, which are the primary guide to its role and workings.<sup>1</sup>

There seems no sense that Medvedev either has any authority over Patrushev – who is in any case much closer to Putin – nor over the bulk of the Secretariat staff. He has his own small staff and three Assistants, but to a considerable degree the clumsy compromise that has emerged is that Medvedev has been given some Interdepartmental Commissions to chair (see below) and the personnel needed to support them, and the forms of authority, so long as he stays out of Patrushev’s way and, outside the SB meetings and other official gatherings, does not try to intervene in matters outside his specific areas of responsibility.

First Deputy Secretary Averyanov has been described as **“Patrushev’s chancellor”** – his role is largely administrative, even though his background is in the military. The Assistant Secretaries are a mixed bag. There are some – such as former Interior Minister Nurgaliev – for whom this is essentially an honorific post, reflecting the pre-Patrushev days when the Secretariat was as much as anything a

<sup>1</sup> The legal instruments shaping the SB’s constitutional role and status are: Article 83(g) of the Constitution; the Law ‘On Security’ of 5 March 1992; Presidential Decree No. 547 of 3 June 1992 ‘On the formation of the Security Council’; Federal Law No. 390-FZ of 28 December 2010 ‘On Security’; Presidential Decree No. 590 of 6 May 2011 ‘On the Regulations of the Security Council of the Russian Federation.’



halfway house for retiring *siloviki* (members of the security apparatus). He and perhaps Mikhail Popov are more like counsellors, not so much burdened with particular administrative duties but on the staff for their expertise and experience. Most, though, are full-time deputies of Patrushev's, with specific portfolios. Oleg Khramov, for example has particular responsibility for the North Caucasus, while Aleksandr Venediktov takes point on foreign affairs matters when Patrushev doesn't want to handle them directly.

## Capsule Biographies

### *Secretary:*

**Nikolai Platonovich Patrushev**, b. 1951, now one of Putin's closest allies and in effect his national security adviser; background in the KGB and then its successor agencies the FSK and then FSB, which he headed 1999-2008 before becoming SB Secretary. Austere, a fierce critic of the West, which he appears genuinely to believe is implacably hostile to Russia, he is arguably the primary architect of current Russian foreign and security policy after Putin.

### *First Deputy Secretary:*

**Yurii Timofeevich Averyanov**, b. 1950, background in the Ground Forces until 1994, then 1994-2000 taught at the department of strategy in the Military Academy of the General Staff and holds the rank of lieutenant general. Deputy Plenipotentiary Representative of the President in the Far Eastern Federal District 2000-6, then moved to SB Secretariat. At 72, he is widely predicted to be leaving the Secretariat soon – but then again, his imminent retirement has been predicted ever since he was 65...

### *Deputy Secretaries:*

**Aleksandr Nikolaevich Grebenkin**, b. 1954, background in the Military Prosecutor's Office 1976-93 before moving to the Secretariat, becoming a Deputy Secretary in 2016; holds the reserve rank of major general of justice. There are unconfirmed reports that he is responsible for information security issues, but this fails to match obviously with his past experiences, so ought to be taken with particular caution

**Oleg Vladimirovich Khramov**, b. 1955, a career internal security officer, in the KGB from 1978 and serving as the First Deputy Director of the FSB 2009-17 before becoming Deputy Secretary of the SB in 2017; holds the rank of colonel general. Born in Grozny and thus tends to take lead on issues concerning the North Caucasus; also regarded very much as a Patrushev loyalist, rewarded with the SB position in compensation for not succeeding him as director – and also because his relationship with the new director, Bortnikov, was a little tense.

**Yurii Aleksandrovich Kokov**, b. 1955, a career police officer, who also served as head of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic 2014-18, before joining the SB Secretariat in 2018; holds the rank of police colonel general. Kokov tends to take point on domestic security and policing issues, not least because the other obvious deputy, Nurgaliev, has a tense relationship with the senior figures in the MVD, and he is the Deputy Chair of the Interdepartmental Commission on Public Security.

**Rashid Gumarovich Nurgaliev**, b. 1956, a career internal security officer, in the KGB from 1981 and through to the FSB in 1998, when he spent a year in the Presidential Main Control Directorate before returning to the FSB in 1999, being made Deputy Director in 2000; 2002-2012 he was in the MVD, a First Deputy Minister and then Minister from 2004; dismissed by Medvedev in 2012 and joined SB





Secretariat; holds the rank of Army General. One of the most widely-despised Interior Ministers for a long time, his role at the SB is largely honorific.

**Mikhail Mikhailovich Popov**, b. 1950, career soldier serving in the navy 1969-2010, and holding the rank of vice admiral of the reserve; moved thereafter to the SB Secretariat, becoming a Deputy Secretary in 2013. Popov is the Deputy Chair of the Interdepartmental Commission on Military Security, deputising for the Chief of the General Staff when necessary, but there are suggestions that ill-health is making him increasingly a part-time counsellor more than anything else.

**Sergei Alekseevich Vakhrukov**, b. 1958, career administrator who became Governor of Yaroslavl Region 2007-12, then Deputy Minister of Regional Development (2012-13) before joining the SB Secretariat, becoming a Deputy Secretary in 2016. He currently chairs the Interdepartmental Commission on Security in Economic & Public Spheres, and is sometimes disparaged within the Secretariat for his relative lack of directly security-related experience and rank, but is nonetheless a hard-working deputy who shoulders arguably a disproportionately heavy load with responsibilities relating to civilian government institutions.

**Aleksandr Nikolaevich Venediktov**, b. 1978, career diplomat 2001-7 before moving to the SB Secretariat, rising to Deputy Secretary in 2019. Is on the one hand the 'baby' among the deputies, merely 44 years old, yet he also has the most experience actually working his way up through the apparatus (from consultant to adviser, all the way to his current position), so he is generally regarded as having the best understanding of how it works and the broadest range of contacts. Some sources tip him as a potential successor to the 72-year-old Averyanov for that reason.

## B. DEPARTMENTS

<i>Department (and head, where known)</i>	<i>Roles</i>	<i>Main ministry/agency relationships</i>
State & Public Security (Aleksandr Kudryavtsev)	Public order, counter-terrorism and counter-intelligence.	Interior Ministry (MVD), Federal Security Service (FSB), National Guard
International Security (Vladimir Kryazhev)	Foreign policy, arms control and international security affairs	Foreign Ministry, Defence Ministry, Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR)
Information Security (Anatoly Strel'tsov)	Cybersecurity and information operations	FSB, military intelligence, Federal Protection Service (FSO)
Defence-Industrial Security & Military-Technical Construction (Aleksandr Vidanov)	Defence-industrial complex, economic espionage	Military-Industrial Commission, Defence Ministry, Federal Service for





		Military-Technical Cooperation
Military Inspectorate (Evgeny Nikitenko)	Military	Defence Ministry
Problems of Security in the North Caucasus (Viktor Rodionchev)	Regional security in the North Caucasus	MVD, FSB, Office of the Presidential Envoy to the North Caucasus Federal District
Personnel (Valentin Valyukov)	Support and staffing	Presidential Administration

The primary organisation of the Secretariat is in 8 (or maybe 9<sup>2</sup>) primary departments. These will each fall under one of the Deputy Secretaries, but have their own department head: the former sets assignments, the latter manages the department and ensures those tasks are completed. The Department for Problems of Security in the North Caucasus is headed by Viktor Rodionchev, for example, who is overseen by Oleg Khramov, while Valentin Valyukov, head of the Personnel Department, reports to Averyanov. As noted in the summaries above, departments also tend to have one or more particular ministries of other agencies with which they work.

## C. INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMISSIONS

<i>Interdepartmental Commission</i>	<i>Ex Officio Chair</i>
Strategic Planning	Secretary (Nikolai Patrushev)
Security in Economic & Public Spheres	'A Deputy Secretary of the SB' (currently Sergei Vakhrukov)
Public Security	Minister of Internal Affairs (Vladimir Kolokoltsev)
Military Security	Chief of the General Staff (Valeryi Gerasimov)

<sup>2</sup> There have been persistent suggestions of another department, especially considering that there is a ninth named head, Anatoly Naumov, but contradictory claims as to quite what its remit would be, from Environmental Security (highly unlikely) to a new Space Security one or, of special relevance in the current context of Western sanctions, Economic Security, which is the most likely.





Information Security	'A Deputy Secretary of the SB' (current chair not known; possibly Aleksandr Grebenkin)
Environmental Security	'A Member of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences'
Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs	'A Deputy Secretary of the SB' (currently Aleksandr Venediktov)
Issues on Creating a National System for Protection against New Infections	Deputy Chair of the SB (Dmitri Medvedev)
Matters of National Interest in the Arctic	Deputy Chair of the SB (Dmitri Medvedev)

Perhaps the most significant elements of the Secretariat are the nine Interdepartmental Commissions, as these not only are explicitly intended to operate across Secretariat departments, but they act as standing bodies allowing representatives from stakeholder ministries and agencies regularly to interact. Their formal roles tend to be programmatic, to develop common positions, work on major documents (the Military Security Commission, for example, took the lead on coordinating the work to draw up successive Military Doctrines) and provide briefing materials for the president and other key leadership figures. However in practice they also provide a space for the resolution of interagency disputes of a technical kind (more political and strategic ones are more likely to be handled by Patrushev or at the actual SB meetings). For example, the Public Security Commission is often required to resolve turf rivalries between the MVD, National Guard, FSB and Investigatory Committee.

The significance of these commissions is attested to by the seniority of their chairs, and also by the way that Medvedev was given a role when joining the SB apparatus precisely by standing up two new ones for him. (Although it is unclear if the clumsily-named Interdepartmental Commission on Issues on Creating a National System for Protection against New Infections will be wound down once the COVID threat has receded or whether, as is more likely, it will be broadened out to become a new Health or Epidemiological Security commission.)

## D. SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL

The Scientific Council, formally chaired ex officio by the SB Secretary, is a body of some 145 senior experts on a wide range of issues broadly relating to the SB's own expansive definition of 'security'. It meets as a body very rarely and essentially for ceremonial reasons. Rather, it has been described as the **"Security Council's scientific reserve,"** a body of trusted experts with at least some level of security clearance, who can be turned to for quick and trusted advice and briefing.

