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## **Anatoliy Sergeevich Kulikov: Policeman, Power Minister, Deputy Prime Minister...Politician?**

**Mr. Timothy L. Thomas**  
**Foreign Military Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS.**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

On 23 March 1998 Russian President Boris Yeltsin dismissed his government. He later reinstated every government minister (albeit sometimes to different, non-ministerial or non-governmental positions) except two, Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin and the Minister of Internal Affairs, Anatoliy Kulikov. Reportedly, Kulikov found out about his expulsion from radio and TV reports and, to date, has not received any official reason for his dismissal.

In the world of Kremlin politics, the dismissal of Kulikov is not an aberration. For the past four years, President Yeltsin has found reason to dismiss nearly all of the power ministers for one reason or another. The list has included Ministers of Defense Grachev and Rodionov, the Head of the Border Troops Nikolayev, and Ministers of Internal Affairs Yerin and now Kulikov, among others. Yet the discharge of Kulikov was unexpected. Rumors persist in Moscow that there was no sound logic behind the dismissal. On the contrary, many attribute his removal to the uncertain circumstances surrounding today's Kremlin politics, which appear to be strongly influenced by the swirling maelstrom of groups in opposition to one another composed of business tycoons, private interests, family associations and other agents of influence.<sup>1</sup> However, his personal stand on privatization, the war in Chechnya, and military reform may also have been influential factors in his release.

Who is Anatoliy Kulikov, what did he offer to President Boris Yeltsin, and why was he dismissed? Has he been miscast as a "hawk" by the press and the West due to the responsibilities of his job and fixed stereotypes of his office, respectively? Will he remain a prominent force after the year 2000 when a new President is elected? The answers to these and other intriguing questions about the former minister are explored below.

### **BACKGROUND**

General Anatoliy Sergeevich Kulikov was born on 4 September 1946 in the Stavropol Krai of the Russian Republic of the Soviet Union. He came up through the ranks as a professional soldier of the Internal Forces of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). From 1963 to 1966 he attended the Ordzhonikidze (or Vladikavkaz, a city in North Ossetia near the border with Chechnya and bordering on Ingushetia) Command School for Internal Troops. He became a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1966.<sup>2</sup>

After serving as a platoon leader and company commander, he attended the Frunze Military Academy in Moscow from 1971-1974 (an armed forces academy often attended by MVD and border guard officers), graduating with "distinction." From 1974 to 1988, he served in positions of increasing responsibility, from battalion to division commander. He was then assigned as a student to the General Staff Academy in Moscow, serving there from 1988-1990. The MVD had not sent a general to the General Staff Academy since 1968 and Kulikov did not disappoint those who pushed his selection, graduating with "distinction" once again. Those who taught him, as well as his classmates, highly valued his professional military competency. For his own part, Kulikov considered the General Staff Academy as the epitome of military education facilities in Russia. Soon, fate would draw together not only members of his graduating class but also those classes junior or senior to his both on the streets of Moscow and in the Russian countryside.<sup>3</sup>

After his tour at the General Staff Academy, Kulikov served as the chief of the Internal Forces (VV, a major component of the MVD) for the North Caucasus and Trans-Caucasus. He used force to settle a dispute that arose between the people of North Ossetia and Ingushetia during his tenure, in Kulikov's view, much of the trouble later resulting in the war with Chechnya first arose during this time. Kulikov monitored and attempted to neutralize the activities of Chechen thugs who intimidated and blackmailed MVD forces on Chechen territory between 1990 and 1992. .

As but one example, in November 1991 a local Chechen leader with 10 armed guards paid a visit to an MVD unit near Grozny. The Chechen leader summoned all of the officers of the garrison to the officer's club, and informed them that he was now in charge. The officers were told that if they didn't comply, bad things might happen to their families, some of whom were already in the custody of the Chechen leader's armed guards. Simultaneously, some Russian citizens in Chechnya were robbed and intimidated by armed local thugs. Kulikov was furious that Chechen President D. Dudayev let his cronies get away with these activities. At this point, according to one of his associates, he mentally began dividing the Chechen population into two groups, ordinary law-abiding citizens and renegade economic thieves.<sup>4</sup> Such events also helped form Kulikov's attitudes towards the authorities in Grozny, long before the December 1994 intervention in Chechnya. There is a chilling similarity between the events in Chechnya in 1991 and recent events in neighboring Dagestan that Kulikov undoubtedly is closely monitoring at this time. He has long believed that the Caucasus region may fall victim to the so-called domino theory, whereby the secession of one people would lead to the secession of others and the disintegration of the entire region.

Thus it appears that Kulikov was in the North Caucasus region during the coup attempt of 1991 and probably played no role in it. He became the head of the Internal Forces of Russia in 1992, when the size of the force was close to 403,000 (a recent report listed the current strength at 257,000 with another reduction of 37,000 planned for the near future; thus, Kulikov has reduced

the number of troops he was handed in 1992 by nearly half although, realistically, most of the reduction in force came from the breakup of the USSR and subsequent partitioning of the internal troops to the newly formed nations).<sup>5</sup> In the spring of 1992 he defended his candidate's dissertation on "Problems of Preparing Human Resources in the Interests of the Country's Defense," and by the summer of 1994 he had nearly completed work on his doctorate in military economics (most likely with the Academy of Natural Sciences), and received the degree in the coming months. He undoubtedly played a crucial role in coordinating forces for the storming of the White House and defense of the TV station at Ostankino in October of 1993, although in Yeltsin's book The Struggle for Russia he is not mentioned by name.

When fighting broke out in Chechnya in December of 1994, Kulikov was the deputy to MVD chief Yerin and was part of the command group. However, he was very unsatisfied with the initial planning and implementation of the intervention effort, and let his feelings be known. For example, he was extremely unsatisfied that the initial plan did not include the total encirclement of Grozny (as the academy had taught him). He accepted responsibility as Commander in Chief of all forces, both MVD and Ministry of Defense, on 26 January 1995, acting on the order of the Security Council. He spent the month of February consolidating security arrangements in Grozny, and also began moving forces out into the countryside. This sweep of neighboring villages in the plains and mountains lasted until June. Kulikov must bear responsibility for some of the worse fighting during this time period. At some points, such as at the battle for Samashki, his forces seemed out of control with some of the worse atrocities occurring on both sides in May and June.

In July of 1995 Kulikov accepted the position of Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation after Minister of Internal Affairs Yerin was relieved for the performance of Russian Interior troops at Buddenovsk. He was the first head of the Internal Forces to be promoted to this position, as most appointees came from within the police/militia branch of the MVD or from Party organs. He recognized within days of taking office that the MVD was layered with old conservative thought from top to bottom, and a restructuring or new creative approach was badly needed. Addressing his first MVD collegium, he promised that radical reform would be the order of business for the ministry, asking for a plan from his subordinates in three months.<sup>6</sup> It would take three full years before the plan would go into effect.

## **PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES**

Anatoliy Sergeevich Kulikov is not someone who takes his responsibilities, family or professional, lightly (he is married and has three children, a daughter and two sons). He has been miscast as an outright "hawk" by the West and by many of his countrymen. This is unfortunate. Analysts ignored many of the indicators that might point otherwise and also ignored the heavy responsibilities that weighed on his shoulders in the post-Gorbachev/Chechnya era.

One Russian journalist even compared Minister Kulikov to Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beriya, deputy chairman of the government in charge of the power ministries from 1941 to 1953 and the most feared henchman of the Stalin years.<sup>7</sup> This journalist's concern was with a potential Yeltsin decree to put Kulikov in charge of all the power ministries, giving maximum power to supporters of the presidential staff and blocking the "Lebedites," supporters of former Presidential contender

Alexander Lebed. The latter conducted a heated debate with Kulikov over the withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya in September of 1996.

For some time, Kulikov has demonstrated that he is not at all like Beriya or other "hawks" of the days of the USSR. Some two years ago during a call-in radio show, for example, he rejected out-of-hand suggestions to return to the days of "Red Terror" via the establishment of powerful "triumvirates" in every rayon with ministerial powers. In a speech to his own law-enforcement agencies, he noted that "we cannot and must not cross the line beyond which totalitarianism will again appear."<sup>8</sup> In April of 1997, while appearing on the show "Hero of the Day", Minister Kulikov, responding to potential pogroms in the Armavir and Pyatigorsk cities (after Chechen terrorists wounded, maimed or killed up to 50 people in a train station bombing), called for law and order instead of a resort to the raw use of force:

I am appealing to Russians to act strictly in accordance with the law...Reprisals or taking the law into people's own hands is something that must absolutely be prevented. This would be war. This must not be allowed to happen. And I am appealing to the commonsense of the leaders, the present leaders of the Chechen Republic, to Aslan Maskhadov.<sup>9</sup>

Even more interesting, and more supportive of an image of a "Russian-style democrat," was his involvement in an incident in March of 1996. It is one of those reports most often ignored by people wishing to label him a "hawk." Reportedly, President Yeltsin's advisors had requested that the President cancel the upcoming elections in June of that year, disperse the Duma, and ban the Communist Party. Kulikov was summoned to the President's office at 0600 on 18 March, where he confronted Yeltsin and his advisors and talked them out of this madness, which included plans to surround the Duma and institute what constituted a mini coup. The Presidential decree authorizing this action reportedly had already been prepared before Kulikov's meeting with the President, and only his last minute intervention stopped this action.

Minister Kulikov's duties, which called for maintaining law and order in Russia, made it easy to label him a "hawk." This task would present a daunting challenge to the best-equipped western law-enforcement official (one seriously doubts that any single western individual would want or be up to the job), charged as he was with fighting organized crime and tax evasion with a broken police force and inadequate legislative support. At one point, in addition to these responsibilities, he was also appointed the commander of all forces in Chechnya. How comfortable would the head of U.S. Police be if he were appointed head of all forces during Desert Storm? While the scale of the two conflicts might be different, the responsibilities and knowledge required were similar. Kulikov's job clearly was not for the weak at heart, since the context of Russian society within which he operated was anything but stable, and every word and action were open to the judgement of a vituperative press corps searching for victims while still learning their role as reporters in an open press.

On a recent visit to NATO headquarters, Kulikov juxtaposed his role in contemporary Russia with that of western law-enforcement officials during the initial stages of capitalism. He noted that

At the stage of the initial accumulation of capital, the West did not have nuclear weapons, global criminal syndicates, high-precision weapons, or missile launchers. The initial accumulation of capital in the West did not go hand in hand with the erosion of the entire industrial production system. The West did not have a huge number of professionals disillusioned with reforms and discarded by the system, those whose knowledge and skills can be put to use by criminal communities.<sup>[10](#)</sup>

To contend with the current situation in Russia, the leadership of the MVD required a strong hand, decisive action, and lots of common sense. Minister Kulikov appeared to be well-equipped with all of these attributes, based on his past accomplishments. How equipped was he, however, to handle the rule of law? Would his experiences in Chechnya and the North Caucasus prohibit him from developing an even handed approach to this most important element?

What were the traits of Minister Kulikov toward which reporters, analysts, and policy-makers should have paid more attention? First, and most important, Kulikov was extremely loyal to President Yeltsin, almost to a fault, yet was not afraid to speak his mind in order to give his boss the best information possible (which perhaps was a primary reason for his expulsion, as his replacement, Sergei Stepashin, is much more of a "yes" man than Kulikov). As mentioned above, some circles believe that he prevented a crisis for President Yeltsin and the government in March of 1996 when he confronted a policy that was neither democratic nor just. On the other hand, Kulikov was a man of military discipline, demonstrating that he could command federal troops and fight Chechen forces one day, and become an ardent advocate of a "bad peace" (in his opinion) the next. He knew when to compromise--when the commander-in-chief orders him to do so, as any soldier would do. Perhaps it was the latter trait that forced his silence after his dismissal.<sup>[11](#)</sup>

It appeared that Kulikov's respect for and loyalty to President Yeltsin held the two men together before the events of 23 March. They shared a common fate and laid everything on the line for the ideas they supported. The fate of the executive office and Russian-style democracy depended on the MVD's ability to maintain public order. Yeltsin believed that Kulikov could be trusted with this mission and with maintaining political control over the MVD. Kulikov for his part wanted to build a state based on the rule of law in an evolutionary fashion.<sup>[12](#)</sup> In order to have law and order, Russia needed oversight of its power ministries. At the same time, law enforcement personnel needed to be paid on time to keep them from all forms of bribery. If law and order broke down, anarchy would prevail in Russia. For these reasons, Kulikov's dismissal is suspect--did he have compromising material on some of President Yeltsin's closest friends, or did President Yeltsin have compromising material on him? Or was his dismissal the result of Tatyana Yeltsin, the President's daughter, meddling in high politics and business at her father's expense (indicating the President is not in charge, a very scary thought)?

A second personal attribute was Minister Kulikov's leadership style. Without question, he looked out for his men as well as the other commanders in Moscow. This was even apparent when he traveled abroad, as one of his first missions was often to search for specific kinds of medicine for his soldiers.<sup>[13](#)</sup> After a recent court case was settled in his favor, he donated all of the proceeds to

the MVD hospital. In the face of another court case with a newspaper for libel, he stated that he was sure he would win and could then help more soldiers recuperate quickly.<sup>14</sup>

Former Minister Kulikov also was quick to look out for subordinates who minded to his every detail, from enlisted men to high ranking officers, asking whether they had eaten on time, been paid, or had any other problems. Concern for his men was also apparent when examining the MVD's budget and pay habits. Kulikov's associates at his former Internal Forces headquarters noted that he always knew by heart how much money had not been transferred somewhere, who had not yet received his pay, and what amount of money had to be extracted from the budget.<sup>15</sup> Yet initially, the position of the MVD was worse than that of MOD. During the war in Chechnya, the Defense Minister at the time, Pavel Grachev, noted that "the situation with financing the Defense Ministry is also complicated, but it is not so critical and desperate as in the Interior Ministry. These are our common difficulties, but I have learned to keep my mouth shut during my four years in office."<sup>16</sup>

Radio Rossii reported on 5 January 1998 that arrears owed to servicemen and employees of the interior bodies and internal troops had been settled in full, that is money, ration allowances, social payments and other compensations.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps this meant that Kulikov simply watched out for his men better than those at the Defense Ministry. Or perhaps his force simply didn't have to spend the same amount of money on R&D for new, high-cost equipment (ships, planes, missiles, tanks, etc.) as the armed forces, and consequently could put more of it into people, which should help stabilize the fight against crime. Kulikov appears to have done better than Grachev and the latter's successors.

Kulikov, until recently, appeared to have very sound relations with the armed forces. The appointment of Army (not MVD) Colonel-General Leontiy Shevtsov, a close friend, as the new head of the Internal Forces was indicative of this relationship. Shevtsov was the first Army commander of the Internal Forces since General Gromov had assumed that post on the eve of the 1990 crackdown. Kulikov also reportedly had few problems adjusting as head of all forces in Chechnya, owing this to the fact that all forces pass through the same schools and receive the same training. On the ground, however, there were problems between the forces of the army and MVD, and they have been well-documented elsewhere in the press.

A third quality worthy of note is that General Kulikov is a hands-on type of leader. His actions in the early days of his ministry were indicative of this. Four months after acquiring the title of Minister, he ran several operations designed to find out just how corrupt his police force had become. The results were shocking. In one case, he put on civilian clothes and went out to inspect units near midnight. He found a duty officer in one instance who peered through the peephole, recognized him, and locked him out, afraid that the minister might see what he was doing. Further, Kulikov drove down Russian roads in a private car, disguised in civilian clothes, and was "stung" for several hundred dollars in bribes by his subordinates.<sup>18</sup> One can imagine the look on their faces when he produced his actual identity documents.

In one case, he set up an operation that involved the MVD buying some vodka, loading it up in a refrigerated truck, and then video taping the route and inspection processes along the "Caucasus highway" from North Ossetia to Rostov. Only two of 24 State Motor Vehicle Inspection



Administration personnel did not take a bribe when offered, which varied from \$5 to \$50. More than 30 policemen were discharged as a result, and Kulikov himself noted that "it would probably be right for me too to be sacked."<sup>19</sup> Kulikov also demanded more hands-on involvement from his own forces. He instituted more foot patrols and promised to hold precinct police inspectors accountable for local security. This attitude of hands-on extended to his off-duty time as well. Minister Kulikov is a tool and gun fanatic, and relishes every opportunity to make or fix something, or to go hunting. He also is reportedly extremely well-organized, with "personal planning" one of his strong suits.

A fourth characteristic is that General Kulikov is decisive and has little tolerance for fools and incompetents. He did not hesitate to fire those officers who appeared to stand in the way of progress in the Ministry. However, he was as just as he was demanding. He listened closely to enlightened opinions, and constantly sought out innovative and original sources of information. He once complained that there simply was not enough time in the day to meet with everyone on his wish list, such was his penchant to hear different opinions. His initial days in office would start with operational briefings, and then include a stream of politicians, members of political parties, and businessmen, with an update on the situation in Chechnya thrown in for good measure.<sup>20</sup>

Some of the meetings he held early in his tenure were rather unorthodox. For example, the Chairman of the State Duma Security Committee, Viktor Ilyukhin, gave Kulikov documents that reportedly contained details of investment corruption in the top echelons of power (implicating First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets and Federation Council Speaker Vladimir Shumeyko) in the first few days after he became minister. Kulikov later reportedly met with the person who had provided the information, Valentina Solovyeva, who was in charge of the investment firm. She was in a detention cell at the time and was transported to meet Kulikov in secrecy on a Saturday, according to the story.<sup>21</sup>

Kulikov recently formed an MVD advisory council.<sup>22</sup> It contained some of the finest research establishments and individuals in Russia noted for innovative and novel ways of attacking problems. The advisory group consisted of the following individuals: Andrei Anatol'evich Arkhipov (politologist); Elena Ivanovna Bashkirova (General Director of the Center for the Study of Public Opinion, Sociologist); Arkadii Ivanovich Vol'skii (representative of the Russian Union of Manufacturers and Entrepreneurs); Sergei Alekseevich Goncharov (President of the Association of Veterans of the Antiterrorist Group "Alpha"); Sergei Efimovich Egorov (President of the Association of Russian bankers); Evgenii Mikhailovich Kozhokin (Director of the Russian Institute of Strategic Research, Doctor of Historical Science); German Vasil'evich Kirilenko (General-Major in the reserves, Doctor of Military Science); Oleg Emel'yanovich Kutafin (Rector of the Moscow Juridical Academy, Doctor of Juridical Science); Viktor Borisovich Kuvaldin (politologist, Doctor of Historical Science); Viktor Grigor'evich Loshak (Editor, Moscow News); Oleg Edmundovich Pavlov (First Deputy Director of the Russian Committee for the Defense of Peace, Coordinator of the Advisory Council); Aleksandr Petrovich Potemkin (Chief of the Directorate of Large Taxpayers of GNS [Main Tax Council?] of the Russian Federation, Coordinator of the Advisory Council); Eduard Mikhailovich Sagalaev (President of the Moscow Independent Broadcasting Corporation); Aleksandr Sergeevich Tsipko (politologist, Doctor of Historical Science); and Nikolai Petrovich Shmelev (Main Researcher of

the Institute of Europe RAN, corresponding member of RAN). Kulikov also had a strong interest in maintaining contact with the Kirginyan Center in Moscow, noted for its creative and experimental approach to a variety of problems ranging from terrorism to international relations. Through these contacts, Kulikov hoped to encourage an imaginative approach to problem-solving, and to utilize their expertise.

A final characteristic is that former Minister Kulikov is more open and forthright in public forums than many officials involved in police work and military affairs in past memory. When reading his interviews or watching him handle questions on TV, the impression he left was one of genuine candidness and sincerity through iron teeth. This included his analysis of combat operations in Chechnya such as the battle for Grozny, which he described in one interview as "from a commander's point of view, ...this could have been done much better. We did not properly seal off the city as we had been taught in the academy, and paid for our faulty planning measures with the blood of our children." When asked about cease-fire violations in Chechnya, he responded that "yes, there are violations. According to our estimates, about one-third of the commanders are seriously influenced by the viewpoint that fighting should continue."<sup>23</sup>

Such frankness is rare. Kulikov was also quick to reciprocate in direct exchanges, and was willing to discuss information with foreign governments engaged in the business of fighting crime. He was not afraid to use his initiative or explore opportunities that arose. He believed that what set his agency apart from the Ministry of Defense and other agencies, and allowed him to be slightly more open, was that police organizations all over the globe had common enemies. These included drug traffickers and cartels, mafia elements, and other types of criminal elements, and they could only be overcome by a joint, unified effort. Kulikov believed that discussion of such issues was mandatory under today's conditions. He appears to have decent relations with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

However, perhaps the most striking example of his frankness was his call during the war with Chechnya to strengthen or increase control over the government's own portion of property (the infamous statement that called for the nationalization of banks). This act caused a huge uproar among officials in the country, yet upon closer examination was rather typical for the Minister. First, the reason behind the statement was to gain money for soldiers in the MVD and the armed forces. There were two reasons for this. On the one hand Kulikov was in the middle of waging a battle to rid the MVD of corrupt officials, and he recognized above all else that officials who were not paid would turn to crime to make ends meet for their families. He desperately needed to get his men paid on time.

On the other hand, Kulikov had to get his men paid because he knew that the "man with a gun" would continue to ask who needed the war in Chechnya, who benefited from it, and why should Russian soldiers and officers die in the North Caucasus, especially for a state that wouldn't take care of them or their families?<sup>24</sup> Kulikov stressed again and again that his call for nationalizing several banks was not a program to fulfill but rather just a proposal for discussion. He alleged that no one was doing anything to help his force, and banked on the chance that this maverick statement would get discussions underway again. Government officials and businessmen responded in kind, as they often do when their empires are threatened. Kulikov's commentary acted as the catalyst and provided the motivation for discussions.



When asked if he had taken this step because he had been backed into a corner, Kulikov replied that "you know, that might be a little too direct and blunt, but in actual fact the situation is close to that, and here is the reason. After all, it is not just workers, miners and teachers that have turned out for protest actions. They have also involved people bearing arms (a reference to his own forces)...We are not meeting our contract obligations, and I am unable to find a solution to this. That is what this is really about"<sup>25</sup> Kulikov added that he was glad everyone (Chubays, Gaydar, Nechayev, etc.) was criticizing his plan, because it underscored what he had been saying over the past six months--no one proposed anything, they just criticized.

I, who am regarded as a dilettante, am being criticized for outlining these ways.  
What did they propose? Nothing, except criticism and excuses.<sup>26</sup>

The timing of Kulikov's statement was also interesting. It came shortly after the Duma elections, when nationalizing banks may have played better in the new Duma than raising taxes to pay his forces. In addition, it came at a time when it would be dangerous for the President to quarrel with one of his power ministers, barely three months before the elections were to be held for the leadership of the country. In subsequent governments, Kulikov believed, practical steps had to be taken to strengthen state control of its own property. In the end, however, no one embraced his plan.

## **KULIKOV ON ETHNIC CONFLICT**

One of the main priorities for Anatoliy Kulikov throughout his career in the MVD was to control conflict, ethnic and otherwise. Chechnya challenged his conflict control theories to the utmost. Perhaps the best explanation of his thoughts on this subject were presented to an international audience in May of 1995. Then Colonel-General Kulikov took a trip to London where he addressed an audience on Russian national security policy and internal threats. Fresh off the Chechen battlefield and destined to return directly to it, one might think he would be gloating since at the time the war was going in his favor. Such was not the case. True to form, his speech was a serious look at the Russian landscape in 1995, analyzing how it had gained its form and what role military force had played in its development.

Kulikov began by noting that the disintegration of the Soviet Union had resulted in a "geopolitical catastrophe" for Russia, which had lost its two buffer zones of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics. As a result, Russia had transformed from a geopolitical extrovert to an introvert in a very short space of time, leaving it with poorly demarcated, transparent borders. In Kulikov's words

Because of the absence of respective inter-governmental agreements, such borders put millions of Russians and Russophiles into an ambiguous position where they suddenly, and against their own free will, become foreigners and perhaps stateless in the countries of the 'near abroad'.<sup>27</sup>

Kulikov defined a conflict as a collision of antagonistic, objectively irreconcilable dialectical contradictions. Conflicts are a product of the inner life of a society, of the order of things existing in it, of the relations between individuals and groups of persons. An ethnic conflict is a variety of

a social conflict. In reality, pure ethnic conflicts do not exist. They are caused, rather, by economic discrimination of a national group, nation, unsettled territorial issues, the absence of real sovereignty for a nation, and the discrimination of national minorities.<sup>28</sup> While ethnic conflicts may be inevitable, they may have both good and bad consequences, Kulikov suggested. Conflicts can be good, in that they can serve as a "discharge channel" or "exhaust valve" for aggression and purify the air of its participants. This allows them to "connect, get closer" and resume mutual relations. In this sense, conflict can serve as a stimulant for socio-political change. The negative aspects of conflict are only too apparent. A conflict may jeopardize the integration of society and is fraught with serious consequences for representatives of certain nationalities who might become victims or refugees. Since ethnic conflicts contain an intense emotional potential, they are often accompanied by extreme forms of man's behavior.<sup>29</sup> The frightening prospect is that these conflicts may be unavoidable.<sup>30</sup>

On occasion, man's right to live requires military actions to stop armed confrontation between groups to achieve political compromise. Two approaches to preclude and settle ethnic conflicts are institutional (use of a network of organizations, and institutes of national, regional and global levels) and instrumental (the selection and proper combination of operative, tactical and strategic decisions).<sup>31</sup> It was on this latter approach, as a military man, that Kulikov focused his attention.<sup>32</sup>

The use of force in ethnic conflicts is not always good since, Kulikov noted, it not only can sharply aggravate relations but hinder the promotion of conflict resolution as legal and political struggles between movements are suppressed and an independent search for a mutually acceptable solution is discontinued, pushing most fanatical groups to terrorism. Theory, Kulikov added, states that troops stabilize ethnic conflict for short terms but seldom gain long-term success. However, success is possible if the troops are there (even long term) before an armed struggle breaks out.<sup>33</sup> Kulikov therefore would likely be very pessimistic about the chances for peace in Bosnia.

Regarding Chechnya, Kulikov noted that it was a perfect example of why arms control is needed even within a country. Huge amounts of weapons were concentrated on this part of Russia's territory, and the criminal regime of Dudayev violated the laws, human rights and territorial integrity of the country. Compromise was tried, but Dudayev took only the position of secession from the Russian Federation and started a large-scale campaign for the forcible ousting of all non-Chechens from the Chechen Republic. The only way of resolving the conflict by the end of 1994 was to disarm the gunmen and ensure the legitimacy of power structures at all levels by holding free elections on a Russian-style democratic basis.<sup>34</sup>

Some of the blame for failing to act earlier falls on Russian military officials. Some also falls on the immature, young Russian democracy, in Kulikov's opinion, due to the unfinished condition of its governmental institutions and the imperfection of its legislation. Unfortunately, the country conducted large-scale combat operations on its territory to safeguard security while the laws regulating such actions were unavailable. The lack of legal protection resulted in numerous extremes, criminal inaction and other errors.<sup>35</sup>

In May of 1995, Kulikov viewed the tasks of the immediate future in Chechnya as restoring from 60-70% of the economy, and the creation of peaceful conditions for restoring the Republic. He also wanted to prevent the conflict from changing to a new stage, the stage of a guerrilla war. Military actions must be aimed at creating the conditions for restoring constitutional law and order, in his opinion, and not for the use of force. The government must do better in its information support of the actions of troops. The unity and accord of the Chechen people must be restored as well. A policy of divide and rule may have to be imposed to neutralize the most extremist part of Chechen society, he added. Opposition elements to Dudayev in Chechnya do not show real power, and so it is necessary to create in the Republic the committee of national consent that would include the representatives of each inhabited area, town and district whose chairman would speak in the name of the Chechen people. Time is also required. In any case, the view that ethnic disputes can be solved only by force, and that it is possible to isolate an ethnic group from all nations, despite the views and destiny of other nations living nearby, is a tragic mistake as Chechnya has shown. Internal threats can be as dangerous as external ones.<sup>36</sup> And then Minister Kulikov added his most fateful observations:

The negative prognosis, according to which bringing federal troops into Chechnya will cause the consolidation of the majority of the indigenous population behind Dudayev, did not materialize. There is no civil war in Chechnya. At the same time, the situation in various districts of Chechnya is quite different. Out of the eleven administrative districts of the Republic, the situation is fully controllable only where the Provisional Councils for support of Russian troops are set up and where local people take effective steps to preclude the appearance of the Dudayev hit men in inhabited areas.<sup>37</sup>

He notes further:

Most dangerous among other factors for the development of the socio-political situation in Chechnya is the real possibility of the spread of the Chechen events to the regions contiguous to the Russian Federation territory and not to these areas only in recent time there is a tendency to complicate the situation in the Republic of Dagestan where the Dudayev supporters intend to use all forces to provoke a collision with Russian troops . . . .<sup>38</sup>

This potential problem area was a priority issue for former Minister Kulikov at the time of his dismissal. Kulikov recognized that relations were on shaky ground. In his words, the "regressive situation has not been overcome. Regressive forces are at work. And when certain impassioned heads, speaking in the name of democracy, tell us that supposedly a 'free people' is fighting in Chechnya, then all we can do is shrug our shoulders. Animal force, including against one's own people, is combined in this attempt with a deep and obvious spiritual obscurantism that contradicts the basic principles of Islam. The great Islamic spiritual experience has nothing in common with the 'obscurantism of wolves,' with that which is the basis of the terrorist ideology - a denial of humanism, the 'dehumanising' of human existence. One can and must fight against this with the sword. And we are waging this battle, being subjected to criticism and experiencing the torment of the necessity of moving to peace by way of war."<sup>39</sup>

No other writings have been uncovered on Kulikov's thinking on ethnic conflict. Therefore, it is unknown if the outline above still represents his views on the subject.

## **RUSSIAN SOCIETY AND CRIME: FORMER MINISTER KULIKOV'S BIGGEST NIGHTMARE**

Russian society is undergoing incredible changes as it moves from a totalitarian to a Russian-style democratic system, and from a centrally-controlled to a capitalist economy. This change has introduced instability into the political, economic and social processes of the country, which allowed organized crime a chance to exploit the situation and amass incredible wealth. It was estimated in 1995 that some 5,000 gangs (between 20-25,000 men) were active on Russian soil. But it was the number of criminal dealings among the police that really shocked Kulikov:

Three months ago when I was appointed Minister of Internal Affairs I could not even imagine the degree of corruption in Internal Affairs organs that I have encountered. I have come to realize one thing: if we do not start purging our own ranks, the whole fight against organized crime and corruption will merely be reduced to eliminating their superficial manifestations.<sup>[40](#)</sup>

This caused Kulikov to institute a "clean hands" operation in 1995 that was designed to uncover and eliminate MVD personnel who were corrupt. This resulted in several people getting fired immediately. One was a general from a top post in the Moscow region police who admitted passing classified information about a witness to a criminal group. Three other generals soon followed. Kulikov also established an Interior Security Department to prevent agents of criminal groups from penetrating the police force.<sup>[41](#)</sup>

Former Minister Kulikov initially said he would assess his accomplishments in some measure by how he stacked up against crime statistics over the extent of his tenure in office. This is a dangerous yardstick against which to measure success, however, since it could happen that crime rose 30% in a year, but in that same year 30% more crimes were reported than in the past. Or it could work in reverse, that apparent success really was only a reflection of the fact that all of the crimes were not reported. However, a look at the statistics and proclaimed achievements during the years 1995-1998 are worthy of mention.

### **1995**

On 20 February 1996 the newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta, in an interview with former Minister Kulikov, listed the results of the activities of the ministry in the past year. While this was clearly not Kulikov's program, since he took over in mid-stream in July, his comments still are worthy of comparison with those in the years to come.

On the negative side, Kulikov noted that ordinary citizens had trouble making ends meet and therefore moved closer to professional gangsters in efforts to put food on the table. More than 3 million citizens lost thousands of rubles in financial pyramid schemes and pseudo-banks. Unemployment reached 6 million or 8.2% of the total number of people able to work. The incomes of one-fourth of the population dropped below the subsistence wage.

On the positive side, Kulikov reported that Yeltsin's edict "On Urgent Measures for the Protection of the Population from Gangsterism and Other Manifestations of Organized Crime" became the only normative document making it possible for the police to at least maintain parity in the fight against the mafia. In all, 24,000 crimes [murders] were solved, including 60 contract murders.<sup>42</sup> This was 4.9% better than the previous year. More than 11,000 weapons were confiscated, as well as valuables worth some 715.3 billion rubles. Ties to other law enforcement agencies of the Commonwealth of Independent States were also improved. In addition, the central apparatus of the MVD and its operational subunits were restructured somewhat, as changes were made to managing the operational-investigative subunits. All of this in spite of the fact that the police were weakened by the continuous exodus of personnel and material resources to Chechnya.<sup>43</sup>

Regarding Chechnya, Kulikov reported in March that over 5,000 crimes were recorded in Chechnya in 1995 (it is hard to understand where these statistics came from, and how these crimes were kept separate and distinct from war crimes). He noted that the power of lawlessness made it possible to continue their criminal activities, and that the kidnaping of construction workers (25 million ruble ransom) or soldiers (200 million ruble ransom) was a new and profitable practice.<sup>44</sup>

## ***1996***

In late 1995, Kulikov estimated that some 2.9 million crimes would be registered in 1996. In January of 1997, he reported that there were 2.62 million crimes recorded, down from his initial estimate by some 3000 and down from 1995's total of 2.75 million. However, Kulikov also estimated that the realistic number of crimes (or latent crime) approached 7 million. He also reported that 29,700 murders or attempted murders were committed, some 2,000 fewer than 1995. However, only 60 of 450 contract killings were solved. The Minister reported that 200 gangs were broken up, and he continued his assault on his own ministry, arresting some 10,000 workers of Interior Ministry organs, including 3,500 for criminal offenses.<sup>45</sup> This number was up substantially from the 800 Internal Affairs staffers charged with abuse of power in the previous year.

## ***1997***

By October 1997, Kulikov noted a few trends in the underworld, namely that it had changed qualitatively and structurally. It is better organized and offers more active resistance to law enforcement while striving to control entire sectors of the economy. It is more than a social menace, he emphasized. It is a threat to national security. Now his estimate of the number of people involved in organized crime rose to 60,000 members. Mafia crimes rose from 1.4% of the total committed to 1.7%, with more concentrated in the energy and raw material sectors (all together, there were 21% more crimes in this category than in the previous year). In the Ryazan region alone, over 70 contract killings have left 112 people dead, and the groups have connections in law enforcement and administrative agencies, penetrating legal businesses and senior management positions of large enterprises.<sup>46</sup>

Kulikov estimated that in 1997, registered crimes dropped to somewhere between 2.6 and 1.8 million, while the number of solved crimes rose 2.2%. In the first seven months of the year, nearly 5,000 MVD staffers had proceedings initiated against them, and 1500 for crimes they committed.

Many observers of the criminal scene in Russia believe that the results offered by former Minister Kulikov don't match reality. This may be true, since so many crimes go unreported. One such observer was Vladimir Lopatin, Russian Federation State Duma Deputy and gadfly of military reform during the Gorbachev era. Lopatin believed that Kulikov's program failed for two reasons: it didn't coordinate all the numerous law enforcement structures, and it didn't enhance the professionalism of agency personnel. Instead, Lopatin believed that Kulikov was merely trying to preserve the status quo. This is hard to comprehend, given that Kulikov had fired or had proceedings initiated against more than 5,000 staffers. Lopatin called the crime situation in Russia a threat to national security (which Kulikov had also noted, as cited in an Ogonek article). Lopatin also noted that Minister Kulikov may have political ambitions in mind and for that reason he was trying to keep power in his hands by increasing the number of internal troops (yet the number is reportedly decreasing).

On closer examination, then, Lopatin's arguments simply do not withstand the scrutiny of logic and commonsense. He unwittingly defends Kulikov in his argument, noting that only 4 out of 23 trillion rubles are available to the MVD to implement its program and therefore it is doomed to failure. How will the MVD be able to secure national security if it gets less than one-fifth of what it needs? And Lopatin, as a deputy, should be arguing for more money for the MVD if he is worried about crime statistics that don't match reality! Lopatin concluded his interview with a most amazing leap of logic. He stated that crime in Azerbaijan had decreased several-fold over a two-three period, and that during a personal discussion with Azerbaijani President Geydar Aliyev he had found the secret: they brought back the old, experienced cadre who had left the MVD, worked inside the commercial structures, and now brought back order to the shadow economy.<sup>47</sup> Please note--Mr. Lopatin doesn't question President Aliyev's statistics, apparently doesn't believe that Azerbaijani police are corrupt, and doesn't believe that the "old, experienced personnel" may now know exactly how to beat the system and in fact "control the shadow economy." Yet for years, this is what Lopatin fought against--the old system. How soon one forgets...

A much better argument for Lopatin and others to pursue is the fact that in early 1998 former Minister Kulikov reportedly stated that he would no longer release official statistics on crime in Russia to the public. One can draw from this action a much more reasonable hypothesis that things are indeed bad in Russia, and that citizens should be on the lookout for a rise in crime rates.

## **A SURVIVOR, BUT BARELY: THE KULIKOV-LEBED DUEL**

Russian Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs, among others, have rotated out of jobs into other, less prestigious positions during the Yeltsin Presidency. Now this is also Kulikov's fate. Earlier, however, Kulikov survived several heated political battles. The most contentious was his confrontation with Alexander Lebed. Lebed appeared to be one man that Kulikov



underestimated, and one he had significant difficulty debating, especially over the fate of Russian forces in Chechnya.

Both men, in their own way, wanted only the best for the country and the armed forces and this put them at loggerheads. Kulikov, deeply involved in the Chechen conflict from the very beginning, did not want to pull out of Chechnya until Russian forces had wiped out the bandit gangs. His idea to save the army was to win the war and gain some revenge against the criminal bands.

Lebed, on the other hand, had quite a different view. He had not been involved in the fighting, and believed that to save the army President Yeltsin must pull it out of Chechnya immediately and give it time to rebuild. In effect, both men conscientiously pursued their goals, but at the time Lebed's plan made more sense. Perhaps he shared the doubts of many army commanders about the war.

Perhaps there was also some resentment on Kulikov's part, since Lebed organized a settlement that Kulikov could not due to a different set of terms. It was the "discovery" by Kulikov of the reported coup plans that eventually led to Lebed's undoing. Questions regarding the timing and authenticity of these plans remain. In the end, this made Yeltsin decide between his two generals, and he sided with Kulikov in what some refer to as a mini coup in October 1996. The fight, however, continues to this day in absentia. Recently, for example, Lebed questioned why Kulikov needs "31 tanks, military helicopters and anti-tank systems? Against whom are they going to unleash such a fight?"<sup>48</sup>

## **ANOTHER CRISIS: THE RAID IN BYUNAKSK, DAGESTAN**

...we have a right to make preventive strikes against bandit bases, wherever they are located, including the territory of the Chechen Republic. This is my view, and I intend to inform the President of this.<sup>49</sup>

In early January, bandit gangs staged a raid against the town of Byunaksk in Dagestan. Local police and civilians protected the maternity home and hospital, and approaches to the town. Former Minister Kulikov, in response to the raids, noted that preemptive strikes against the camps of these bandits should be made to destroy them. This line of thinking makes sense in light of his comments on ethnic conflict in London.

Naturally, Chechen authorities took strong exception to Kulikov's statements. They made it known in no uncertain terms that if preemptive strikes are initiated against bands on Chechen territory, Chechnya would respond. Kulikov also faced opposition from Russian officials, to include the speaker of the State Duma, Gennadiy Seleznev. The latter noted that proposing preemptive strikes against Chechen guerrilla bases in and outside Chechnya was outside Kulikov's powers.<sup>50</sup> He was partly correct in his assessment. As head of the country's police force and interior troops, Kulikov most likely has permission to conduct limited strikes against gangs in Dagestan and other areas of Russia. This permission, undoubtedly, is limited by politics and the personal preferences of the President. But Chechen territory is another matter, totally out of Kulikov's area of responsibility. Here, Kulikov had to seek the permission of Presidents'

Yeltsin and Maskhadov before entertaining any thoughts of intervening. He undoubtedly realized this, since failure to do so could easily reignite the conflict with Chechnya.

Interestingly, there were endorsements of and attacks upon Kulikov's statement. Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, in the words of military correspondent Pavel Felgenhauer, noted that remarks like that should not be made. But the Prime Minister also did not say that one should not think like that, Felgenhauer added, and conjectured that perhaps Kulikov was thinking of a political career and was trying to score points among the section of the Russian public that does not like Chechnya.<sup>51</sup> This analysis seems to miss the mark, as it is hard to link political ambitions with actions over Dagestan.

The most positive assessment of his remarks was offered by journalist Mark Deych of Moskovskiy Komsomolets. Deych offered that while he had no particular respect for Kulikov, he had grown weary of the constant anticipation of terrorist acts and of having Chechen terms dictated to Russia. He concluded that the man, in his opinion, from the Party of War (that is, for conflict in Chechnya) was correct and straightforward, and he had expressed an opinion calmly that many people share. Someone had to call a spade a spade, and Kulikov did just that.<sup>52</sup>

But negative comments, in the final analysis, outweighed the number of positive assessments. One of the more negative assessments by a journalist consisted of a series of conjectures against Kulikov: that the statement suggested the central authorities weakness since everyone seems to play by his own rules; that the President must be very kind and magnanimous to forgive his subordinate with stars for both minor and major transgressions; that there must be a division of labor between the President and his subordinates, in that he makes statements and the subordinates dispute them; and that Chernomyrdin's men needed elementary training in political literacy and proper statesmanlike behavior. The lack of a strong redress indicated to some that the country's leaders must agree with Minister Kulikov, his statements coming as they did on the heels of the firing of Border Troops Chief Nikolayev.<sup>53</sup> Kulikov would be unlikely to take a chance under these circumstances, it was felt. Perhaps Vadim Dubnov is correct in his analysis that Kulikov serves as a reflex action for what Yeltsin tells his generals, seemingly acting in opposition to the President's edicts or pronouncements.<sup>54</sup>

The response from the Chechen leadership was predictable. President Aslan Maskhadov conferred with field commanders and discussed the need to be ready for any course of developments.<sup>55</sup>

## **DANGEROUS SIGNS, OR A PRESS SERVICE OUT OF CONTROL?**

Reports about and comments by former Minister Kulikov caused concern in the days leading up to his dismissal. One report in Obshchaya Gazeta, mentioned above, noted that the former Minister published an order in January prohibiting statistical data from being reported in the open periodical press concerning the amount of crime in Russia.<sup>56</sup> Are statistics really that bad that they can't be published? Or is information on crime that unreliable? This notice is also disturbing since Kulikov had previously noted:

the battle is not between the old and new. The battle is between regression, degradation, and "dropping" our society into a feudal and pre-feudal condition and counter-regression, on the one hand, and the shoots of citizenship and law, of free thought and the responsibility of government action, on the other. We will be uncompromising in this battle. But this uncompromising position is nothing without depth and openness of political vision. It is very easy in such a battle to cross the line and begin moving in reverse under the guise of protecting state interests.<sup>57</sup>

Kulikov himself offered another version, namely that every year in early March a written summary is produced by the MVD of its activities for the previous year. This report is sent to the mass media as a report to the people. The product provides all the numbers and information about the state of crime. In Kulikov's opinion, his instruction to increase control of the preservation of secret data and to prevent the leaking of operational information served as a pretext for the press to assume that this prohibition on the publication of numbers applied to all crime-related data.

Other danger signs included his growing boldness to publicly contradict statements of President Yeltsin. One example was the comments former Minister Kulikov made at the Academy of Military Sciences on 7 February 1998. Kulikov discussed how reform "is skidding" and "can be carried out only by economically well-off countries." He considered the first stage of reform to include cuts in personnel while preserving the combat capabilities of the army. Perhaps most important, he believed Russia should not just analyze local conflicts but must "prepare the army and the state for a drawn-out war." This statement clashed with President Yeltsin's demand that the provision for potential global conflict be crossed out of the draft document for military doctrine in May 1997. Perhaps he was referring to a protracted local or regional war, but the newspaper accounts of the talk simply don't give enough information.

Former Minister Kulikov also denounced the idea of canceling conscription. To preclude the situation that is now unfolding in Iraq, Kulikov recommended the preservation of military science and officer cadres to study and thwart such an event.<sup>58</sup> He also proposed that retired officers from the armed forces be allowed to join his ministry and attached to the tax inspectorate and tax police. Some have interpreted this as a call for the officer corps to support him, but the more likely analysis is that he had rid his force of many middle-age officers due to corruption and needed more experience, which these officers would provide, to supplement the younger generation coming into the force. Kulikov's speech was greeted with approval by many conference participants, according to the paper *Nezavisimoye Voennoye Obozreniye*.<sup>59</sup> *Kommersant-Daily* and NTV were less enthusiastic, with the latter reporting that many generals said privately that Minister Kulikov should put his own house in order before giving advice to the military.<sup>60</sup>

## **RUMORS ABOUT THE DISMISSAL OF 23 MARCH**

Why was former Minister Kulikov dismissed on 23 March? There are many explanations circulating in Moscow. Interestingly, his dismissal has drawn attention to some of the most controversial scenarios circulating about Kremlin politics, especially those relating to President

Yeltsin's health and competency to rule. One version or speculation about Kulikov's dismissal is that his ministry had grown too influential and strong, especially in regard to the amount of combat equipment it possessed. One newspaper account theorized that this structure could be used to suppress an army coup, or could be used to run an independent coup against the President and the army.<sup>61</sup> Kulikov's dismissal now presents the army with the chance to create a "unified coordinating power structure within the context of a single military district or operational-strategic sector, where a single commander would control all territorial troops."<sup>62</sup> The MVD opposed this idea in the past because its funding would then be dependent on the interests of the Armed Forces General Staff. In addition, such a decision meant that the MVD might have to fight in Chechnya without modern or sufficient weaponry since the army, according to the country's military doctrine, should not be used again under such circumstances unless in support of the MVD.

A second speculation behind Kulikov's dismissal was his perceived meddling in the economic affairs of the country. This was resented by Anatoliy Chubais and others in the administration. Chubais's privatization plan and Kulikov's calls to nationalize the banks obviously were in direct contradiction with one another. The two men barely got along with one another. The country's present economic path, for Kulikov, also was the main impediment to military reform since the state was not offering the necessary funding. This idea was also seized upon by Lev Rokhlin, leader of the All-Russia Movement in Support of the Army, the Defense Industry, and Military Science. Rokhlin noted that Kulikov had spoken out in support of his movement's military concept.<sup>63</sup> Perhaps President Yeltsin also feared a potential alliance of forces between Rokhlin and Kulikov, adding to his desire to dismiss him. Yeltsin's decree dismissing the government focused on economic issues, calling for fresh impetus to economic reform and to make it more efficient. Chubais, incidently, noted that he had discussed the government's dismissal earlier with President Yeltsin and that it thus came as no surprise to him.<sup>64</sup> Others felt getting rid of Kulikov balanced the dismissal of Chubais in the Vice Prime Minister sphere, who may have agreed to go amicably and accept another position if Kulikov was dismissed.

A third speculation for his dismissal was simply his overestimation of the security of his position and standing with the President, especially since his position did not always coincide with that of the Presidential team. Kulikov had become increasingly bold since the fall, attempting to unite all the power agencies that do operational work under his supervision but succeeded only in securing the operational and investigation activities of many of the power ministries (Federal Security Service, Federal Government Communications and Information Agency, Foreign Intelligence Service, Main Intelligence Directorate, Federal Border Service and the Federal Tax Police Service), according to one report.<sup>65</sup> He had also spoken out forcefully to intervene and stop bandit raids into Dagestan; had iterated his own view of military reform, which differed from that of President Yeltsin; and had many supporters from among the Duma opposition. Kulikov often appeared as a positive force on the pages of *Zavtra* and *Sovietskaya Rossiya*, and the reformers, to include President Yeltsin, may have grown increasingly suspect of the minister for his political ties with members of the non-democratic opposition.

A fourth speculation for his dismissal was his growing friendship and reliance on Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov. The Yeltsin entourage could not have been happy with this alignment either since it put together two popular figures in potential opposition to the Yeltsin team's

proposal for the next Presidential election, whoever that might turn out to be. Luzhkov was the only one to openly admit in the press that the dismissal of Kulikov was a mistake. "Kulikov was a strong minister" who "left the guidance of political structures and ceased to be an instrument of political struggle. A real combat of crime began," he noted.<sup>66</sup> The issue for Yeltsin is to choose someone who not only can win but who suits his family and their closest employees, financiers, and business associates, some believe.<sup>67</sup> Kulikov does not fit that mold.

A fifth and final speculation is that Kulikov was dismissed either because he had become corrupt, or because he may have provided Yeltsin with some sort of information about people who are close to the President. Instead of an investigation the bearer of the bad news was released.<sup>68</sup> Or perhaps Kulikov had simply grown disgusted with the first family and their lucrative business ties with such questionable people as Boris Berezovsky, who has a huge financial investment in the newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta, the airline company Aeroflot and the oil company Siberian Oil, and let his disgust be known. The U.S. journal Forbes has put Berezovskiy's worth at some \$3 billion. It is reported that he is a great friend of Tatyana Dyachenko, Yeltsin's daughter, and favors other "bankers" in the "on-going fire sale of Russian state assets to Kremlin insiders."<sup>69</sup>

Berezovskiy first became a national celebrity in 1996 when he was appointed to the position of deputy secretary of the Security Council of Russia, an action that was met by both amazement and rage by top politicians. Berezovskiy reportedly was a central figure in a 10-strong presidential campaign team set up around Anatoliy Chubais and Tatyana Dyachenko, Yeltsin's daughter. He also was instrumental in establishing the "letter of Russian bankers" in May of 1996 which suggested that the elections should not be held for the sake of national consolidation.<sup>70</sup> He apparently was ousted in 1997 by Chubais and Boris Nemtsov, charging that he had used his post to advance his business interests. During his time on the Security Council he made efforts to advance the peace process between Moscow and Grozny. This moved him closer to Ivan Rybkin but farther away from Kulikov. His privatization policy also puts distance between him and Kulikov.

Berezovskiy, however, is greatly admired by the first family. Perhaps Kulikov's disdain for Berezovskiy's beliefs alienated him from the Presidential family. One analyst believes that Tatyana feared Kulikov because he was not involved in shady deals like the others and so could not be compromised.<sup>71</sup> To date, there has been no mudslinging against Kulikov, and he appears to have served with little or no personal profit. Unlike Kulikov, Berezovskiy was appointed executive secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) where, along with none other than Ivan Rybkin, government representative for CIS affairs, there will be new focus on promoting Russian capital in the privatization of industrial assets in the CIS countries.<sup>72</sup> He has also offered considerable financial support to the gubernatorial campaign of Alexander Lebed, still an opponent of Kulikov. Lebed noted in February 1998 that "I started the process of returning peace to Chechen soil, and Berezovskiy continued this."<sup>73</sup> Some feel Lebed's election might help bring aluminum customs into Berezovskiy's hands and that as a vice-speaker of the Federation Council on economics (in present governor Zubov's place) Lebed would create a powerful counterweight to Yuriy Luzhkov.<sup>74</sup> And as for Chernomyrdin? One report indicated that the Prime Minister's signing of a Rosneft privatization decree more profitable to the state than for Berezovskiy was his undoing.<sup>75</sup>

While based on nothing more than newspaper reporting, the possibilities arising from such charges certainly throw some light on the events that transpired, and indicate that the dismissals were more complicated than originally thought. The end result--a reunion of the Lebed and Yeltsin team in the coming year? Who knows, but Berezovskiy will clearly try to prevent this from happening and get a man of his choice as the new Presidential contender, it appears.

## CONCLUSIONS

The four questions posed at the start of this article were: what did Minister Kulikov offer President Yeltsin; was he miscast as a "hawk"; why was he dismissed; and will he remain a prominent force after the year 2000?

First, Kulikov offered Yeltsin political control over the streets of Moscow, and a realistic start in the fight against crime. He was deeply devoted to Russian-style democratic ideas that appeared to coincide with those of President Yeltsin. And he offered an opinion on the internal situation in the country that Yeltsin highly valued and considered before deciding on an issue in his sphere. He also appeared to remain popular among the opposition parties in spite of his strong support of the Yeltsin-Chernomyrdin team and to remain an advocate of national unity and territorial integrity. Somehow, through all the twists and turns of Russia's political quagmire, former Minister Kulikov appeared neutral, and this was often substantiated by the support he received from the Communist Party and Our Home is Russia political parties, located at different ends of the political spectrum, and from the favorable opinion of him expressed in the opposition press. Yet in the end, his loyalty to President Yeltsin was not enough. Did Kulikov lose faith after viewing the political shenanigans of the executive branch for three years (and let the powers to be know about it with his positions on issues that often contradicted those of the Presidential team), or did President Yeltsin believe he had a Minister who no longer was completely loyal to him and him alone?

Second, former Minister Kulikov did not appear to be the "hawk" some make him out to be. Without a doubt, he was a strong conservative, but this is an attitude which is mandatory for a Minister of Internal Affairs in Russia, especially today. His penchant for control and order were within reason. To appoint a liberal Minister at this point in history would have had catastrophic results. Kulikov had common sense and listened attentively to all types of opinions before deciding on an issue. He appeared no more "hawkish" than any U.S. law enforcement official, understanding that he operated under different rules and guidance than our officials do. It would have been more interesting to focus on his political adeptness rather than on his so-called "hawkish" behavior, in hindsight. He appears to have been an adept political animal, one that was much more flexible and coy than he was given credit.

What was the cause for his dismissal? It appears to have been the fact that his personal views on the economic situation in the country (and its impact on the pace of military reform), and his views on the North Caucasus set him apart from the influential movers and shakers inside the Kremlin, in particular the views of Anatoliy Chubais, Tatyana Dyachenko and Boris Berezovskiy. He thus became a pawn that could be used when necessary, and the time appeared to be right in March of 1998 as initial moves are being made to put in place the President's personal choice for President. Whether Yeltsin will regret the decision remains to be seen.



Finally, does former Minister Kulikov bring to a political alliance? Does he have a political future? He appears to have left his post without any charges of personal profit at the expense of his men or the ministry. This is the most positive point of his past, his clean record as we know it. He also offers to an alliance his vast organizational experience as a Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, inside knowledge of how the country was run from 1995 to the present, and a wealth of information on the country's hottest area of national interest, the North Caucasus. He will be a valuable asset to some political group in the upcoming election.

Conversations with members of the MVD lead one to believe that Kulikov himself may not have political ambitions but that his friends and subordinates expect him to reach new heights nonetheless. He will most likely remain a prominent force well after the year 2000 due to his close ties with leaders in the academic and power ministry communities. He also has the ability to unite the left opposition and the center, since both support him in spite of his neutral political stance and loyalty to President Yeltsin (which may now be questionable). This is most likely due to his apparent disdain for privatization, tough yet credible stance on terrorism, and desire to keep Russia from falling prey to the domino theory in the Caucasus and other regions of Russia. He continued to expand his political contacts daily while in office. He conceivably could be considered by some future parties to serve in some capacity on the Security Council or in a ministry or Prime Minister position. He is well-respected by those who know him in Moscow, and should offer a strong voice in a future Russia.

Perhaps the most unlikely, yet interesting integration of political strengths for a future Russia would be a union of Kulikov's forces with those of Alexander Lebed. While improbable (some say over their dead bodies), it is not totally out of the question. Both men have been full of surprises so far, and we may see more of them. And this would be one that would surprise everyone, a union of the MVD with the Army. Not long ago Lebed began to cooperate with former opponent Boris Berezovskiy, so nothing is out of the question.

Rumors of an alliance with Mayor Yuri Luzhkov or Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin are the principal combinations sweeping Moscow with Kulikov's name attached. Perhaps even a liaison with new Security Council chief Andrei Kokoshin is possible. Both have worked together now for several years, share some of the same mentors and advisors, and are serious about bringing stability and influence back to Russia. Minister Kulikov will most likely remain a prominent member of the Russian political scene for the next ten years. In retrospect, his disappearance from the scene was far too quiet. Is he laying in wait to join with another person or party, or was he dismissed because he is Yeltsin's future choice for the Presidency and all of this is simply pokazuka? Only time will tell.

### ***ENDNOTES***

1. While in office, Kulikov's powers far exceeded those of any American official, and the true extent of his power and influence was virtually unknown outside of Russia. Inside the country he remained one of its most charismatic figures. Some opponents simply labeled him a hawk, while others accused him of trying to usurp the same power as Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beriia, Stalin's main henchman, or of involvement in suspected coups.

There are also those who believe that he was both a Russian-style democrat and President Yeltsin's most loyal serving Minister. Charged with maintaining internal order in the country, he was the main police official responsible for fighting the Russian mafia and collecting customs duties and taxes. He was also a Vice Prime Minister, a member of the Security Council and Defense Council, and was the commander of all forces, to include the armed forces of the Ministry of Defense, for several months during the fighting in Chechnya. He appeared to be making headway in the fight against corruption, which makes his dismissal all the more perplexing.

2. Kulikov says the country owes much to its forefathers, to include those who fought gloriously for the USSR. He notes that "in these many faces there are both things that frighten and things that gladden. We have departed from the greyness and colorlessness, as well as from the principle that 'if you are not for us, you are against us.' One wants to believe that this departure is permanent. Not only would returning to a single 'denomination' be immoral, it would be socially ineffective. When we are told that by 'lumping everybody together,' colossal political and social results were achieved, a great country was built -- the USSR, a high level of science and culture was achieved, and an impenetrable defense shield was created -- all of this accurately describes at least part of the truth about our past. We will never forget the greatness that was created by the hands of our fathers and grandfathers. We will not allow this to be desecrated by those who wish that nearly eighty years of our life be turned into a black hole, that eighty years be ripped from the pages of our history."

However, Kulikov also recognizes that the USSR fell behind the rest of the world, especially in regard to technology due to the restrictions of its ideology. He added that "being proud of and believing in Russia's historical role (I say 'Russia,' since the USSR is one of the historical forms of the existence of our great homeland), we can and have the right to assess our history realistically. 'Lumping everybody together' led to a mighty state's -- the country of Zhukov and Korolev, Sholokhov and Shostakovich -- losing two technological revolutions: the new technological revolution and the information revolution. This loss, which became quite clear by the early 1980s, became the prologue for the destruction of the USSR and the loss of world prestige. The new information reality would not have allowed the continuation of a monochromatic world view. Underneath the appearance of a unity of views and opinions, a spiritually different situation was growing and becoming unavoidable." From the proceedings of a law enforcement conference later published as Dukhovnost', pravoporyadok, prestupnost', Academy of the MVD of Russia, 28 March 1996, pp. 5-12.

3. For example, in one course with Kulikov was Pavel Grachev, who would become the first Russian Minister of Defense; Leontiy Shevtsov, who would serve first as Kulikov's chief of staff in Chechnya, then as the Deputy Commander of Russian forces in Bosnia, and finally as the army commander of Russia's Internal Forces; and many other important personalities. Also studying with him was soon-to-be Vice President Alexander Rutskoi. There would come a day in October of 1993 when General Kulikov's forces would storm a building held by former classmate Vice President Rutskoi and after the tanks of former classmate and Minister of Defense Grachev fired on that building. There would also come a day, a few years later, when General Kulikov would negotiate with Colonel Maskhadov of the Chechen armed forces to end the fighting in and around Grozny. Kulikov respected Maskhadov for his military

professionalism and for his responsible and logical approach to creating the Chechen force. He probably detected the same traits in Maskhadov that he valued in himself.

4. Author's discussion with an MVD officer while in Moscow, March 1996.

5. Interfax, "Internal Forces Continue to Downsize," Nezavisimaya Voyennoye Obozreniye, Feb-Mar, 1998, p. 1.

6. Marina Shakina, "One Resignation, Two Resignations--and then, of course, Appointments: New Appointees are Anatoliy Kulikov, Vyacheslav Mikhaylov and --Viktor Yerin," Novoye Vremya, July 1995, pp. 14-16.

7. Yuliya Kalinina, "Minister Follows into Beriya's Footsteps," Moskovskiy Komsomolets, 5 February 1997, p. 1.

8. Speech at law-enforcement conference.

9. Moscow NTV, 30 April 1997, as translated in FBIS-SOV-97-120, web site <http://fbis.fedworld.gov/cgi-bin/retrieve>.

10. Russian Public TV, First Channel, 14 December 1997, as translated in FBIS-SOV-97-348, 14 December 1997, downloaded from web site <http://fbis.fedworld.gov/cgi-bin/retrieve>.

11. For example, in opening comments to a meeting of law-enforcement officers in Moscow in 1996, Kulikov noted that when Yeltsin left society vulnerable to information of all kinds at the start of the conflict with Chechnya, he was presenting a true test of democracy to the country. He did not impose political censorship as many urged him to do, Kulikov added, allowing a deafening wave of criticism to be unleashed on him, much of which was unfounded. This was very dangerous, and for a long time Kulikov noted that he did not understand why the President acted in this way. He later came to realize, in his own words, that the President was defending the most important thing that had been won at colossal cost, the 'gulp' of political, information and human freedoms. This position involved risk-taking but it also involved an exact understanding of Russia's strategic goals, as well as a faith in the intrinsic national wisdom of the Russian people, Kulikov concluded.

12. Moscow Russian Television Network, 8 November 1995, as translated in FBIS-SOV-95-217, 9 November 1995, pp. 26, 27.

13. Story related to the author by one of General Kulikov's escorts in London, England in 1995.

14. Andrei Rodnov, "Minister Kulikov Lands in Court," Situatsiya, No. 5, February 1998, p. 5.

15. Aleksandr Budberg, "The New Minister Reckons Well: Anatoliy Kulikov is Planning to Rely on the 'Healthy Forces'," Moskovskiy Komsomolets, 8 July 1995, p. 2, as translated in FBIS-SOV-95-144-S, 27 July 1995, pp. 35, 36.

16. Moscow INTERFAX, 15 February 1996, as translated in FBIS-SOV-96-033, 16 February 1996, p. 44.
17. Radio Rossii Network, 5 January 1998, as translated in FBIS-SOV-98-005, downloaded from web site <http://fbis.fedworld.gov/cgi-bin/retrieve>.
18. Viktor Sokirko, "While the 'Power Ministers' Fight for Sobriety...," Komsomolskaya Pravda, 30 August 1995, p. 2 as translated in FBIS-SOV-95-168, 30 August 1995, p. 25.
19. Olga Parfenova, report of a phone-in with Minister Kulikov, "Hello, Kulikov Here," Trud-7, 10-16 November 1995, pp. 4, 5 as translated in FBIS-SOV-95-220, 15 November 1995, pp. 15-19.
20. Discussion with MVD officer close to then Minister Kulikov, Moscow, March 1997.
21. Maksim Glikin and Nikolay Troitskiy, "Solovyeva Introduced to High Office. Kulikov's Secret Rendezvous with 'Mamma Valya'," Obshchaya Gazeta, No. 38, 21-27 September 1995, p. 8, as translated in FBIS-SOV-95-186, 26 September 1995, p. 50-52.
22. "Pri ministre i s ministrom," Shchit i Mech, 2 December 1997, p. 2..
23. Moscow Russian Public Television, First Channel, the 'Vzglyad' Program, 4 August 1995, as translated in FBIS-SOV-95-152, 8 August 1995, pp. 35-42.
24. Anatoliy Makarov, "Anatoliy Kulikov has Apparently Found Trillions for the Wages of the Defenders of Law and Order. Whom Did the General Scare?" Sovetskaya Rossiya, 20 February 1996, pp. 1, 2 as translated in FMSI-SOV-96-036, 22 February 1996, p. 48.
25. Moscow Russian Public Television, 14 February 1996, as translated in FBIS-SOV-96-033, 16 February 1996, pp. 38-42.
26. Ibid., p. 42.
27. Anatoliy Sergeevich Kulikov, "Russian Policy in the Sphere of National Security: Essence and Magnitude of Internal threats to Stability and Order," European Security, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Autumn 1997), p. 20. This article is from Minister Kulikov's speech at the Conference on Russian Defense and Security Policing," King's College, London University, 16-18 May 1995. All references to the words of Kulikov in this section of the article are taken from this talk.
28. Ibid., p. 27.
29. Ibid., p. 28.
30. Russia's situation was characterized by Kulikov as a struggle for political power. It included attempts to destroy the economy, and fights between the haves and have-nots. Tendencies for the breakdown of the State system were still manifesting themselves. Armed conflicts had occurred

on Russia's borders, further stretching and weakening its armed forces. The fact that three fourths of Russia remained uninhabited invited looks of envy and interest from abroad. In Kulikov's words, the external threat of wars for independence moved closer to Russia while conditions for such a war inside the country ripened. The fate of Russian citizens in the near abroad was affected by economic difficulties, social strains, ethnic conflicts and political disagreements both inside and outside of Russia. The crisis in Chechnya brought this situation to a boil and made it imperative that legislative acts be elaborated and transferred into the language of service manuals to provide a legal basis for the actions of soldiers, because a struggle for independence within Russia itself was now possible.

31. Ibid.

32. Strategic decisions, on the one hand, were aimed at preventing crises in ethnic relations by creating, in advance, the legal, political, economic and socio-psychological conditions for the maximum smooth and civilized development of these processes. Operative and tactical decisions, on the other hand, primarily relied on power structures and force. Use of the power factor must be ensured by proper conditions for its legal, civilized development and use.

33. Ibid., pp. 28, 29.

34. Ibid., p. 32.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., p. 33, 34.

37. Ibid., p. 34.

38. Ibid., p. 35.

39. Speech to law-enforcement conference.

40. Parfenova, Ibid.

41. Interfax, 4 November 1995, as translated in FBIS-SOV-95-214, 6 November 1995, pp. 34, 35.

42. Harder to fathom is a figure Kulikov offered regarding killings in 1995. He claims that the MVD was able to find the murderer 75% of the time, which is difficult to comprehend. Of course, perhaps he did not include all of the contract killings in this figure. See Parfenova. For some interesting charts on the structure and dynamics of economic crime in Russia from 1991-1995, and results of work by the MVD in 1995, see Olga Shlyapnikova and Oleg Utitsin, "Anatoliy Kulikov: Terrorism is a State Matter," EKSPERT, No. 8, 26 February 1996, pp. 12-14, as translated in FBIS-SOV-95-068-S, 8 April 1996, pp. 97-101.

43. Oleg Rubnikov and Irina Skarnikova, "Activity of Criminal Groups in Russia is Growing: But the Militia is Still Maintaining Control Over the Situation," Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 20 February 1996, p. 1.
44. Moscow Russian TV, 16 March 1996, as translated in FBIS-SOV-95-054, 19 March 1996, pp. 31, 32.
45. Penny Morvant, "Kulikov on Crime and Corruption," OMRI Daily Digest, 20 January 1997.
46. "Ministry Issues Statistics on Crime in Russia," Moscow Interfax, 3 December 1997.
47. Vladimir Lopatin, "The MVD is Using Sham Figures Like a Fig Leaf to Cover Itself," Komsomolskaya Pravda, 17 January 1998, p. 2 as reported in FBIS-SOV-98-054, 23 February 1998.
48. Interfax, 17 February 1998, as translated in FBIS-SOV-98-050, 19 February 1998.
49. Moscow NTV, 6 January 1998, as translated in FBIS-SOV-98-?,
50. Moscow INTERFAX, 12 January 1998, as translated in FBIS-SOV-98-012, 12 January 1998, and downloaded from web site <http://fbis.fedworld.gov/cgi-bin/retrieve>.
51. Moscow NTV, 8 January 1998, as translated by FBIS-SOV-98-011, and downloaded from web site <http://fbis.fedworld.gov/cgi-bin/retrieve>.
52. Mark Deych, "Minister Kulikov was Misunderstood," Moskovskiy Komsomolets, 13 January 1998, p. 4, as translated in FBIS-SOV-98-013, 13 January 1998, and downloaded from web site <http://fbis.fedworld.gov/cgi-bin/retrieve>.
53. Teymuraz Mamaladze, "Threatening Maneuvers on Kulikovo Field," Novyye Izvestiya, 9 January 1998, p. 1 as translated in FBIS-SOV-98-009, and downloaded on 9 January 1998 at web site <http://fbis.fedworld.gov/cgi-bin/retrieve>.
54. Vadim Dubov, "General Kulikov through the Eyes of Academic Pavlov," Novoe Vremya, No 7, 1998, p. 3.
55. Moscow INTERFAX, 9 January 1998, as translated in FBIS-SOV-98-009, and downloaded from web site <http://fbis.fedworld.gov/cgi-bin/retrieve>.
56. Margarita Popova and Yelena Skvortsova, "A Blabbermouth is Once Again a Boon to a Spy," Obshchaya Gazeta, 29 January-4 February, 1998, No. 4, p. 1, as translated in FBIS-SOV-98-041.
57. Speech at a law enforcement conference.



58. Sergei Kokut, "Anatoliy Kulikov has a Programme for Military Reform," Nezavisimaya Gazeta, February 10, 1998, from Johnson's List 2055, 2/10/98..
59. Sergey Sokut, "Anatoliy Kulikov Has His Own Military Reform Program," Nezavisimaya Voyennoye Obozreniye, No. 6, 13-19 February 1998, p. 3.
60. Marianna Maksimovskaya, from the "Segodnya" program on NTV, 7 February 1998, as reported in FBIS-UMA-98-038, 7 February 1998.
61. Yuliya Kalinina, "The Enemy Within. Minister Kulikov is Preparing for a Military Coup. Whether to Suppress it to Take Part in it, He has not Yet Decided," Moskovskiy Komsomolets, 23 January 1998, pp. 1, 2 as reported in FBIS-SOV-98-023, 23 January 1998.
62. Viktor Litovkin and Yuriy Snegirev, "Army and Police Continuing to Serve No Matter What," Izvestiya, 24 March 1998, p. 2.
63. Vladimir Kostrov, "Lev Rokhlin Supported Anatoliy Kulikov. Vice Premier Believes he was Misunderstood," Russkiy Telegraf, 12 February 1998, p. 3 as reported in FBIS-SOV-98-043, 12 February 1998.
64. Interfax Communications and Electronics Report, Volume II, Issue 12 (72), 18-24 March 1998, as translated by FBIS-SOV-98-082, 23 March 1998.
65. Aleksandr Igorev and Oleg Kutasov, "Not a Single Boot Will Remain in the MVD," Kommersant-Daily, 24 March 1998, p. 2.
66. Moscow Interfax, 24 March 1998, as reported in FBIS-SOV-98-083, 24 March 1998.
67. Aleksandr Budberg, "What Devil Has Beguiled Yeltsin? The President Has Recovered--the Government Has Died," Moskovskiy Komsomolets, 24 March 1998, p. 1.
68. "Many People in the MVD are Confused," Moskovskie Novosti, No 11, 22-29 March 1998, as reported in FBIS-SOV-98-084, 25 March 1998.
69. Matthew Fisher, "Boris does his Spring Cleaning," Toronto Sun, March 27, 1998, as downloaded from Johnson's List on 27 March 1998.
70. "Controversial Russian banker appointed to Security Council," NUPI Database, downloaded from the Internet on 14 May 1998 at site [www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/krono.exe/243](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/krono.exe/243).
71. Discussion in Moscow with a Kulikov advisor, April 1998.
72. "CIS summit in the wake of the appointment of Berezovskiy," NUPI Database, downloaded from the Internet on 14 May 1998 at site [www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/krono.exe/243](http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/krono.exe/243).
73. Moscow Interfax, 17 February 1998, as reported in FBIS report of 19 February 1998.

74. Pavel Yegorov, "A Berezovskiy Mess," Profil, 1 April 1998, No. 12, pp. 13-14 as reported in FBIS-SOV-98-104, 14 April 1998. The report indicates that Berezovskiy planned the event, and that Kulikov counted on the President's common sense and miscalculated.

75. Aleksandr Budberg, "What Devil has Beguiled Yeltsin?" Moskovskiy Komsomolets, 24 March 1998, pp. 1, 2 as reported in FBIS-SOV-98-084, 25 March 1998.