
Soviet 'Defector's' Revelations

How GRU terror targets the West

"Viktor Suvorov" is the pseudonym of an alleged Soviet defector who served as a field officer (e.g., during the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia) and then a general staff officer (military intelligence—GRU). Suvorov has written several books, and is most noted as the first person to talk about the Soviet armed forces' special commando units, the spetsnaz. Swedish television, Channel 1, interviewed him on June 3, reporting that they had been trying to get an interview with him for over a year, and that this was his first interview to European television. Suvorov's face was concealed during the one-hour interview, which was conducted in English.

First Suvorov described his own career: Farm boy joins army to get off the farm; grows disillusioned by the Warsaw Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia; spends four years in training with the GRU, then five years in GRU service, including in Western Europe.

Excerpts from the interview follow:

Suvorov: On the one hand, Sweden is a medium-sized country like any other for the GRU. But they pay enormous attention to Sweden as a country, from the strategic point of view. It's a country of extreme importance. I repeat, extreme importance. Because of that, they may have more than the normal number of agents. I don't know how many. I never served in a Scandinavian country.

There is an enormous concentration of Soviet troops in the north. The northern fleet is the most powerful fleet of the Soviet Union. The northern fleet is the fleet that has the biggest number of nuclear missile submarines. And if war starts, whoever rules the Atlantic will dictate his will on this planet, you see. It is very important to separate Europe from America, you see, to cut off all communications in the Atlantic.

And then there is quite a big problem to put Soviet forces from the northern ocean into the Atlantic, because there is the very unfriendly Norwegian coast. And here you see [pointing to the map] Canada and Greenland. And in that situation, for the Soviet Union, Norway will have an extremely important role. Norway itself. But Sweden is a door to Norway. Sweden is a door to Norway, and Norway is a key for the Atlantic Ocean, and the Atlantic Ocean—it is very important.

Interviewer: Are you absolutely sure that spetsnaz exists, and how can you know it? A Swedish journalist some time ago called you a liar more or less for your talk about spetsnaz.

Suvorov: First of all, I was the first person to speak about spetsnaz. How do I know about it? I am officer of GRU and spetsnaz—it is our fist, shock and fist—so I have to know about it.

Interviewer: What is spetsnaz?

Suvorov: Spetsnaz is special forces of Soviet military intelligence.

I have my personal involvement with spetsnaz. When I was officer in a military district—each military district has its own intelligence, and spetsnaz is fighting unit, terroristic unit, of Soviet military intelligence. In war their prime job is to destroy political and military leaders. The best companies of spetsnaz are "anti-VIP" companies—to kill political leaders, to kill military leaders.

Interviewer: Can you tell us something about spetsnaz training?

Suvorov: It is quite hard training. Spetsnaz have extremely hard training. Their soldiers have to train against animals—dogs, KGB dogs—who are fighting them.

The weapon of spetsnaz is a spade, a small spade. It is a very popular weapon. You fight against dogs, you see. It is quite a bloody and uncompromising fight, because if you fight one man against the other, you cannot kill him. But a dog is such a creature that it does not understand that it is training. So it is a real fight. And you have to protect your life against the dog.

Dog is main enemy against spetsnaz. Dog is very effective weapon. So he has to be ready to fight against dog, with his hands, with his spade.

So spetsnaz have quite hard training and sometimes against people—criminals. They call such people "dolls" or "puppets."

Spetsnaz are not the only ones who use them. Soviet policemen and KGB also use them sometimes. If a man is condemned to death—and in the Soviet Union there are an enormous number of such people, anyway we use them in the uranium mines, in Zheltye Vody, they have to die in the mines, "to improve the Soviet defense level. . . ."

And it is the same if you fight against him. Same thing: It is a criminal who has to die, and by his death he improves the standard of the Soviet fighting force. So it is the same approach.

There is quite a lot of training in jumping. If a man can jump from a bridge, if a man can jump from a car, if a man can jump from a train—they have a train running, and a whole platoon has to jump off, one by one—it is not only a professional skill, jumping. It creates some kind of decisive approach for life. It's a big risk—jumping from a train.

So it is quite hard training. Now, you ask me, this boy—20 years old—can he speak Swedish? Yes, of course. You see, a small book and at the beginning there is the Russian phrase: “Silence, or I’ll kill you!” and there is a translation into German, English, Swedish, Chinese, and so on. They show it to you. They put their hand on your mouth and show it to you. First one, in Russian, and then you see your language: “Oh, yeah.”

And suddenly they show to you: “Where is missile?” “Left?” “Right?” And so on.

And you just point here, and they understand that.

If you ask the question, how much time one man can resist interrogation of spetsnaz, I think between one and two seconds, you see. If you are hard, very hard, two seconds. If not hard, less.

The GRU pays enormous attention to Sweden as a country, from the strategic point of view. It's a country of extreme importance. I repeat, extreme importance. They may have more than the normal number of agents. . . . When we speak about Sweden and spetsnaz, in my opinion, Sweden is made for spetsnaz.

Because standard approach is file—metal file—and they file across your teeth. Just like that. So can you resist that?

Interviewer: Do you really know about this?

Suvorov: Yes, of course. War, you see, is not game. War is not parade. So if you are in war, and you know you are illegally in a country, you have a group of boys, five or six or seven, and if they are captured, they are dead. They are not wearing uniforms. They are not under the Geneva Convention. They have to be killed. And that boy knows that. So because of that, he fights for his life. And there is a choice: Either you sacrifice your own life, or you take the file and just interrogate somebody.

Interviewer: How long has spetsnaz existed?

Suvorov: Something like spetsnaz did exist during the Second World War. But after World War II, NATO started to use tactical nuclear weapons. This was a serious change, and the Soviet Union had to do something against that. You cannot destroy tactical nuclear weapons by other weapons,

because they are mobile. So you have to create a force to find them and destroy them.

In my opinion, spetsnaz has existed in its present form since the 1950s or early 1960s.

When we speak about Sweden and spetsnaz, in my opinion—and it is just opinion, but I think as former GRU officer and as officer who has been connected with spetsnaz very much, as controlling officer, as information officer of GRU—so I say to you, Sweden is made for spetsnaz.

In Western Europe, you can use tank armies, enormous amounts of tanks. But such places as Finland, and Scandinavia, are not made for that. They have experienced how inefficient conventional forces can be in such an area. So they have to use something else. And that something else can be spetsnaz—air assault brigades, or spetsnaz.

So if you use spetsnaz in Western Europe—of course they will use them, but Western Europe, you see, West Germany particularly, is very bad place for spetsnaz, because the people live everywhere. There are too many dogs, too many people, you see, too few forests. Everything is under control. It would be a suicide mission.

Interviewer: But what would be their job in Sweden?

Suvorov: You see, spetsnaz everywhere do exactly the same thing. They have three main targets. It is very easy to remember what they are.

First of all, destroy brain, brain of state and army. So, the President, parliament, political parties, leading politicians, military headquarters, officers—so brain of state, first.

Second, they destroy teeth of state. I mean by that nuclear weapons. In Sweden there is no such weapon, but the most important weapons you do have: aircraft, submarines—the most sophisticated weapons systems.

And third, is the nerve system of the state. I mean communications centers, communications lines, any communications installation. And they move simultaneously. If they are not successful in destroying the brain, or maybe are not successful in destroying teeth, they destroy all communications systems of state.

So if a group comes here and suddenly they cannot find the enemy. They think a command spot is here, but it is not here. They think a missile battery is here, but it not here. So what do they do? In that situation they start to fight against the energy system of the state—electrical power stations, electricity lines, pipelines, and so on. They can paralyze the state by that.

Interviewer: Do you think the Soviet Union would respect Swedish neutrality in case of a conflict?

Suvorov: I don't like to answer that question, but you see the best relationship with a neutral country the Soviet Union had was Afghanistan. They had a very friendly relationship. Afghanistan never kicked out Soviet diplomats. They had a very good relationship, and so on. It is my answer for you. I don't know about Sweden but . . . there is Afghanistan.