

FSB Makes Cartoons on Bombs, Rallies

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In an odd attempt to reach out to the young, Volgograd law enforcement agencies have created a series of short cartoons teaching children to be vigilant about gun-toting men and to obey police at rallies.

Eight 20-second cartoons, which hit the web last week, all star a child named simply “Little Boy” and are accompanied by rhymes recited by the narrator.

The videos are to be aired on Volgograd television, as well as in the city's local retail chains, public transportation and on street video screens, the local V1.ru news portal reported last week, citing an unidentified FSB source.

One video shows the boy [discovering a box](#) of explosives on the street and taking it with him, and it ends with the narrator saying, “We won't show what happened to the boy.” In another, the child decides in the same situation to call the police and guard the box until the bomb squad arrives.

He receives a medal.

Still other cartoons ask children to report to police if they find firearms in someone's attic or basement and warn that [fake bomb calls](#) to school can land the trickster in jail for three years.

The cartoons were created by officers of the Volgograd police and regional branch of the FSB, local news reports said.

The Volgograd region's police department declined to comment on the issue when reached by phone Wednesday.

City police spokeswoman Svetlana Smolyaninova confirmed that Volgograd police officers were involved in creating the cartoons, but referred all comments to the local FSB office.

"It was their initiative, and we don't want to steal their fame," Smolyaninova said by telephone.

The Volgograd branch of the FSB did not answer repeated phone calls on Wednesday afternoon.

Volgograd law enforcement agencies got the idea from the Novosibirsk branch of the Federal Security Service, Vl.ru reported, without elaborating.

The campaign may actually have a negative effect, fueling paranoia among children, said Andrei Soldatov, a leading independent expert on Russian intelligence services.

"This is complete propaganda that makes people more suspicious and increases the number of false calls from alarmed children," Soldatov told The Moscow Times.

This was not the first time Russian law enforcement agencies dabbled in visual arts for propaganda's sake, but they usually hired professionals to produce the videos in the past.

Last year, a series of television commercials on road safety awareness, produced on orders from the traffic police, were banned from the air for excessive realism in depicting gruesome outcomes of road accidents.

The first [anti-terrorism animation](#) for children appeared a few years ago and was ordered by Russia's National Anti-Terrorism Committee for the children's section of the web site Antiterror.ru, Soldatov said. The interactive game remains available online.

Editor's note: An earlier version of this article incorrectly stated that the first anti-terrorism animation was ordered by NATO. The animation actually was ordered by the National Anti-Terror Committee.

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