

Doubts on Wikileaks Source Naming Chaika a Mole

By [Jonathan Earle](#)

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Defense experts on Tuesday cast doubt on the credibility of a Texas-based company whose leaked e-mails allegedly contain inside information about Kremlin infighting from high-ranked sources including Prosecutor General Yuri Chaika.

Experts say they do not consider Stratfor a reputable source, characterizing the company as a shoddy operation with a flair for self-promotion that masquerades as an extremely well-connected security information database but simply trawls widely available news reports.

"They rewrite the newspapers," said Alexander Golts, an independent military analyst.

"Whoever spoke to them was a former state employee who shared the latest gossip. It's not news."

On Monday, anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks began to release what it says are more than 5 million internal Stratfor e-mails, which it claims detail the company's "inner workings,"

including a "web of informers, pay-off structure, payment laundering techniques and psychological methods."

But the most shocking Russia-related allegation to come out of the leak is that Chaika is a Stratfor informant.

A leaked December 2009 e-mail includes information allegedly from Chaika — code named RU101 — about Kremlin infighting between President Dmitry Medvedev and the so-called *siloviki*, or senior officials with security backgrounds believed to be close to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

In first-person narrative, Chaika allegedly describes how Medvedev and then-First Deputy Chief of Staff Vladislav Surkov were carrying out a purge of the "Sechin/Patrushev clan," a reference to siloviki Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin and Security Council head Nikolai Patrushev.

If true, the e-mail could offer insight into an ongoing, widely reported turf war between the Investigative Committee and the Prosecutor General's Office.

In the message, Chaika claims that "Sechin/Patrushev" used Investigative Committee chief Alexander Bastrykin to mount a purge within the Prosecutor General's Office.

"These publications can't be called anything but hogwash and an open provocation," a spokeswoman for the Prosecutor General's Office said Monday, Interfax reported.

Stratfor said in a statement on its website that it would not comment on the e-mails, which it said were stolen in December.

Analysts contacted by The Moscow Times by and large spoke disparagingly about Stratfor, which they said had a poor reputation within the defense community.

Andrei Soldatov, editor of Agentura.ru, said Stratfor's analysts had been spectacularly wrong in the past. He said a 2011 report casting doubt on Doku Umarov's role in the 2011 Domodedovo Airport bombing was "obviously stupid."

A third analyst, who said he'd been recruited by Stratfor and requested anonymity, said the company preyed on the ignorance of foreign clients.

"It's low-quality journalism pretending to be inside insight," he said.

In November 2010, WikiLeaks began releasing U.S. diplomatic cables that contained embarrassing observations on Russia's rulers by U.S. diplomats, including that President Dmitry Medvedev "plays Robin to Putin's Batman."

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