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Russian Spy Ring in U.S. Groomed Children to Take Over

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Yelena Vavilova, alias Tracey Foley, groomed her son Tim to work in the United States as an undercover agent for the Russian government.

Russian sleeper agents exposed and deported from the United States in 2010 were actively grooming members' children to carry on their undercover espionage, a news report said.

Agents' children represented an especially valuable asset, as they would be more likely pass the background checks necessary to work in high-profile U.S. institutions, The Wall Street Journal reported, citing current and former U.S. officials.

According to the report, Tim Foley, who had just finished his second year at the prestigious George Washington University at the time of his parents' arrest, had already agreed to travel to Russia to receive spy training and continue his parents' work.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation made the discovery after bugging the spies' homes, telling the business daily that Foley had saluted "Mother Russia" when his parents asked him to spy for the Russian government.

The 10-man spy ring had seven children ranging between 1 and 20 years old, the report said. All but one returned to Russia with their parents following a spy-swap deal in which four agents convicted of spying in Russia for the West were released.

Former President Dmitry Medvedev bestowed state awards on the sleeper agents in October 2010, a few months after their July homecoming.

Anna Chapman, the best-known agent, has kept a high public profile since her return, hosting her own television show, appearing at United Russia conferences and on the pages of glossy magazines. Chapman has no children.

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