

U.S. and U.K. Developed 'Novichok' Nerve Agent Linked to Ex-Spy's Poisoning, Russian Official Claims

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Suzanne Plunkett / Reuters

The potent nerve agent linked to the poisoning of a Russian ex-spy in Britain may have been developed in the U.S. and the U.K. rather than Russia, a senior Russian has said.

Britain's Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson [said](#) Friday that it was “overwhelmingly likely” that Russia's President Vladimir Putin directed the March 4 poisoning of former military intelligence officer Sergei Skripal and his daughter in the English city of Salisbury. Britain has [said](#) that the weapon used in the attempted murder was believed to be from the Novichok family of nerve agents, which were reportedly first developed by the Soviet military.

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"There has never been a 'Novichok' research project conducted in Russia," Alexander Shulgin, Russia's representative to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague, [told](#) state television on Friday.

"But in the West, some countries carried out such research, which they called 'Novichok, for some reason," Shulgin told the hosts of the Rossia-1 television channel.

The official singled out both the U.K. and the U.S. as countries where the Novichok-class agent was reportedly developed, adding that it "may very well be that the substance used [in Skripal's poisoning] may have come from the stocks" of the two Western countries.

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