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Kremlin Says Doesn't Know If Czech Blast, Skripal Poisoning Suspects Work for It

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The two men who identified themselves as Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov famously told Russian state television that they run a sports nutrition business in a 2018 interview. **Screenshot RT**

The Kremlin said Thursday it is unaware of its alleged employment of the suspected Russian agents wanted over the 2018 Skripal poisonings in Britain and fatal 2014 arms depot blasts in the Czech Republic.

Investigative journalist Christo Grozev said Friday that the duo identified as GRU military intelligence agents Anatoly Chepiga and Alexander Mishkin have been "promoted" to work for the Kremlin. Czech and British authorities have implicated the two, who operated under the cover identities of "Alexander Petrov" and "Ruslan Boshirov," in the deadly incidents.

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“All I can say is that they’re in good health and work in the civil service. They got new jobs because they can no longer work as spies,” Grozev said in a live broadcast on jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny’s YouTube channel.

“They’re important representatives of the Kremlin, one might say, for different [Russian] regions,” Grozev added.

President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov responded to the claims after they were republished by Czech media, saying he is unaware of Mishkin’s and Chepiga’s new jobs.

“No, to be honest I don’t have this information,” Peskov told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency Thursday.

“I also don’t know if they work in the presidential administration. I don’t think there’s a sports nutrition division in the administration,” he added.

The two men who identified themselves as Petrov and Boshirov famously told Russian state television that they run a sports nutrition business in a 2018 interview. British prosecutors had accused the pair of attempting to poison former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in Salisbury earlier that year.

Grozev said in the YouTube broadcast that “sports nutrition” is an “inside joke” among GRU agents that denotes the deadly Soviet-designed military-grade nerve agent Novichok. Britain accused the pair of poisoning the Skripals with Novichok and European scientists determined that a nerve agent from the same group was used to poison Navalny in Siberia last August.

Grozev added that the open-source investigative group Bellingcat where he is senior investigator and Russian independent news website The Insider are preparing a new investigation on the GRU agents’ activities.

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