

A STRANGE CASE IN KIEV

*By Genovefa Etienne and Claude Moniquet,
Directors of ESISC*

A strange case that took place this week in Ukraine triggers concerns over a possible "manipulation" from security services. On Monday, June 6, **Vassil Grytsak, the head of the SBU** (Sluzhba Bezpeky Oukrayiny), the Ukrainian domestic security and intelligence service, announced the arrest of "Gregoire M", a French national found in possession of an impressive arsenal and who allegedly plotted to commit 15 attacks (no less!) in France before and during the Euro 2016 competition. Among the potential targets of the attacks would be mosques, synagogues and public buildings.

Clearly staged (see below), the arrest of Gregoire M on the Polish border on Mai 21 raises numerous questions:

- 1) The young Frenchman arrived in Ukraine in December 2015 and was immediately placed under surveillance for unknown reasons. Indeed, Kiev announced that SBU has been monitoring the suspect 'for months'. Here is the first curious fact: as far as we know, **Paris had not been informed that one of its nationals was placed under surveillance.**
- 2) Therefore the French security services seems to have not been involved in the investigation before the arrest. It was involved only after it, by notably implementing a search in the French house of the suspect, where authorities discovered a T-shirt "flocked with the acronym of a far-right group". **Nothing else was found: no documentation on potential targets or any trace of preparations for the attacks.** Moreover, **the young man appears to be completely unknown to the French services**, which is curious, given that for intelligence agents, far- right (as well as far-left) organizations are much easier to infiltrate than Islamist networks, and French intelligence has a real expertise in that field.
- 3) It seems that the suspect did not have any potential accomplices or, at least, none of them have been identified so far by French authorities. **Has he truly intended to commit "15 attacks" using two rocket launchers and several Kalashnikovs just by himself?**
- 4) Absence of any antecedents as well as vagueness surrounding this case explain why the French anti-terrorist prosecutor's office did not seize the issue and why the DGSI (interior intelligence) seems to be rather skeptical regarding

explanations from Kiev. So far the issue is considered to be related to a simple "weapon trafficking", with no mentioning about any terrorist activity....

- 5) The arrest itself appears to be carefully staged while **the SBU was generous enough to present a very nice short movie on it to world media outlets**. The video features the suspect operating in a kind of improvised warehouse, packing weapons before storing them in his van. **These images suggest that the supply of arms corresponds to a "controlled delivery"**, a delicate exercise in which security services provide the offender with what he wants (drugs or weapons) in order to trap him. Vassil Grytsak indirectly confirms that version, saying: *"Trapped, the French citizen received 5 Kalashnikov assault rifles, more than 5,000 charges of munition, two anti-tank rockets."*
- 6) The formal arrest, also featured in the video, looks more like an exercise rather than the interception of a heavily armed, dangerous extremist. **It can be clearly seen on this video that a second man, a passenger of the van, is also extracted from the vehicle and thrown to the ground**. He mysteriously disappears after the arrest, and the following images show only "Gregoire M", handcuffed and with a blurred face. Official statement, made by Ukrainian security authorities, also mentions only one person arrested. **It allows us to suspect this mysterious conveyor to be an "agent provocateur" of the SBU.**

This case, for sure a very strange one and in some aspects even incredible, leaves us a large field for guesswork.

It could be a banal arms-trafficking case amplified by a **"manipulation" of Ukrainian security services hoping to improve their image and to prove their effectiveness** at the moment when Kiev is negotiating with the European Union abolition of visas for its citizens traveling in the EU and when its ability to monitor its borders is regularly questioned.

But perhaps the issue would go further if **Kiev suggests involvement of Russian separatists in the case** (Ukrainian authorities have already mentioned that possible presence of Russian security services behind this case cannot be excluded) to attract sympathy (and support) of Paris and Europe against Moscow?

Such hypothesis is worthy of a novel from John Le Carré or Frederick Forsyth. But we should not forget that **the war between Kiev and Moscow in eastern Ukraine remains the reality; and that the Ukrainian services root from the same origin as their Russian counterparts: that of the former KGB, an organization that had made a great art of manipulation, disinformation and other "proactive measures"**.

In this case, whatever was his own motivation, "Grégoire M" would be the scapegoat, the "useful idiot" actor in a scenario written for him by the SBU. A role that, most likely, would exceed his capacities and intentions.

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