



# Spies without Cloaks: The KGB's Successors

*Amy Knight*

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## Spies without Cloaks: The KGB's Successors Amy Knight

This book offers a compelling and comprehensive account of what happened to the KGB when the Soviet Union collapsed and the world's most powerful and dangerous secret police organization was uncloaked. As Amy Knight shows, the KGB was renamed and reorganized several times after it was officially disbanded in December 1991--but it was not reformed. Knight's rich and lively narrative begins with the aborted August 1991 coup, led by KGB hard-liners, and takes us through the summer of 1995, when the Russian parliamentary elections were looming on the horizon. The failed coup attempt was a setback for the KGB because it led to demands from Russian democrats for a complete overhaul of the security services. As a result, the KGB's leaders were fired, its staff reduced, and its functions dispersed among several agencies. Even the elite foreign intelligence service was subjected to budget cuts. But President Yeltsin was reluctant to press on with reforms of the security services, because he needed their support in his struggle against mounting political opposition. Indeed, by the spring of 1995, the security services had regained much of what they had lost in the wake of the August coup. Some observers were even saying that they had acquired more power and influence than the old KGB.

This story told by one of the foremost experts on the Soviet/Russian security services and enriched by face-to-face interviews with security professionals in Moscow, is crucial to understanding Russian politics in transition. It will fascinate scholars, policymakers, and general readers interested in the fate of the KGB.



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