

Russia, China Behind ‘Most Aggressive’ Spying in Czech Republic – Report

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Valery Sharifulin / TASS

Russian and Chinese intelligence services are behind the most aggressive spying activities in the Czech Republic, the Central European nation’s counterintelligence agency [said](#) Tuesday in a report for 2018.

The countries’ activities were connected to politics, diplomacy, espionage, economy and information warfare, the Czech counterintelligence agency BIS said. It said Russia’s foreign, military and domestic intelligence agencies — the SVR, GRU and FSB — were all active in the Czech Republic last year.

“The key Russian goal is to manipulate decision-making processes and the individuals responsible for the decision-making in order to force the counterparty to conduct activities to weaken itself,” BIS said.

Russia’s hybrid operations against perceived NATO and EU enemies — “not elements of intelligence or para-intelligence activities” — posed the main threat to the Czech Republic,

the agency said in the 2018 report.

It added that Russia's intelligence and non-intelligence entities can swap roles and functions, allowing any authority or agency to perform intelligence operations.

Russia has previously denied assertions that it operates a spy network in the Czech Republic.

BIS also highlighted the role of Czech activists across a wide ideological range who — “whether wittingly or unwittingly” — supported Russia's influence operations.

“Activities of the spectrum of pro-Russian activists, who were involved in spreading disinformation, posed the gravest threat to the constitutionality of the Czech Republic in 2018,” BIS said.

The Czech counterintelligence agency also warned that China stepped up its efforts to recruit agents and destabilize state institutions in the Czech Republic in 2018.

Last month, BIS [announced](#) it had dismantled a Russian espionage ring in 2018 that had been planning cyberattacks against the EU member.

It [said](#) last year that Russian intelligence services were behind cyberattacks targeting the Czech foreign ministry. It warned that Russia continued to use undeclared intelligence officers acting under diplomatic cover as part of a general hybrid warfare strategy against EU and NATO members.

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