

insurgency that U.S. forces are fighting, was sent packing last November. He is best remembered for squandering a half-million dollars to give away 5,000 goats to bolster his popularity. He is suspected of embezzling more than \$2 million in Afghan and American money, say U.S. and Afghan government sources. On his way out of the country last week, Didar was prevented by LeGree's soldiers from hurrying off with a \$190,000 armored car that belongs to the U.S. government.

But change is in the making, says Capt. Jay Coughenour, a reservist who is also a senior official with the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Los Angeles. The new development-savvy governor, Sayed Wahidi, has helped to cobble together district-level meetings aimed at estab-

**"To win in Afghanistan, you have to separate the insurgents from the population."**

alone for development, although only some of that money is accounted for. As one U.S. Army colonel says: "In Afghanistan, it is not just a matter of corruption; it is a matter of knowing precisely how corrupt your partners are."

**Why they fight.** That is one reason for the new focus in Kunar on gaining a better knowledge of the "human terrain." Called back to military service just as he was preparing to begin doctoral studies in anthropology at the University of Illinois-Chicago, Staff Sgt. Justin Faulkner is now assigned by LeGree to learn about the personal ties, customs, and culture in the Korengal Valley, where the U.S. military is facing a protracted military engagement. "There really hasn't been much ethnographic work done here since the British back in the 19th century," says Faulkner. "I'm assigned to try to meet with elders and try and understand why they fight us," he adds. "We are finding out that it has a lot to do with tribal differences and geographic isolation."

A U.S. government report on Kunar province warns that officials and soldiers must try to avoid "another Korengal" in other isolated valleys of the province by promoting more economic development. To achieve that, LeGree is stressing stronger ties between U.S. soldiers and the local population.

He is also trying to crack the nut of geographic isolation. As he hikes up a new road snaking into the violent valley where dozens of American soldiers have perished, a crackle comes across the radio and a lieutenant warns of movements by enemy fighters. "As we push up this valley and into higher terrain, we will be effectively encroaching upon them and taking away their population base," says LeGree, who pays the Afghan road workers a daily wage just above what al Qaeda is known to give its own fighters.

In time, he hopes there will be less to see on Kill TV. "To win in Afghanistan, you have to separate the insurgents from the population," he says. "That has more to do with assisting in an economic struggle than any role we have as combatants." ●



Capt. Jay Coughenour with a Women's Affairs Ministry official

lishing public services. For the first time in decades, large groups of men and women are meeting in downtown Asadabad to hammer out, with American and United Nations support, their complaints and needs. The men sit on the floor around a drawing of a giant "problem tree." They cut scrap paper and paste their ideas about the "root" causes of government corruption and inaccessibility.

As Coughenour, who dresses in local garb and leaves his machine gun on base, makes the rounds to the offices of the health and welfare administrators, all of them pay at least lip service to Governor Wahidi's new anticorruption campaign. The U.S. government gave Kunar province \$40 million last year

## RUSSIA

# A Widow's Stalled Quest for Justice

In the Litvinenko murder, the key suspect is safe in Russia

By Alastair Gee

LONDON—In November 2006, former KGB officer Alexander Litvinenko died in London after being poisoned with the radioactive isotope polonium-210. His widow, Marina, holds back sobs and wipes away tears with a tissue, as she talks about her life since then, about the old letters from her husband that she reads often to cling to his memory. Enduring each day is hard, she says, but one thing seems to upset her most: her husband's enemies' getting away with murder. "They killed a person," she says. "That's the main thing, the center, and someone should answer for it."

That, however, looks increasingly unlikely.

In part because of the unresolved Litvinenko case, British-Russian relations have reached perhaps their lowest ebb since the end of the Cold War. Marina Litvinenko may have to get used to the idea that she will never see justice for her late husband. Moscow has refused an extradition request for Scotland Yard's main suspect, millionaire Russian businessman (and former KGB officer) Andrei Lugovoi. Marina's theory is that he acted on orders from Russia's secret services. Despite facing a murder charge in Britain, Lugovoi—whose own claim is that Litvinenko was a renegade British agent killed by the British intelligence service MI6—has been lionized in Russia as a hero who stood up to the West. In the December elections, he was even voted into the parliament.

**Diplomatic fallout.** A chill between London and Moscow was in the air before the Litvinenko affair: Russia has long complained about Britain granting asylum to fugitives wanted on criminal charges in Russia, including the oligarch Boris Berezovsky and Chechen separatist Akhmed Zakayev. And in January 2006, to British bemusement, Russia accused four employees at the British Embassy in Moscow of using a fake rock



Marina Litvinenko, whose husband, Alexander, was killed by exposure to polonium-210.

On Nov. 1, 2006, Litvinenko met with Lugovoi to discuss a business deal at the Pine Bar, located in the Millennium Hotel, across an elegant square from the U.S. Embassy. "It was a busy, busy day. Every table was occupied," recalled Norberto Andrade, the headwaiter. Andrade said he didn't notice anything suspicious.

"They had green tea with honey and lemon," he says.

That evening, Litvinenko vomited after dining at home, Marina recounts. He threw up every half-hour and so decided to sleep in a separate room to avoid disturbing his wife. Worried, Marina called an ambulance the next day but was told by medics that he probably had stomach flu and should rest at home. On

filled with electronics for spying. But after London requested Lugovoi's extradition in May 2007, tensions increased. Russia refused, citing its Constitution, and both sides expelled each other's diplomats. In the most recent move, Russia in January forced Britain to close the St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg branches of the British Council, an organization that promotes British culture abroad, a move that Russian officials described as political fallout from the Litvinenko case.

Alexander Litvinenko rose quickly through the ranks of the KGB and then the FSB, one of its successor agencies. His career came to a dramatic end in November 1998, when he publicly accused senior FSB officials of corruption and of plotting the assassination of Berezovsky. He had met Vladimir Putin, then head of the FSB, to make similar complaints a month before, Marina says. After a brief imprisonment, Litvinenko claimed political asylum in London, joining a burgeoning Russian community that has earned the city the nickname "Moscow-on-the-Thames."

## Officials refuse to hand over Lugovoi to face murder charges in Britain. And he is immune from prosecution in Russia.



Scotland Yard's top suspect: former KGB officer Andrei Lugovoi

the third evening, he grew sicker and was taken to the hospital, where doctors were taken aback by his odd symptoms. Litvinenko's bone marrow and mucous membranes had been almost completely destroyed. His hair fell out. At first, they thought him to be suffering from the side effects of a medication, later deciding that he had ingested thallium. The last time Marina spoke with him was the evening of November 23, just before she went home to take care of their young son, Anatoly. "Sasha smiled and said sadly, 'Marina, I love you so much.' He had such sadness in his eyes." Hours later, he died.

**Radioactive residue.** On the same night, British police informed her that the poison was polonium and told her to leave her house. Because of residual radioactivity, it can't be inhabited for at least four years. The fittings of the Pine Bar were ripped out and destroyed at the Sellafield nuclear power facility in northern England, Andrade says.

There is little chance Lugovoi will ever face questioning. Kremlin officials still refuse to extradite him. And, as a member of parliament, he is immune from prosecution in Russia. "Any accusation should be strengthened with evidence," asserts Lugovoi's press secretary. "That hasn't been presented by the British side." Britain's Crown Prosecution Service, meanwhile, is still hoping for the best. "Our position remains the same as it was in May," says spokeswoman Julie Seddon. "We have an extradition request for Mr. Lugovoi for the charge of murder, and the appropriate place for a trial is the U.K."

Marina is currently living off a grant from a fund headed by Berezovsky and resides with Anatoly, now 13, in London. She's a little worried about her health—she's been told she has a slightly higher risk of cancer due to some radiation exposure—but she says Anatoly wasn't exposed. She has coauthored the book *Death of a Dissident* and gives occasional interviews out of a sense of duty to her late husband.

Now, she is thinking of teaching ballroom dancing, as she did years ago in Moscow. In Soviet times, she had been a competitive dancer, dreaming of one day going to England, home of the famous Blackpool dance competition. She had no inkling of what fate held in store there. ●