



Kremlin was watching us

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THESE are the secret Russian maps that show eyes were watching Wales from behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War.

Kremlin cartographers created the charts of Rhondda and Cardiff – important military targets because of their docks and industry.

But where Ordnance Survey maps highlight one-way streets, local authority boundaries, churches, chapels and cycle paths, the Soviets had other concerns. They were more interested in government offices and military buildings, power and radio stations and fuel storage tanks.

Harbour depths, road widths and railway stations all get special attention.

The maps were made available to the public last week by Old-Maps.co.uk

The website's Russell Morris said: "During the Cold War, they basically used aerial photos, satellite images and local knowledge because they had people on the ground in these areas.

"What is interesting is that it is not like Ordnance Survey.

They are all slightly different, because they are all done by

different cartographers.

"It is not like OS, who have a consistent style."

The site will let users overlay modern and Cold War maps so they can be compared.

Mr Morris said: "It is all very James Bond in the sense that, if you cast your mind back to the '70s, it was the Cold War. The Russians were the enemy.

"And what they were doing was making these."

The maps were discovered on a train in either Latvia or Estonia after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. They were then sold to Minnesota firm East View Cartographic before Old-Maps.co.uk snapped them up.

Lieutenant Colonel Ed Brain, who heads the 3rd Battalion Royal Welsh, said: "Cardiff was a big industrial town so it was key. It could have been one of those places they were targeting to hit the UK economically.

"With Britain being a seafaring nation, if they blocked off places like Liverpool and

Glasgow – because Liverpool has a massive dock and Glasgow too – you would have to go somewhere else to continue trade.

Swansea, Newport, Pembroke and Milford Haven were also among 100 UK town and cities surveyed by the Russians.

Professor Nicola Cooper, who directs Swansea University's Callaghan Centre for the Study of Conflict, said: "It looks like they have done a recce of Britain so that if they decided to float those missiles at us, they would know they were going to hit the right places.

"They will always go for the head rather than the body, so things like the admin buildings they would want to take out.

"South Wales was obviously an industrial place and that would have been one of the main reasons it was looked at."

Mr Morris added: "If you watch James Bond or Harry Palmer, it was all covert and the Russians were the bad guys.

"It is quite easy to imagine the kind of people who were doing these sort of things."



