

March 16, 2009

On “KGB in Afghanistan”

Dear Sirs,

Unfortunately it was too late for me to know about, and have access to the text of “The KGB in Afghanistan” written by Vasiliy Mitrokhin.

While appreciating any valuable work and research (if not aligned), I would like to express my denial and categorical rejection of the shameful allegations written with regard to me by Mitrokhin. I believe the editors have tried to make it milder, when they have expressed their view in the introduction, that: “While we think Mitrokhin is wrong in seeing them as agents first and Afghan Communists second. The degree to which they were involved with Soviet intelligence is important to establish....”

I do not deny knowing some Soviet diplomats and advisers. During almost ten years of my work at Kabul International Airport, I had been known as an active officer in controlling of the contraband especially the smuggling of drugs which was widely covered by local and sometimes by international media. I knew many diplomats, airlines’ staff, businessmen, professors, and experts from many countries and maintained good relations with them. I was invited to almost every reception held by the embassies, airlines, cultural centers, and so on. I received a very good cooperation from Mr. Burck, who was a representative of BNDD (Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs)—now called DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency). He was the one who provided me the opportunity to attend a course in the Police Training School in Washington, D.C., in 1972.

Such usual day to day contacts can be used by under-cover agents who can pass what they find it interesting in the normal conversations and discussions. They can also mark you with a code-name without your knowledge. Such an action can be taken either just for your protection with a good will from somebody who himself is not working for intelligence service or at least does not regard you an agent; or it is aimed to make their bosses fool and get credit by naming you an agent. The later method is common in local agents. They can misuse their neighborhood and friendship by listing their neighbors and friends as their informants or agents.

Who knows how many other agents or non-agents from other services have code-named me or others who were in similar circumstances. I want to emphasize that the one named in charge of the so-called Luch (Ray) [*KGB in Afghanistan*, page 152] may have used the same method, or he himself is a victim of false allegations. An agent is someone employed in accordance to a mutual agreement or a contract. He receives material reward in exchange for his work. Calling innocent persons engaged in a discussion or a normal conversation, an agent, is unforgivable crime.

It is also worth-mentioning that the rivalry among the different Soviet agencies—the Embassy, the military, the KGB, and the Party advisers—as mentioned by the editors—

could result in misunderstandings. Every agency could try to demonstrate that it was the most active and the most successful one in maintaining contacts. Under-covers from secret services could call such contacts: Agents.

It is not secret that we-members of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan-trusted the Soviets more than the others, and we were more open with them.

It was a common belief in those days, that the Soviets were true friends for all suppressed peoples, and they stood for social justice. The solidarity between the international socialist movement, international working-class movement, and the international liberation movement across the world, was well-known. Taking such an atmosphere in consideration, the under-cover ones could extract information they thought useful, from friendly discussions.

I am totally astonished when Mitrokhin refers to my normal accomplishment of a duty ordered by my superiors as an act of agent (*KGB in Afghanistan*, page 151). The arrest of American diplomat was due to a request put to the top level in the interior ministry by the Soviets. Later, I was the one who discussed the matter with the General Commander of Police and Gendarmerie—Abdul Qadeer, expressing my concern about the possibility of Soviets' bad intentions aiming at destroying the Afghan-American relations. Abdul Qadeer shared the opinion with the minister and both of them went to the President Mohammad Daud. As a result, the President ordered the ministry of foreign affairs to deal smoothly with the case and ask the American Embassy to silently send the accused diplomat back home. It should not be forgotten that in that period of time, we—members of the PDPA—were in full cooperation with Daud's regime.

What happened to me after the April Revolt, and after the Soviet invasion, is crystal clear. I remained jobless. On June 19 I was taken from my house together with some relatives and visitors to the interior ministry and then to Pule-Charkhi Prison. I was treated with insult and impolite behavior. At midnight a dozen of my friends were also brought to the same prison. Thanks to the strong reaction from the party, we were released next day. I was ordered personally by Hafizullah Amin to stay at home avoiding all contacts. I was put under house arrest and could move only to the small market nearby my home escorted by security personnel. Nobody could visit me. Several times, I was taken to Said Daud Tarroon General Commander of Sarandoy (police) and Asadullah Sarwary the head of AGSA [Afghanistan's secret police], treated badly and warning impolitely without any specific accusation.

On February 25th 1978, I was kidnapped on my way to the market and taken to AGSA. During ten days in Agsa I was daily severely tortured, surely with the knowledge of the Soviet advisers. Then I was taken to the horrors of the Pule-Charkhi, to suffer and see unbelievable atrocities.

After the downfall of Amin, I could never maintain good relations with the Soviet advisers. Few months after I had been posted as the General Commander of Sarandoy (police) I was removed from the post, on the ground of problems raised between me and Golabzoy—the interior minister—over administrative principles. In order to make it

acceptable for the common sense in the society and the file and ranks of the party, it was done simply through omitting that post, as planned by the Chief Soviet Adviser of the ministry. I was jobless once again for almost two years. In 1981, I was appointed Chief of the South-West Zone. There too, I had serious disagreements with the Soviet advisers. I could not agree to the blind bombardments and brutalities of their army against the civilians. Even I was obliged to make a great risk and write official letters to all the concerned authorities in the government and the party in Kabul and to the military headquarters of the zone, expressing my strong opposition and objection to their deeds (I have a copy of that letter). Shortly after, I was removed from my post. I remained jobless until 1983. Then it was found an easy and a pleasant way to send me abroad far away as ambassador to Cuba. With the change of the leadership in Afghanistan in 1986, I was shifted to India. Although I was very successful in my diplomatic work in New Delhi (you can go through the international press in that period of 1986 -1989, to find out about just one side of my activities—my press conferences), I was removed from my post, not because I had spent almost three years in this post, but because I opposed shameful activities of the head of the under-covers, who was a diplomat ranking next to me. He could dismiss me through his powerful channels. I was shifted to Yugoslavia with bad intentions, and very soon, in the course of one year, I was dismissed once more. I did not defect in 1990 as alleged by the editors. I returned to Kabul, and remained jobless to the end of the Dr. Najibullah's era. While thousands of non-commissioned officers were promoted rapidly to very high ranks and hundreds of them to over the rank of General, I could not move further than Colonel, the rank I had in 1979, and as said before, I faced so many dismissals and long periods of joblessness.

An Agent obeys the orders, remains loyal, and does not oppose the employers. In return he is also supported. Clearly it was not the case with me.

We regarded the Soviets our friends, as mentioned before. We welcomed their assistance for the development of our country, but we could not be in agreement with their ruling our country.

Some more points to mention:

Mitrokhin has pointed to a letter written by an unknown Soviet to the CPSU Central Committee accusing Pozanov, Gorelov and Osadchy of forming a pact engaged in looting and corruption. Later the writer regrets the execution of Daud who in his words was "our man to the core." (*KGB in Afghanistan*, page 45)

You can see the real face of this double-agent Mitrokhin. He gives an indirect hint that Daud was also an agent. The only missing word here is a codename.

This double agent Mitrokhin does not expose the real agents; rather he names the very well-known leaders of the party—the ones known as having friendly relations with the Soviets.

Double-agent Mitrokhin does not reveal important secret information; rather he describes a detailed history of the events inserting falsifications not hurting KGB, and

fulfilling the desires and instructions from MI6 and probably from the CIA too, in focusing those Afghan personalities regarded by them unfriendly or hostile.

Let me address the editors of the English version, rejecting their allegation of naming me the assassin of Daud (KGB in Afghanistan, page 23). I declare loudly that I am not and I can not be an assassin, neither of Daud nor of any other creature.

Precisely, I want to emphasize, that I could never and can never be a spy against my beloved country or an assassin. All such allegations are politically motivated by political opponents, or self-made false propaganda and blackmail from those forces and agencies who disliked my stands and positions one or the other way.

I regard it my legitimate right to ask Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars to publish this whole text as a document enclosed to the "KGB in Afghanistan" written by Vasily Mitrokhin and published by WWICS. It will be highly appreciated if it can be immediately put on their internet site in connection to Mitrokhin's book.

With Best Regards

Abdul Samad Azhar