



Written by on August 26, 2010

Karzai Aide Suspected of Link to CIA

The New York Times on August 25 quoted unnamed Afghan and U.S. officials who asserted that the chief of the Afghan National Security Council official Mohammed Zia Salehi appears to have been receiving CIA money for many years. The Voice of America News reported regarding this story:



It says it is not clear whether Salehi is being paid for information or to advance U.S. views inside the administration of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, or both. There was no immediate comment from Salehi on the allegations.

The *New York Times* says Salehi's alleged ties to the CIA reflect deep contradictions in U.S. policy on Afghanistan. It says Washington is demanding that President Karzai root out government corruption while the CIA allegedly subsidizes the officials suspected of perpetrating it. Afghan police arrested Salehi last month. They said a wiretap caught him soliciting a bribe in exchange for impeding a U.S. investigation of a company suspected of moving money for Afghan leaders, drug traffickers and insurgents. President Karzai intervened in the case, securing Salehi's release after seven hours in prison.

National Public Radio (NPR.org) also cited the *Times* report, noting that Afghan and U.S. officials told *Times* reporters Dexter Filkins and Mark Mazzetti that Salehi — described as being "at the center of a politically sensitive corruption investigation," "appears to have been on the [C.I.A.] payroll for many years."

"It is unclear exactly what Mr. Salehi does in exchange for his money, whether providing information to the spy agency, advancing American views inside the presidential palace, or both," Filkins reported.

NPR also cited POLITICO blogger Laura Rozen, who in her August 25 blog, "[Karzai aide, probed for corruption, linked to CIA](#)," prefaced a quote from the *Times* report with her observation: "This might explain why Afghan President Hamid Karzai tends to dismiss U.S. complaints about Afghan corruption."

Reuters news — also citing the *Times* as its source — reported that Salehi was arrested by Afghan police in July but released after Karzai personally intervened.

The reporter observed: "Salehi's relationship with the CIA underscores deep contradictions at the heart of the Obama administration's policy in Afghanistan."

An AFP report about the allegations stated that Salehi is allegedly a confidant of a number of powerful people in the Afghan government, including Ibrahim Spinzada who was, until recently, the deputy chief of the Afghan intelligence service. AFP said that the CIA declined to comment on allegations that it paid Salehi.



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The spectre of CIA involvement in corrupt practices within the Afghan government will probably strike many Americans as entirely plausible, given the spy agency's controversial reputation over the years. One of the most powerful critical statements of the agency came from John Stockwell, who while working as the CIA Station Chief in Angola in 1976, reported to then-CIA Director George H. W. Bush, making him the highest-ranking CIA official ever to leave the agency and publicly criticize it. Stockwell delivered a lecture in October 1987 entitled "[The Secret Wars of the CIA.](#)"

Just a few brief excerpts from Stockwell's speech provides much insight, but the entire transcript is well worth reading for a fuller understanding of the spy agency. For example:

- We were doing things it seemed because we were there, because it was our function, we were bribing people, corrupting people, and not protecting the U.S. in any visible way. I had a chance to go drinking with this Larry Devlin, a famous CIA case officer who had overthrown Patrice Lumumba, and had him killed in 1960, back in the Congo. He was moving into the Africa division Chief. I talked to him in Addis Ababa at length one night, and he was giving me an explanation — I was telling him frankly, "sir, you know, this stuff doesn't make any sense, we're not saving anybody from anything, and we are corrupting people, and everybody knows we're doing it, and that makes the U.S. look bad."
- They don't meet the death squads on the streets where they're actually chopping up people or laying them down on the street and running trucks over their heads. The CIA people in San Salvador meet the police chiefs, and the people who run the death squads, and they do liaise with them, they meet them beside the swimming pool of the villas. And it's a sophisticated, civilized kind of relationship. And they talk about their children, who are going to school at UCLA or Harvard and other schools, and they don't talk about the horrors of what's being done. They pretend like it isn't true.??
- What I ran into in addition to that was a corruption in the CIA and the intelligence business that made me question very seriously what it was all about, including what I was doing ... risking my life ... what I found was that the CIA, us, the case officers, were not permitted to report about the corruption in the South Vietnamese army....
- ??• Now, the corruption was so bad, that the S. Vietnamese army was a skeleton army. Colonels would let the troops go home if they would come in once a month and sign the pay vouchers so the colonel could pocket the money. Then he could sell half of the uniforms and boots and M-16's to the communist forces — that was their major supply, just as it is in El Salvador today. He could use half of the trucks to haul produce, half of the helicopters to haul heroin.

More revealing than possible corruption in the CIA, however — since no government agency that ever existed was immune from corruption at one time or another — is the connection between the agency and its predecessor spy agency, the OSS, and the dominant political and foreign policy movement of our time: neoconservatism.

Neoconservatism is typified by most of the key figures in both Bush administrations, under which our nation first interjected it self in both Afghanistan and Iraq. One definition of neoconservatism is "a political philosophy that emerged in the United States of America, and which supports using modern American economic and military power to bring liberalism, democracy, and human rights and to other countries."

The early founders of the neoconservative movement — who came to mentor the most prominent neoconservative of them all: *National Review* founder William F. Buckley, Jr. — were former Trotskyites,



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including Wilmore Kendall, James Burnham, Irving Kristol, and Norman Podhoretz. Both Kendall and Burnham had served in the OSS during World War II, staying on when the OSS became the CIA in 1947. This proved to be a common theme among the founders of neoconservatism: a Trotskyite philosophy; service with or connections to the OSS and the CIA; and, finally, a career in politically oriented journalism.

The progression of events can be summarized as follows: Former members of the OSS (the World War II era's predecessor to the CIA) created the neoconservative political movement, which has strongly advocated an interventionist U.S. foreign policy. Members of that movement came to capture control of the Republican Party in the years following World War II, forcing out old-line "paleoconservatives" such as Ohio Senator Robert Taft and turning the GOP into a virtual clone of Franklin Roosevelt's Democrat Party. When that policy led to strong U.S. intervention abroad, who would the neocons be most likely to turn to for logistical support? The CIA, of course — the midwife that had assisted at the birth of their movement.

That mutually respectful connection is well illustrated by President George W. Bush's Vice President Dick Cheney, who is not only a textbook neoconservative, but also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, an interventionist policy group. Cheney was one of the most vocal "hawks" advocating for the invasion of Iraq, as well as intervention in Afghanistan.

In a speech given on May 21 at the neoconservative American Enterprise Institute in Washington, Cheney championed the role of the CIA, taking umbrage at those who compared the spy agency's "enhanced interrogation" techniques with those who abused prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq: "It takes a deeply unfair cast of mind to equate the disgraces of Abu Ghraib with the lawful, skillful, and entirely honorable work of CIA personnel trained to deal with a few malevolent men."

The CIA is the neocons' best friend, and vice versa.

Photo: Former President George W. Bush, right, and George J. Tenet, left, Bush's director of the CIA, standing at the CIA seal at agency headquarters in Langley, Va. in 2001: AP Images



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