



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on September 8, 2016

KGB Ties of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas Revealed

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (shown on left) was a KGB agent in the 1980s, according to documents smuggled out of Russia by a former Soviet archivist. This revelation illustrates that at least some Middle Eastern activity attributed to Islam was an integral part of efforts by the Soviet Union to extend communism to the region.

The notes in which the name of Abbas is included were part of a collection made by Soviet defector Vasily Mitrokhin, who was an archivist before the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. Abbas was apparently operating under the direction of Mikhail Bogdanov, who is presently Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy to the Middle East. Bogdanov served at the Soviet embassy in Damascus, Syria between 1983 and 1994 — the time period in which Abbas was recruited into the KGB.



Putin was a lieutenant colonel in the KGB at the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and has often lamented the fall of the Soviet empire. Abbas took over the Palestinian presidency in 2005.

Putin has offered to host a summit in Moscow between Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu and Abbas. The Palestinian government has denied that Abbas, who received his Ph.D. in Moscow in 1982, was ever actually a spy for the Soviets, blaming the Israeli government for “waging a smear campaign” designed to scuttle the effort by Putin to revive peace negotiations.

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In fact, the material linking Abbas with the KGB was reported by Israel's Channel One television on Wednesday. Gideon Remez, a researcher at the Truman Institute of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, explained that the connection was found among the documents smuggled out of Russia in 1991 by Mitrokhin. Harry Truman was the U.S. president who gave formal diplomatic recognition to Israel in May of 1948.

Mitrokhin's files, which are in the Churchill Archives of Britain's Cambridge University, were released two years ago for public research. The Truman Institute requested the Middle East file, which is where the information about Abbas's KGB links was found. “There's a group of summaries or excerpts there that all come under a headline of persons cultivated by the KGB in the year 1983,” Mitrokhin explained. Remez noted, “Now one of these items is all of two lines.... It starts with the code name of the person, ‘Krotov’, which is derived from the Russian word for ‘mole,’ and then ‘Abbas, Mahmoud, born 1935 in Palestine, member of the central committee of Fatah and the PLO, in Damascus ‘agent of the KGB’.”



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Abbas, born in 1935 in Palestine, is a founding member of Fatah, which is part of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO).

“We thought it was important now in the context of the Russian attempt to arrange a summit between Abbas and Netanyahu, particularly because of Abbas’ joint KGB past with Putin,” Ramez said. Ramez’ research partner, Isabella Ginor, argued that Abbas’ past is relevant in light of his present role and the fact that Putin is a “former” KGB agent, too. “We don’t know what happened later on and if [Abbas] went on with his service or work for the Soviets.”

Fatah Party central committee member Mohammed al-Madani dismissed the KGB allegations against Abbas as “another attempt to slander him” and blamed the Israeli government. In fact, Palestinian officials have even argued that it is public knowledge that the PLO was working in conjunction with the Soviets at the time Abbas is listed as a KGB agent.

The creation of the nation of Israel in 1948 has been a source of contention in the Middle East since its beginning. Although President Truman pushed for the creation of a Jewish state, American and British oil companies were opposed, not wanting to anger the Arabs. Then-Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin also supported the creation of the state of Israel, apparently expecting it to be socialist, and also in hopes of reducing the influence of the British in the region. Interestingly, the communist government of Czechoslovakia even sold weapons to Israel in the early years of its history.

The independence of Israel, declared on May 14, 1948, occurred within a narrow window of opportunity. Within a year, both the United States and the Soviet Union would most likely have opposed its creation.

For his part, Israeli President Netanyahu told reporters on a visit to the Netherlands that the Palestinian Authority supports Islamic terrorism and will never agree to the continued existence of Israel. “The Palestinians want Acre, Jaffa, and Tel Aviv,” Netanyahu claimed. “The Palestinians and [PA President Mahmoud] Abbas won’t agree to the existence of Israel. The Palestinians celebrate murderous terror around the world and in Israel, they name their streets after murderers.”

Abbas has refused to recognize Israel as a Jewish state, but has indicated that he would like a peace deal, which would create a separate nation of the Palestinian Authority, in a “two-state solution.”

It is obvious that the new state of Israel in 1948 created a tinderbox in the region, and this fits in with Soviet efforts to influence governments in the region since that time. It also illustrates how communist ideology benefits from conflicts — real or imagined. In other words, the Soviets have used real conflicts to advance communism in the Middle East and elsewhere, and if conflicts either do not exist or are actually fairly minor, they will work to exacerbate these differences.

This raises several questions. Was the role of Abbas as a KGB agent to stir up differences between the Israelis and their Arab neighbors, and were there other KGB operatives among the Arabs doing the same thing? Are there Russian agents still active in the region today? After all, Putin did not rise to the level of a lieutenant colonel in the KGB by being an ambivalent Communist Party member.

For that matter, did Stalin himself support the creation of the state of Israel because he saw it as a way to turn the Arabs away from the non-communist West, because he knew of the strong support for Israel in the United States?

We may never know the exact answers to all these questions, but surely Abbas is not the only KGB agent in the Middle East. And at least some of the terrorist activity emanating from the region may very



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well be promoted by actors inspired by something other than Islam.



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