

[<<Back to index](#)[+ Larger type](#) | [- Smaller type](#)

Intelligence officer claims CIA was complicit in torture in Uzbekistan

Officer also claims British UN official was killed by order of Uzbek president Karimov By Neil Mackay, Investigations Editor

 [Comment](#) | [Read Comments \(7\)](#)

THE CIA SENT ITS agents into Uzbekistan torture chambers to observe the abuse of alleged Islamic terrorists, according to a dissident member of the Uzbek security services who is now seeking political asylum in the UK after fleeing Tashkent.

Ikrom Yakubov, a former major in the National Security Service (SNB), accused the CIA of involvement in torture sessions in the central Asian republic in an exclusive interview with the Sunday Herald, during which he made a series of startling claims. These include claims that: I Britain's Richard Conroy, the UN's co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, was assassinated on the orders of Islam Karimov, the president of Uzbekistan. Karimov has been described as one of the world's worst dictators and his rule, since 1991, has been characterised by allegations of torture (including claims that victims were boiled alive), media control, fake elections and brutality against human rights organisations and pro-democracy activists; I a series of bomb attacks in the capital, Tashkent, in March 2004 were organised by the SNB in order to tighten Karimov's dictatorial rule and ramp up the threat from Islamic terror groups; I Karimov ordered the notorious Andijan massacre in May 2005, when Uzbek security forces fired on protesters, killing anything up to 1500 people; I Karimov's regime routinely framed innocent Muslims on charges of involvement in Islamist terror and invented bogus terror threats to maintain his grip on the country, and I the CIA used a secret detention facility in Uzbekistan where suspects in the "war on terror" were taken from around the world to be tortured by SNB interrogators.

Yakubov fled Uzbekistan and sought asylum in the UK this month. Craig Murray, Britain's former ambassador to Uzbekistan and a harsh critic of the Karimov regime, has vouched for Yakubov's bona-fides, claiming he is confident of his background as an intelligence officer and that he finds Yakubov's story believable.

advertisement



leave air pollution unchecked

fight global warming.com

ROBERTSON FOUNDATION Ad Land ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE finding the ways that work

Yakubov fell out of favour with the SNB after writing a series of official reports for the Uzbek National Security Council which were deemed critical of the intelligence services. He was later accused of spying for America and by 2007 was arrested and tortured with beatings. By 2008, and now working with human rights groups, Yakubov left the country and, from Turkey, wrote a series of anonymous articles criticising Karimov and the intelligence services, which he posted on the internet.

Yakubov says the SNB responded by emailing death threats to him, saying they knew his real identity. His cousin was subsequently killed, and Yakubov is sure that SNB agents were responsible for his death, as threats had also been made against his family.

Yakubov's most powerful claim relates to a meeting in 2002 with an American official whom Yakubov's chief in the SNB described as a CIA agent.

"The man introduced himself to me as Andrew," said Yakubov. "We drove some 15 kilometres from Tashkent to the town of Chirchik, where the SNB has a secret detention

centre located underground. We entered the jail and there was an SNB officer torturing a man. Andrew and I watched for about 10 minutes. We were both present while this man was being beaten around the neck with a stick.

"The victim had been captured by the Americans in Afghanistan and taken to Uzbekistan for interrogation by the SNB. He was supposed to be an Islamist. Andrew then went into the administration room and came out 20 minutes later with a bag full of papers."

Yakubov said the American did not protest or urge the torturer to stop beating the prisoner. Instead, Yakubov said, Andrew told sexual jokes and taught him to swear in English. "He certainly did not appear upset by what he witnessed," Yakubov said.

Yakubov also claimed that Conroy, a senior British UN official based in Tashkent, was killed on the orders of the government because he was aware that senior officials were involved in international drug trafficking. Conroy died when his plane crashed in January 2004 in the Uzbek capital. Yakubov says he was told by a friend, also a member of the intelligence services that a bomb was placed on the plane by the SNB.

According to Yakubov, a series of bomb attacks in Tashkent in 2004, which the government blamed on Islamist suicide bombers, was organised by the SNB. Yakubov said: "The intention was to show the world and Uzbekistan that only Karimov could guarantee peace and safety. It helped him maintain power."

Yakubov added that this policy also involved the SNB "setting up" fake Islamic terror groups to keep public panic ramped up.

Ironically, in 2005 Hazel Blears, then a Home Office minister, invoked the Tashkent bombings during a debate on government anti-terror measures. Craig Murray, ambassador to Tashkent at the time of the bombings, said evidence he saw with his own eyes did not point towards Islamist suicide attacks. He claimed the alleged sites of the bombings showed no craters "or even a crack in paving stones". The body of one suicide bomber was unmarked.

Article Tools

 [Print this story](#)

 [Email to a friend](#)

More Articles



.. T .. Mobile ..

LIMITED OFFER

1000 mins
or
2000 texts
(or any mix of the two)

now
£25/month
was £35





Travel Shop

We know what you want from a holiday



Travel Shop

Airport Parking



Murray informed London about his findings and the Joint Terrorism Assessment Centre agreed that there were "serious flaws in the Uzbek government account". Murray added: "I concluded that these events were a series of extrajudicial killings, covered by a highly controlled and limited agent-provocateur operation."

The Andijan massacre was also ordered by Karimov to terrify the populace, Yakubov said, and prevent any popular pro-democracy movement developing.

Yakubov, who is awaiting interview by British intelligence and an immigration hearing, insists he would be either killed or tortured and jailed indefinitely if he were forced to return. He also fears assassination attempts by the SNB while in the UK.

He added: "I am a dissident not just because I believe in democracy and human rights, but also because as an intelligence officer, I saw my colleagues fabricating cases against ordinary Muslims, making them out to be terrorists and religious radicals."

Murray has spoken to a number of high-level contacts in Uzbekistan, and senior opposition figures in exile, who he says all vouched for Yakubov as an intelligence officer.

Murray added: "Personally, I believe what Ikrom Yakubov is saying. His account comes over as naturalistic to me. Funnily enough, he even told me that he'd been involved in setting up a demonstration against me in Tashkent in 2004, which was organised because of statements I'd made about human rights abuses. He also says that he was keeping tabs on my love life while I was there."

Share this story on: [Digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [Furl](#) | [reddit](#) | [NowPublic](#) | [Yahoo!](#)

 [Add Comment](#)

Posted by: Graham Green, USA on 2:54am Sun 14 Sep 08

For those of you who may be feeling guilty about your or your governments engagement in torturer may I recommend the following film:

<http://thetorturer.com>

[Quote](#) | [Report this post](#)

Posted by: Donald Anderson, glasgow on 8:38am Sun 14 Sep 08

Not my Government. I'm no Pom Frit.

[Quote](#) | [Report this post](#)

Posted by: Dundonian on 10:32am Sun 14 Sep 08

Craig Murray tried to stop this as Ambassador there - and New Labour sacked him for it. He's from South Queensferry and was elected Rector at Dundee University.

[Quote](#) | [Report this post](#)

Posted by: John Hanks, Laramie, Wyoming on 4:14pm Sun 14 Sep 08

American intelligence agencies including the FBI are nothing but Demonic Nazi fronts for sociopaths. It is time to just quit giving them money for anything.

[Quote](#) | [Report this post](#)

Posted by: Uzbek, Switzerland on 5:54pm Sun 14 Sep 08

Major Yakubov was a "former major" of which there are plenty about, past, present and future. I have difficulty in imagining he knows all about these things that are not necessarily connected; torture, Andijan Masacre, Richard Conway. Whilst i know all of the above happened to some degree or another, Major Yakubov can't be involved in all of them.

[Quote](#) | [Report this post](#)

Posted by: Morag McKinlay, Falkirk on 9:23pm Sun 14 Sep 08

I can recommend the book, "Murder in Samarkand," by Craig Murray, the former UK ambassador there, sacked by Blair. It's not fiction but it's a **** good read. never a dull moment. Men especially, would like it, I think.

[Quote](#) | [Report this post](#)

Posted by: Another Uzbek, UK on 10:09pm Sun 14 Sep 08

I have read some of the article's posted by Yakubov, and I am not unfortunately convinced that his allegations are grounded. Yet, I would like to believe one thing he says, 'I hope I am not the last one who is leaving the life of being an SNB- which has become the organisation ensuring those in power stay in power instead of working for the good of the nation'.

[Quote](#) | [Report this post](#)