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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By: Jeremy Kuzmarov  
03.08.2024

## CIA Has a Long History of Empowering Monsters



[Source: [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)]

On May 26, *The New York Times Magazine* ran a [feature story](#) by Matthieu Aikins entitled “America’s Monster: Uncovering the Brutal Career of Abdul Raziq—And the Hidden Truths of the War in Afghanistan.”

The story detailed the U.S. military and CIA’s support for Abdul Raziq, a police commander in Spin Boldak on the border of Pakistan in the late 2000s who, thanks to American patronage, was promoted to police chief in Kandahar and rose to the rank of three-star General.

In the years prior to his death at the hands of the Taliban in 2018, Raziq’s photo proliferated on taxis and at checkpoints across Afghanistan as a hero in spearheading the fight against terrorism.

However, Raziq’s men carried out Afghanistan’s largest campaign of forced disappearances since the pro-communist coup of 1978, torturing captives and burying many of them in the Afghan desert.

Aikins wrote that “the scale of Raziq’s abuses, carried out with American support, was shocking.”<sup>[1]</sup>

After Raziq became Kandahar’s police chief, UN investigators documented the beating and administration of electric shock to detainees and the “twisting and wrenching of genitals.”<sup>[2]</sup>



Abdul Raziq at his home in Kandahar City in 2015, shadowed by one of his many bodyguards. Raziq was functionally illiterate.

[Source: [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)]



Dossier of one of many disappeared by Raziq’s U.S.-trained militia. [Source: [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)]

Many of the abuses were carried out as part of a clan war in which the U.S. military and CIA became enmeshed. Raziq was a member of Achakzai tribe whose father had been murdered by the rival Noorzai tribe, which had collaborated with the CIA during the 1980s Soviet war.

When Raziq's brother was gunned down in the bazaar in Chaman by a Noorzai, Raziq kidnapped the suspected culprit and 13 people he was traveling with and shot them all in a dry riverbed.

Summoned to Kabul, Raziq was afterwards pardoned by Afghan President (and U.S. puppet) Hamid Karzai. Blackwater and DynCorp subsequently helped transform Raziq's Achakzai militia into a border police regiment whose salaries were paid for by the United States.



Hamid Karzai [Source: [palmistryforyou.com](http://palmistryforyou.com)]

Heading a special Achakzai battalion in the border police, Raziq's cousin, Jajo, ran death squads in a Noorzai area. His men had detective badges and guns and "threw the bodies in the desert," according to Aikins.<sup>[3]</sup>

Plain-clothes teams would roam in cars with tinted windows, snatching suspects and taking them for "a sand picnic."<sup>[4]</sup>

The desert wells and dunes contained countless corpses; others were dumped in the streets.

Dr. Musa Gharibnawaz, who oversaw Kandahar's morgue as the director of forensic medicine, told Aikins: "I saw things which made me wonder whether a wild beast or man had done them."<sup>[5]</sup>

To fund death squad operations, Razik sold drugs. A Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)-led Afghan army unit seized an enormous stockpile of hashish in Spin Boldak and arrested a district police commander who ran narcotics shipments for Raziq.

There were plans to go after Raziq next. However, U.S. army officers intervened to protect him. The CIA considered him to be a valuable source in collecting intelligence on Taliban havens and bomb-making networks in Pakistan and for providing security in border areas.

A declassified military report from 2010 noted that Raziq was giving shelter to Baloch rebels fighting the Pakistani government and that he “used these tribesmen to carry out assassinations and killings in Pakistan [which the Agency valued].”

James “Jamie” Hayes, a Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel served as a personal adviser to Raziq to plan a military operation with him in Kandahar City.

In March 2010, U.S. commanding General Stanley McChrystal posed before television cameras beside Raziq, stating that he would help the U.S. military to “increase efficiency and decrease corruption.”<sup>[6]</sup> In reality, the opposite was true, as Raziq’s forces carried out gratuitous violence, often against clan rivals, and he was deeply corrupt.



Jamie Hayes [Source: [nwc.ndu.edu](http://nwc.ndu.edu)]



General Stanley McChrystal [Source: [eideard.com](http://eideard.com)]

### *Fitting a Wider Pattern*

Sadly, the CIA's support for the Afghan monster, Abdul Raziq, fits a deep historical pattern. Brutal figures like Raziq are valued by the U.S. military and policy elites because they do the dirty work in stamping out opposition to U.S.-imposed leaders for a relatively cheap fee. The U.S. military and CIA can in turn claim plausible deniability when abuses get out of hand and are publicly exposed, with the abuses blamed on "rogue cowboys" or "uncivilized natives."

Below are some of the U.S. allies also trained under police training programs who, like Raziq, were monsters:

#### **1 – Nguyen Ngoc Loan, Vietnam War**

Nguyen Ngoc Loan was the Saigon police chief during the height of the Vietnam War. He gained infamy when he was photographed shooting a National Liberation Front (NLF, southern-based guerrilla revolutionary movement known as Vietcong) prisoner in the head.



Nguyen Ngoc Loan shooting VC prisoner in the head. [Source: [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com)]

Trained by the French at Saint-Cyr Military Academy, Loan was the power-broker for South Vietnamese Vice Premier Nguyen Cao Ky, an admirer of Adolf Hitler who was previously removed from a CIA mission for smuggling drugs.



Nguyen Cao Ky [Source: [flickr.com](http://flickr.com)]

Loan had been trained by CIA advisers working under the cover of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Public Safety (OPS).

One of the advisers, John Manopoli, had worked for undercover “red squads” in the New York State Police. He went on to train police agents in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who helped stamp out opposition to Joseph Mobutu, a tyrant who sold off his country’s mineral wealth to American investors.<sup>[7]</sup>



John Manopoli [Source: Photo courtesy of Jeremy Kuzmarov]

Loan’s role in shooting the VC prisoner in the head was no anomaly: An OPS report pointed to Loan’s “contempt for individual legal rights” after he had a member of South Vietnam’s constituent assembly assassinated to break a legislative logjam.<sup>[8]</sup>

Marine General William Corson wrote in *The Betrayal* that “Loan’s National police methods to enforce ‘the laws’ make Himmler’s Gestapo look like the board of overseers in a Quaker church.”<sup>[9]</sup>



General William Corson [Source: [foudnagrave.com](http://foudnagrave.com)]

## 2 – Siho Lamphouthacoul, Secret War in Laos

Beginning in the mid-1950s, the CIA had tried to prop up a right-wing Lao government and financed the Lao police force in an attempt to dismantle the left-wing Pathet Lao.

The head of the Lao police in the early 1960s was General Siho Lamphouthacoul, an extreme right winger, [according to \*The New York Times\*](#), who had been trained under USAID police training programs.

Under right-wing CIA favorite General Phoumi Nosavan, Siho headed an assassination program which was designed to eliminate the higher cadres of the Pathet Lao and progressive neutralist politicians like Quinim Pholsema, whose assassination Siho arranged.



General Phoumi Nosavan [Source: [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)]



Quinim Pholsena, one of Siho’s many victims. [Source: [historicimages.com](http://historicimages.com)]

General Siho was a CIA “asset” who had played a vital role in rigging the 1960 election on General Phoumi’s behalf. A stocky man of mixed Chinese-Laotian parentage and humble background, Siho had attended the General Staff School in Taiwan, where he fell under the influence of General Chiang Ching-kuo, chief of Taiwan’s secret police and eldest son of dictator Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi), who had close ties to American intelligence.



Chiang Ching-kuo [Source: [thediplomat.com](http://thediplomat.com)]

Described by *The New York Times* as “rough and tenacious,” and by his CIA case officer as “vain” and “dangerous” [like Phoumi] if in a flash of hot temper,” Siho was known for use of “gangster methods to eliminate the opposition,” including, according to U.S. reports, “the use of twisted cord in interrogating recalcitrant subjects.”<sup>[10]</sup> His men abused their power,



extorted money, were involved in gambling and prostitution, and conducted themselves, in the words of one of Phoumi’s supporters, “in an absolutely irresponsible manner.”<sup>[11]</sup>

A 1965 USAID OPS report authored by Frank Walton, Paul Skuse and Wendell Motter stated that General Siho and Phoumi had used the Laotian police as a “private army” and raised money through “considerable traffic and smuggling into Thailand” as a means of “raising money for a wave of repression against political opponents,” including “mass jailings and executions.”<sup>[12]</sup>



Survey Team at Neutralist Headquarters with Generals Kong Le and Soukan and the Director General of the Neutralist Police

Paul Skuse, left, and Frank Walton, right, with members of the Lao National Police trained under the USAID’s OPS. [Source: Photo courtesy of Jeremy Kuzmarov] Siho’s men, according to the report, like Raziq’s decades later, engaged in “Gestapo-like tactics, carrying out operations that “rivaled anything ever heard of in terms of brutal, corrupt activity.”<sup>[13]</sup>

### 3 – “Tiger Kim” Chong-Won, South Korea

In 1956, following staged elections that secured the re-election of Syngman Rhee, a U.S. client who had triggered the Korean War and massacred tens of thousands of his own people, *The Korea Times* [reported](#) on the arrest and beating of a member of parliament named Kim Sun-Tae.

Kim Chong-Won, head of South Korea's public security bureau, who worked closely with Captain Warren S. Olin, a career army officer, had ordered his troops to "nab the bastard" and kept him in detention for five days, during which time he was "treated like a dog."

*The Korea Times* editorialized: "There can never be a representative democracy with men like Lee and Kim in positions of power."

Born to a poor Korean family in Japan, Kim Chong-Won was trained in the 1930s in Japanese military academies, whose rigorous ideological conditioning and harsh, dehumanizing methods set the course for his career.

Known as the "Paektu Mountain Tiger," Kim decapitated suspected guerrilla collaborators during the suppression of the late 1940s Yosu rebellion against Rhee with a Japanese-style sword and machine-gunned 31 detainees in the Yongdok police station.

In Yonghaemyon, Kim's men arrested civilians after finding propaganda leaflets at a nearby school and shot them in front of villagers, opening fire on women and children who ran from the scene. More than 500 were killed in the massacre, for which Kim was sentenced to three years in prison, though he was granted amnesty by Rhee.

"Tiger" Kim presided over further atrocities as vice commander of the military police in Pusan during the Korean War (1950-1953).

His appointment as head of the public security bureau was a reward for his loyalty to Rhee and reflected the U.S.-subsidized Korean National Police's continued emphasis on counterinsurgency and utter disregard for human rights.

John Muccio, the first U.S. ambassador to South Korea, who later oversaw another dirty war in Guatemala, characterized Kim's methods as "ruthless yet effective," typifying U.S. support for brutal tactics, as long as they were directed against "communists" or "terrorists" in the post-Cold War era.<sup>[14]</sup>



South Korean Police Chief Chang Taek-sang with a man who may be Tiger Kim.

[Source: [apjff.org](http://apjff.org)]

#### **4 – Manuel Contreras, Chile**

Contreras was the head of Operation Condor in South America, a terrorist operation spearheaded by the CIA, which connected the intelligence services of South American dictatorships and collated data on leftist “subversives” who were hunted down, tortured and assassinated.

A model was the Phoenix Program in Vietnam.

Contreras headed the Chilean intelligence services under General Augusto Pinochet who came to power in a 1973 CIA-backed coup that ousted socialist Salvador Allende.

Following the coup, Allende supporters were rounded up and tortured and/or murdered.

Contreras worked closely with CIA operative Vernon Walters under General Pinochet.



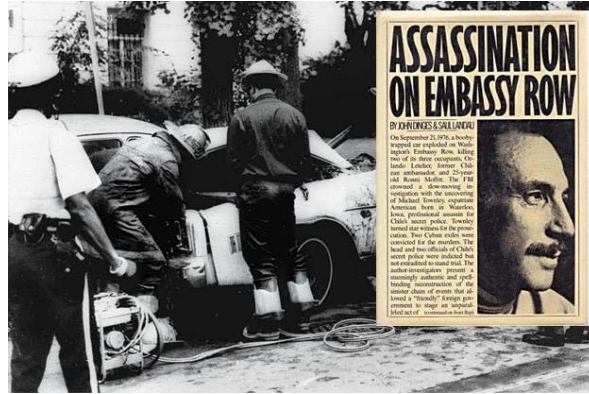
Manuel Contreras [Source: [en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)]



General Vernon Walters [Source: [en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)]

The Chilean intelligence service was organized along lines similar to the intelligence services of 1950s Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista.

In 1993, Contreras was convicted of the [murder of Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier](#) in a car bombing in Washington, D.C., and sentenced to seven years in prison.



[Source: [americasquarterly.org](http://americasquarterly.org)]

**Other notable monsters trained by the CIA (and/or U.S. military Special Forces)**

1 – **Dai Li:** Nationalist Chinese intelligence chief in the 1940s, tied to the Green Gang, who was referred to by his own OSS contact as a “Chinese Himmler.”



Dai Li [Source: [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)]

2 – **Ahmed Wali Karzai:** Afghan drug smuggler and murderer who was the brother of U.S. puppet Hamid Karzai. *The New Yorker* referred to him as an “Afghan Godfather.”



Afghan Godfather: Ahmed Wali Karzai [Source: [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)]

**3 – Ayad Allawi, Iraq:** Allegedly a British MI-6 asset since 1978, he personally oversaw torture as head of the new Iraqi government after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Even when he was a student, Allawi was a thug. His classmates said that, when he entered the handball court, they left because they were scared of him.



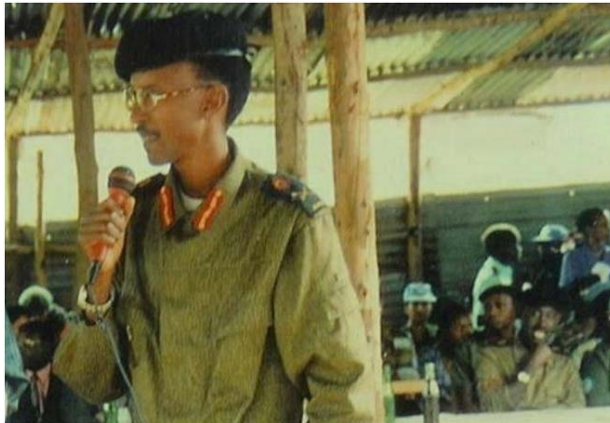
Ayad Allawi [Source: [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)]

**4 – Joseph Mobutu:** A notorious Congolese dictator.



Joseph Mobutu in Army fatigues. [Source: [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)]

**5 – Paul Kagame:** Rwandan dictator considered to be an African Hitler.



Paul Kagame [Source: [ktpress.rw](http://ktpress.rw)]

**6 – General Gustavo Álvarez Martínez:** Honduran death squad operator in the 1980s who worked directly with U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte and was a graduate of the U.S. Army Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg.



Gustavo Álvarez Martínez [Source: [specialforces78.com](http://specialforces78.com)]

**7 – General Napoleon Valeriano:** Notable killer of left-wing Huks in the Philippines in the 1950s who was then brought by his CIA godfather Edward Lansdale to spearhead an anti-communist campaign in support of the Ngo Dinh Diem quisling regime in South Vietnam that helped trigger the Vietnam War.



Colonel Napoleon Valeriano. The skull and bones symbolizes the Nenita death squad unit that was trained by CIA operative Edward Lansdale and his country team. [Source: [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)]

**8 – Félix Rodríguez:** Murderer of Che Guevara who was also involved in the training of the Nicaraguan Contras in the 1980s. Rodriguez carried out some of the latter operations during the governorship of Bill Clinton in Arkansas (Clinton was [himself a CIA asset](#)). Rodriguez was so close to Clinton, he had special access to the governor's mansion.





Félix Rodríguez with picture of Che Guevara. He was proud of his role in killing Che.  
[Source: [english.elpais.com](http://english.elpais.com)]

**9 – Orlando Bosch:** Cuban terrorist who blew up a Cuban airliner, killing all 73 passengers.



Orlando Bosch [Source: [historica.fandom.com](http://historica.fandom.com)]

**10 – Phao Siyanon:** Thai Police Director-General trained by the CIA in the 1950s who committed extrajudicial executions of leftists and controlled the Southeast Asian drug traffic.



Director-General Phao Siyanon [Source: [wikispooks.com](http://wikispooks.com)]

**Before the CIA came into existence:**

**1 – Anastasio Somoza García:** Nicaraguan tyrant who headed U.S.-trained National Guard in the 1930s. After murdering leftist leader Augusto Cesar Sandino, Somoza established a family dynasty that ruled Nicaragua like a private fiefdom for more than 40 years.



Anastasio Somoza García [Source: [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)]

**2 – Admiral Alexander Kolchak:** Counter-revolutionary general who supported pogroms against Jews and commanded Cossack generals in the Russian Civil War (1917-1920). The latter committed acts that American Colonel Robert Eichelberger said would have been considered “shameful in the Middle Ages.”



Alexander Kolchak [Source: [en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)]

All of the above figures—from Kolchak to Raziq—have been instrumental over the last one hundred years in doing the dirty work of the American Empire. Contrary to popular illusions, this empire has been sustained by violence and massive human rights abuses, like all other empires.



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1. Matthieu Aikins, “America’s Monster: Uncovering the Brutal Career of Abdul Raziq—And the Hidden Truths of the War in Afghanistan,” *The New York Times Magazine*, May 20, 2024, 25. [↑](#)
  2. Aikins, “America’s Monster,” 30. [↑](#)
  3. Idem. Jajo was assassinated in 2014. [↑](#)
  4. Aikins, “America’s Monster,” 30. [↑](#)
  5. Idem. [↑](#)
  6. Aikins, “America’s Monster,” 29. [↑](#)

7. Jeremy Kuzmarov, *Modernizing Repression: Police Training and Nation-Building in the American Century* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 149. A colleague described Manopoli as a “strange character” with odd work habits: He would disappear for days and then be seen in his office typing into the night. First serving as a police adviser in Vietnam under cover of a Michigan State University program, he also served with the OPS in Rwanda, Ivory Coast and Nicaragua, training the National Guard on the eve of the Sandinista Revolution. [↑](#)
8. Kuzmarov, *Modernizing Repression*, 149. [↑](#)
9. Idem. [↑](#)
10. Kuzmarov, *Modernizing Repression*, 130, 131. [↑](#)
11. Ibid., 131. [↑](#)
12. Idem. [↑](#)
13. Idem. [↑](#)
14. Jeremy Kuzmarov, “Police Training, ‘Nation-Building,’ And Political Repression In Postcolonial South Korea,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, July 1, 2012, <https://apjjf.org/2012/10/27/jeremy-kuzmarov/3785/article>.

### **CovertAction Magazine**

June 20, 2024