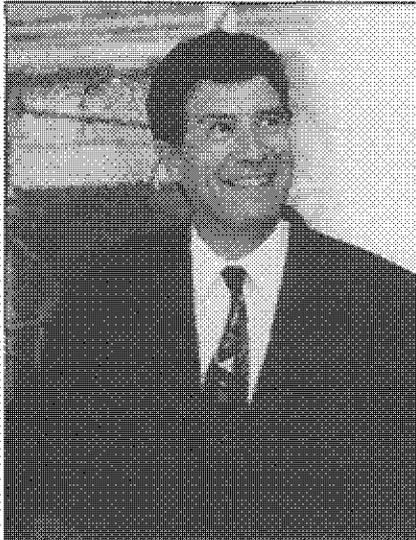


The Mitrokhin Archive

Looking Behind the KGB Facade

Christopher Andrew



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The simplest test I can think of by which to judge whether any intelligence report is really of critical importance is this: if it arrives in the middle of the night would you wake the President?
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Editor's Note: Christopher Andrew is a prominent international expert on the history of intelligence. He chairs the British Intelligence Study Group and is co-editor of the publication Intelligence and National Security. He has been a Visiting Professor at Harvard University, the University of Toronto, and the Australian National University. Professor Andrew is a frequent host of BBC radio and TV documentaries on modern history and international relations. He was the sole non-US member of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the future of the US Intelligence Community. His 14 books include several on the history of intelligence, the most recent of which is The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB.

*Professor Andrew visited CIA to discuss his new book, with the sponsorship of the Center for the Study of Intelligence and the Directorate of Operations. He provided this version of his remarks given in the CIA Auditorium on 18 April 2000, for the classified edition of Studies in Intelligence. Professor Andrew spoke on the condition that his talk not be publicized and that his remarks were not to be quoted or copied for attribution. *(U//FOUO)*

Thank you for your invitation, and thank you even more for coming in.

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such large numbers, I'm all the more grateful for your welcome because I know you haven't always had good experiences with Cambridge historians. The first Cambridge historian to visit the CIA was, I think, Kim Philby, and I'm told you also have some reservations about his houseguest, another Cambridge historian called Guy Burgess. Let me try to reassure you. Times are changing in the Cambridge History Faculty. For the first time in British history, both the current Chief of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), Richard Dearlove, and the current Director General of the Security Service, Stephen Lander, are Cambridge historians. A conspiracy theorist might find that deeply worrying, but I'm reassured, and I hope you will be too. Anyway, that's quite enough about Cambridge. Now for Mitrokhin. (U//FOUO)

There is, I think, one important characteristic which many of the KGB files noted by Mitrokhin and Vasili Mitrokhin himself have in common, and it's this: Neither are comprehensible in Western terms. So, first the KGB files, and then Mitrokhin himself. The simplest test I can think of by which to judge whether any intelligence report is really of critical importance is this: if it arrives in the middle of the night would you wake the President? Or, if not the President, some senior member of the administration? Now, from the moment you apply that hopelessly simplistic test ("Andrew's Test"), it quickly becomes clear there were

fundamental differences of priority between East and West during the Cold War, which at the time, I think, weren't sufficiently appreciated. Just one example. On the 27th of October 1978, the KGB resident in Oslo, Leonid Makarov, rang Mikhail Suslov, the member of the Politburo chiefly responsible for ideological purity, in the middle of the night. Why? Not to tell him about some great international crisis which was about to break. Simply to tell him that the dissident Yuri Orlov had not won the Nobel Peace Prize. So, far from being reproved for waking Suslov in the early hours, the Oslo residency was warmly congratulated for the supposed "operational effectiveness" of its active measures. By influencing both the Norwegian Labor Party and the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, the residency was believed to have ensured that the prize went to Sadat and Begin (who, in reality, had always been the clear favorites), rather than to Yuri Orlov (who had never had a realistic chance of beating them). (U//FOUO)

In Western eyes, such episodes are pretty trivial as well as seriously unpleasant. But it is important, I think, to remember that what appeared to us as nasty and trivial episodes like that were, to the KGB, major priorities. Just one example of the way that sort of priority played in the United States. Mitrokhin's notes contain one account (I wish there were more) of a KGB video evening. It was held at Moscow Center in the summer of 1978, to celebrate a major operational success in the United States. The top brass from both the

Central Committee and the KGB were invited, though Mitrokhin's notes don't, alas, reveal who exactly turned up. The video, remarkably, was of Solzhenitsyn's commencement address at Harvard in 1978. (It was almost as if Yezhov had gotten together a group to watch a film of a speech by Trotsky in 1938.) But this was intended to be a success story, to show how Public Enemy Number Two (Sakharov, of course, being Number One) had been discredited by the KGB's efforts in the United States. It was a deeply, if unconsciously, satirical occasion. Many of you will have seen excerpts of the commencement address on television at the time. (U//FOUO)

What Solzhenitsyn did, in his own words, was to give his audience "a measure of bitter truth." He denounced the West for its feebleness as regards the abuse of human rights in the Soviet Union. He denounced the West for being corrupted by materialism. This was not a happy experience for many of the graduates. The weather was pretty much like it is today. It was drizzling, their academic robes got wet, and many of them didn't much care for what Solzhenitsyn said. But in keeping with Harvard tradition, they dutifully applauded in Harvard Yard at the end of Solzhenitsyn's speech. *The Washington Post* next day was less polite. It denounced Solzhenitsyn's "gross misunderstanding of Western society." And, of course, the reason why this video evening had been organized by the KGB was so that representatives of the First Chief Directorate and the Fifth Directorate were able to stand up

after the video and say in effect, "You see, Solzhenitsyn is now discredited even in the United States. Thanks to our efforts, the American people have been repelled by his reactionary views and intransigent criticism." (U//FOUO)

The KGB had not one but two "Main Adversaries." One, of course, was the United States. And I hope I have not underestimated that in the book that I've written with Vasili Mitrokhin. There are more than six chapters devoted to operations against the US "Main Adversary." There was, however, a second "Main Adversary" (even if it was described differently), and that was what Andropov and others called "ideological subversion," which, it's important to remember, was a priority target for KGB foreign as well as domestic operations. The foreign operations took some unusual forms. At the height of Euro-Communism in the mid-1970s, the KGB was engaged in an active measures campaign to discredit the main Euro-Communist leaders: Berlinguer, who was accused of shady land deals in Sardinia; Marchais, who was accurately accused of working voluntarily to build Messerschmitt planes during World War II; and Carillo, was accused of all kinds of things.

So far as the KGB was concerned, seeking to discredit every well-known dissident who managed to get to the West was a major priority—irrespective of whether the dissident's profession had, in Western terms, anything to do with politics at all. So when Rostropovich became director of the National Symphony Orchestra here in

Washington, as soon as the Center got hold of a bad review in *The Washington Post*, it was sent to residences with instructions to arrange for more, and preferably worse, reviews. At the world chess championship in the Philippines in 1978, when Viktor Korchnoi, the dissident, committed the unforgivable sin of challenging the orthodox Karpov, the KGB sent 18 operations officers to ensure that he lost. What it would take for SIS to send 18 operations officers to the Philippines, I really can't imagine—but it wouldn't be a chess championship. (U//FOUO)

The most dangerous dissidents were in the Soviet Bloc. One of the best indications, I think, of the importance which the First Chief Directorate attached to operations against them were the numbers of illegals it used to penetrate their ranks. Now it was a very simple, but unfortunately effective, technique. If people with thick Russian accents had gone off to the leaders of the Prague Spring and asked to be let into their confidence, that plainly wouldn't have worked. But illegals who posed as sympathetic German businessmen or British journalists—that worked really pretty well. In the first two months after the beginning of the Prague Spring, 15 KGB illegals posing as Westerners were posted to Prague. I don't know of any example—there is certainly none in the Mitrokhin archive—of that number of illegals being posted in such a short period of time for any operation in the West. (U//FOUO)

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files which show just how professionally they undermined democratic movements not in the West but in the East—how well, in particular, they penetrated and destabilised dissident groups within the Soviet Bloc. But by the early 1970s, the KGB had correctly identified one individual with whom they could not deal adequately: Karol Wojtyla, Cardinal Archbishop of Krakow. Together with the SB, the KGB identified a number of Wojtyla's homilies for which he could have been given 10 years in prison. But they dared not put him in jail it because of the uproar which it would cause throughout Poland (and in the West). (U//FOUO)

So what do they do? They penetrate his entourage with illegals: Gennadi Blyablin (BOGUN), who had made his reputation as an illegal in the United States but by the early 1970s was penetrating Wojtyla's entourage posing as a West German journalist newspaper photographer, and Ivan Bunyk (FILOSOV), who successfully passed himself off as a French writer. KGB active measures, however, proved powerless to undermine Wojtyla's immense moral authority. I think that the evidence of the Mitrokhin archive supports the view that the beginning of the end of the Soviet

system was the election of [Karol] Wojtyla as Pope John Paul II in 1978. The Soviet Bloc were able to contain that problem for 10 years, but never managed to resolve it. (U//FOUO)

The extraordinary amount of detail in Mitrokhin's material on the illegals, on their legends, on their real identities, on their operations in both East and West, is, I think, proof of Mitrokhin's virtually unrestricted access to First Chief Directorate (FCD) files. If he could get hold of the holy of holies, the files of the illegals, it's unlikely, I think, that much of great importance in the FCD archives was held back from him. (U//FOUO)

Now to the problem of understanding Mitrokhin himself. Well, there is an easy part and a difficult part. The easy part of his motivation to understand is, I think, the fact that he was himself a secret dissident, and that the turning point for him was the same as for so many other dissidents, the same as for Gordievsky, the same as for Sakharov, the same as for Ratushinskaya, the same as for many more—in other words, the suppression of the Prague Spring. Until the suppression of the Prague Spring, it was possible to hope that “socialism with a human face” could emerge. When socialism with a human face did emerge and the tanks moved in, however, it became clear to the leading dissidents that the Soviet system was unreformable and had to be replaced. (U//FOUO)

The most difficult problem in understanding Mitrokhin's motivation, I think, is simply in understanding

why every day, for 12 years, he risked execution compiling a secret archive, which he hid beneath his dacha and which he knew might never see the light of day. To understand that, as with so many other truly tricky problems in the history of intelligence, it is necessary to move outside the history, narrowly defined, of intelligence, and, in Mitrokhin's case, into the history of Soviet literature. Mitrokhin belongs to a tradition of Soviet writing for which there is no parallel in the West. That is to say, writers who were willing to devote all their creative energies to producing books which might never be published. And those writers include, I think, some the greatest novelists of the 20th century. (U//FOUO)

Just two examples. My own particular nomination for the greatest novel of the 20th century—I'm not a literary critic, so my nomination is of no particular importance—is Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*, the first and so far the only book to bring together two of the most extraordinary creations of the 20th century: surrealism and Stalinism. Bulgakov was a genius. He knew that he was a genius. He also knew that that book could never be published in his lifetime, indeed that it might never be published in anybody's lifetime. Yet somehow he managed to put all his creative energies into writing that book in secret, for 12 years. And when he was on his deathbed in 1940, his widow has credibly described how he insisted that she get him out of bed one last time, and he hobbled over to the hole in the wall in which he had hidden this masterpiece. He saw that it was

still there, and he went back to his bed and died. (U//FOUO)

You cannot understand that in Western terms. It's impossible to imagine the biography of a single Western writer ending like that. It's also impossible to any Western author beginning writing like Solzhenitsyn. Now Solzhenitsyn had to wrestle not merely with the problems of writing, but with one of the greatest egos in the history of literature. For him to come to terms with the fact that the works of sublime genius, which he did not doubt that he would write, might never be read by anybody in his own lifetime was extraordinarily difficult. Solzhenitsyn describes in *The Oak and the Calf*—he's the calf butting and not denting the KGB oak—how he couldn't begin writing until he had come to terms with the fact that nobody might ever read it and realize he was a genius. "I must write," he said, "simply to ensure that the truth was not forgotten, that posterity might someday come to know of it. Publication in my own lifetime I must shut out of my mind, out of my dreams." So the manuscript of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was initially hidden, like the Mitrokhin archive, beneath a dacha, except that whereas Mitrokhin, who had no great literary pretensions, was content to hide his in a milk churn, Solzhenitsyn waited until he had enough empty champagne bottles in which to conceal the manuscript of *One Day in the Life*. (U//FOUO)

Dealing with Mitrokhin is not easy. To keep my respect for him, which is great and sincere, I have coined

the following platitude: "Only a tiny minority of really difficult people are heroes. But a surprisingly large proportion of heroes are really difficult people." Mitrokhin is a really difficult person, but he is also a hero. And the Western media, corroded as it is by the cynicism of the age, simply cannot imagine what it might be like to risk your life everyday for 12 years (really 20 years in Mitrokhin's case), for something that you believe in. That concept is beyond the imagination of most Western media.

What did he produce during his final 12 years in the FCD archives? His private archive has an astonishingly global coverage. Well, not every European country is there. There is nothing about Lichtenstein, for example, and nothing about Andorra. But there is some very interesting stuff on San Marino and on Luxembourg, and, as volume two will show, there is material on almost every country in Latin America. So his archive is extraordinary in its geographic range, intentionally global in its coverage. Chronologically, it goes from the founding of the Cheka right up to the eve of Gorbachev. Any attempt to summarize its remarkably diverse contents now is impossible, and I'm not going to try. But I would like to raise just a few of the problems posed by the archive: collection-analysis, and the current significance of Mitrokhin's material.

First, KGB intelligence collection. I think the biggest remaining mystery concerns SIGINT operations. We know that the volume of SIGINT was enormous—that from the

1950s onwards there was probably never a year in which the KGB forwarded fewer than 100,000 diplomatic decrypts to the Central Committee. (How many were read is another matter.) We know that in 1960 it was decrypting a significant amount of the diplomatic traffic of 51 nations, and that by 1967 the total had risen to 72, and probably kept on rising. Mitrokhin, alas, had no access to the decrypts themselves, which are presumably in the archives of the Eighth and the Sixteenth Directorates. But he noted important material on the assistance given by both the First and the Second Chief Directorates to SIGINT operations. Some of the biggest Cold War KGB successes appear to have been SIGINT operations against continental NATO powers. The methodology of HUMINT support for SIGINT collection, which you already know, was relatively straightforward but, the Mitrokhin archive suggests, even more effective than maybe we had realized. It had two main aspects. First, the penetration of Western foreign ministries by the First Chief Directorate. Second, the penetration of the Moscow embassies by the Second Chief Directorate (often in FCD files). If there was a Western embassy in Moscow that was never penetrated, I'm not aware of its identity. There's time for only one or two examples. (U//FOUO)

The KGB's longest serving French agent seems to have been a cipher clerk in the Quai d'Orsay, code-named JOUR. He was recruited in 1945 during the period when the French Communist Party took part in postwar coalition governments. Thirty years later, in the mid-1970s,

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JOUR still seems to have been regarded as the KGB's most valuable French agent—he got a bigger New Year's bonus than any of the others, and that's perhaps one indication. At the beginning of the 1980s, he's still active, still recruiting new agents among his fellow cipher clerks and secretarial staff. As we now know, France was—unintentionally—conducting open diplomacy so far as the Soviet Union was concerned for a significant part of the Cold War. As recently as the early 1980s, all the diplomatic traffic between the Quai d'Orsay and its Moscow Embassy was read. And Mitrokhin's material suggests that the French Embassy was even more penetrated than we previously realized. The Italian equivalent of JOUR was also a foreign ministry employee and probably the KGB's longest serving Italian agent. The Italian Embassy in Moscow was even more successfully penetrated than the French. (U//FOUO)

One other aspect of intelligence collection on which there's much material in the Mitrokhin archive concerns HUMINT operations in the United States. There's a striking contrast between political intelligence and S&T collection. Political intelligence operations in the United States during the Cold War were not very successful by two comparative standards—first, the

extraordinary success of such operations during the wartime Roosevelt administration, and, second, the much greater Cold War success against most other NATO members. What was strikingly successful throughout the Cold War was S&T collection in the United States. A majority of the scientific and technological intelligence collected by the KGB actually came from the United States or American targets abroad. Many major American defense contractors were penetrated at some stage by the KGB. Some also had their fax communications intercepted. In 1975, the KGB had 77 active agents and 44 confidential contacts working against American S&T targets (not all of them in the United States). (U//FOUO)

The second general point that I'm still wrestling with—and I would welcome any help—concerns KGB intelligence assessment. In many ways, that's the biggest gap in the Mitrokhin archive. There are remarkably few assessments, for two reasons. First, for much of Soviet history, there *were* remarkably few assessments. Until the Andropov era, what the KGB thought of as an assessment was simply a compilation of relevant bits of classified information, which was just assembled in a way that they hope won't express any kind of opinion, because to do so might offend the policymaker, and in the Stalin era, shorten the life expectancy of the analyst. (U//FOUO)

One of the things that I gradually realized working with Mitrokhin is that he still has that kind of mindset. We'd agreed to do a book

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together, but a year or so on he told me that I was the editor, and I gradually understood that what he meant by that was that I was to do what a KGB analyst would have done in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s. That is to say, I was simply supposed to produce compilations of various bits and pieces that he had put together. The idea that it might be necessary to put these in context, the idea that it might be necessary to write a critical analytical history, was beyond him. It was an idea that he could not grasp because it was beyond the mindset of the KGB in which he grew up. KGB assessment for much of the Cold War was often overestimated in the West. Who can any longer doubt that Soviet leaders, so far as political intelligence is concerned, would have been far better off throughout the Cold War reading and believing major Western newspapers, than believing what the KGB told them? (U//FOUO)

Now for the current implications of Mitrokhin's material. As far as I'm concerned, one of the big surprises of the last ten years has been the amount of effort that the SVR has gone to in order to burnish the history of Soviet foreign intelligence. It would have been very easy for them to back off a bit and say, "Look, most of the people in the KGB First Chief Directorate were very able intelligence officers. Most of them were working for what they saw as patriotic reasons. But times have changed, and we now need to look at what they were doing in a different way." Not at all. I have not detected any sign of a very different perspective in any of the official histories of the

SVR—which nowadays includes a CD-ROM with an interesting section on the "Magnificent Five" from Cambridge University. The only thing that I think really distinguishes what the SVR has to say about KGB foreign intelligence from what the KGB had to say about KGB foreign intelligence during the Cold War was that the SVR now publishes much of it. The six-volume official history, of which four volumes so far have been published, is devoted to the simplistic proposition that First Chief Directorate officers—almost all of them, it seems, *chevaliers sans peur et sans reproche*—"honorably and unselfishly did their patriotic duty to Motherland and people." And, of course, in the SVR's cosmetic version of KGB history, they had no part in the abuse of human rights, no part in the persecution of dissidents. What the Mitrokhin archive demonstrates, by contrast, is that they had a central part. Some of the main directives on operations against ideological subversion in the 1970s were jointly signed by the heads of the First, Second, and Fifth Directorates. So the real KGB archive blows out of the water much of the version of KGB history now being peddled by the SVR. (U//FOUO)

A second aspect of the current significance of the Mitrokhin material: I like to think that the SVR has been spending a lot of time on damage assessment recently. I

immodestly like to think that I may be partly responsible. Now, what's my reason for thinking that? Well, one of the many files which Mitrokhin noted was the file on John Barron's first book on the KGB, published in 1974. So we now know the number of damage assessments that book led to. It led to no less than 370. It also led to active measures to discredit Barron as far afield as Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan. I would feel hurt if there weren't current attempts in Afghanistan to portray me as a Zionist or if our book had not produced even more damage assessments than Barron's.

I'm also offended by the thought that Vyacheslav Trubnikov may have been replaced as head of the SVR by the time the second volume comes out. I'd like him to be around when it appears. Volume two begins with a chapter entitled "Bridgehead" (AVANPOST, the new codeword which the KGB adopted for Cuba, two years after Castro's rise to power), but it also has a chapter on the Indian subcontinent. That is where Trubnikov made his reputation; he will find some interesting material on his own operations. (U//FOUO)

Finally, I hope, very modestly, that I may have had a negative effect on SVR recruitment. It seems to me to go without saying that any foreign intelligence agency anywhere in the world—yours, theirs, ours—in order to keep the loyalty of its current agents, in order to recruit new agents, needs to be able to persuade them that it can keep their secrets—not simply for a year or so, but into their retirement so that

their declining years are not disturbed by media enquiries about their careers with the KGB. The SVR can no longer do that and expect to carry real conviction. It knows that, thanks to Mitrokhin, there is almost nobody who worked for Soviet intelligence at any point between the 20th of December 1917 and the eve of the Gorbachev era, who can be abso-

lutely certain that their secrets are still safe. Anyone who is nowadays working for the SVR, or considering working for the SVR, is well advised to ask themselves the following question—and if they are not already asking themselves this question, may I modestly suggest you put the question to them. The question is this: If the current head of the SVR, Vyacheslav Trubnikov,

was unable to protect his own secrets, do you think the SVR can protect yours? And the tentative answer, which I invite you to put to those who are already working or considering working for the SVR, is the following: “Probably not, guys.” (U//FOUO)

Thank you very much. (U)

