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Soviet Tells of Afghan Expulsion of U.S. Diplomat

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MOSCOW, April 28 — The Soviet Union has asserted that a United States diplomat expelled two weeks ago from Afghanistan was snared in a counterintelligence operation that had been sending bogus information about Afghanistan to the Central Intelligence Agency.

When Afghanistan announced on April 11 that Richard S. Vandiver, a third secretary at the United States Embassy in Kabul, was being expelled for spying, the State Department rejected the statement as having "no substance whatever."

However, a detailed account appearing in the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia has asserted that Mr. Vandiver was a C.I.A. agent and that he was duped into thinking that an Afghan citizen recruited during a visit to the United States was relaying valuable information about Afghanistan's guerrilla war, the movements of its leaders and other matters. According to the Soviet account, the operation passed false information to the C.I.A. for nine months.

In fact, Izvestia said, the Afghan contact, identified as Abdul Majid, was a double agent planted on the C.I.A. by Afghanistan's security services "to expose the dirty face of C.I.A. provocations." Since the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, its military and security apparatus has been controlled from Moscow.

The Izvestia account, published two days after the expulsion, did not say why the Afghans had curtailed a purportedly successful counterintelligence operation by expelling Mr. Vandiver. Western diplomats here cautioned against accepting the Izvestia version at face value, saying that it could be part of a Soviet effort to recoup from damage done by a successful United States infiltration of the Afghan Government.

The diplomats said they had no inside knowledge of the affair. However, they said it was theoretically possible that Mr. Majid, the Afghan citizen in the case, had been successfully recruited by the C.I.A. and was later caught, whereupon the Soviet experts who oversee Afghanistan's intelligence operations could have tried to reduce the damage by saying Mr. Majid had been a double agent all along.

Photo of Vandiver Published

The Izvestia report was accompanied by photographs of Mr. Vandiver, who appeared to be in his late 20's, and of espionage equipment that he was said to have passed to Mr. Majid.

According to the Soviet paper, the Af-

ghan security services mounted the operation against a background of intensive efforts by the C.I.A. to infiltrate the Afghan Government.

"In recent years, the United States special services did not ignore a single Afghan citizen making a trip to the United States," the paper said. "After a period of surveillance and soundings, a visitor would be approached with an offer to cooperate with the C.I.A. on favorable terms."

Izvestia identified Mr. Majid as a "security service operative" who posed as a "well-placed government official" and went to the United States for medical treatment. The paper said that on arrival in Los Angeles he was almost immediately approached by C.I.A. people who offered to pay his medical costs in return for his agreeing to spy.

After heart surgery, Mr. Majid was said to have been required to make good on the C.I.A. "investment" forthwith. "A mere two days after his discharge from the clinic, Majid was at work again," Izvestia said. "He was spirited to the C.I.A. office in Los Angeles for a polygraph test, which failed to catch him off guard. He passed the test without losing his composure and was thereupon turned over to a certain 'John,' who made no effort to conceal the fact that he was a professional spy working at the American Embassy in Kabul."

The Soviet paper asserted that "John," proved to be Mr. Vandiver.