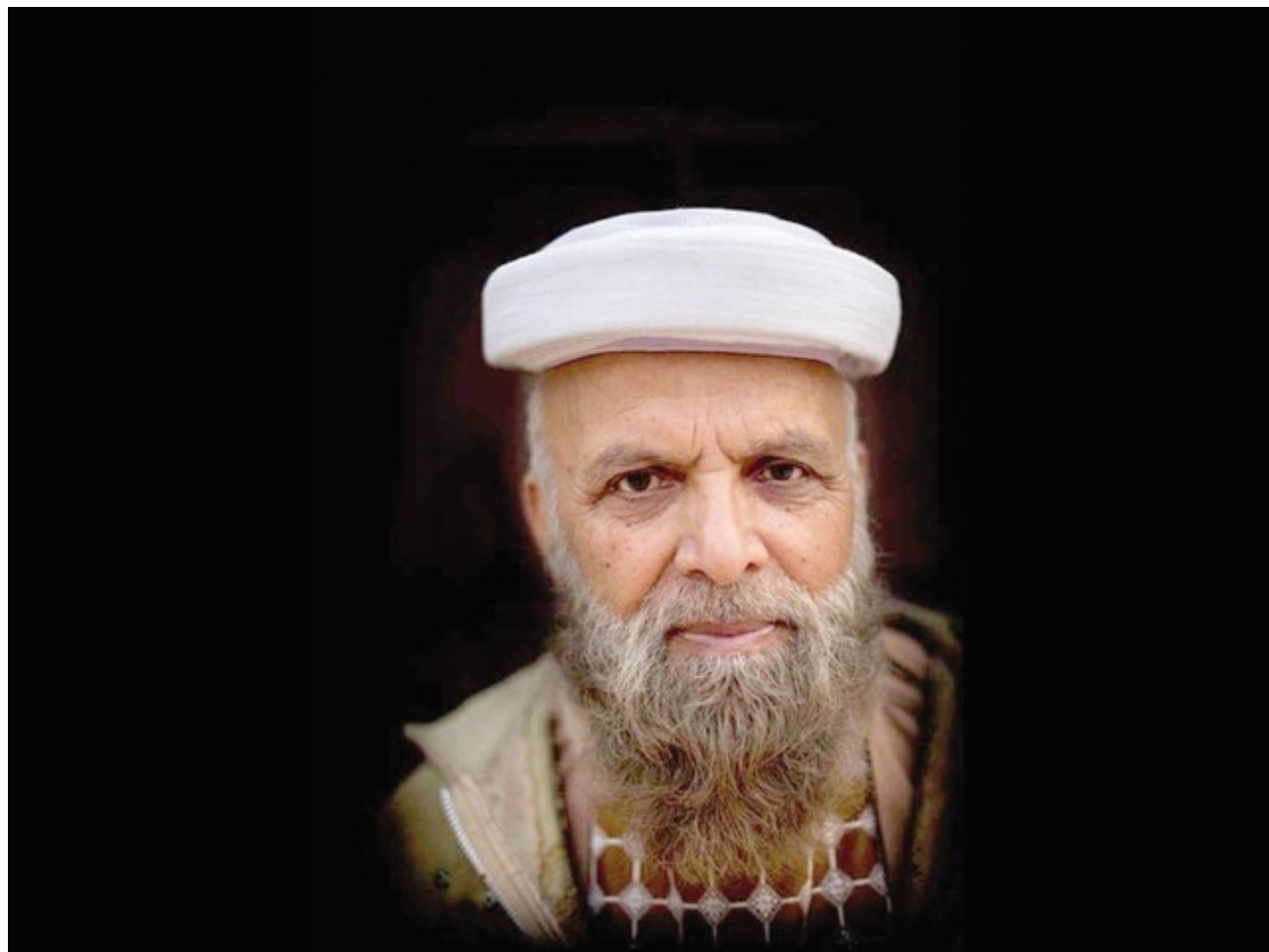


Brigadier Yasub Dogar the author of the article



Late Colonel Imam , A man of action



Symbol of SSG

Brigadier Yasub Dogar was one of the outstanding professionals of Pakistan Army . Thus keeping on line with Pakistan Army's system of promoting mediocres he did not become a general.

He also served in key command , staff and intelligence assignments .

He had a long and deep association with the Afghan war and knew all key Afghan Mujahideen figures .

A.H Amin Blog
Courtesy of Brigadier Dogar
<http://low-intensity-conflict-research.blogspot.com/>

Brigadier Yasub Dogar sips
tea with the Legendary Jalaluddin
Haqqani



A.H Amin Blog



At the masoulem of Ahmad Shah Massoud with an old Parchami
He has shared his memories of Colonel Imam
here in this article.

All major Afghan groups in the Afghan war since 1978 have some state sponsor ! When I met some very senior Khalqis and Parchamis in Russia in 1995-96 I discovered that more than 50 % of so called Mujahids had been converted secretly by the Soviet GRU or Afghan KHAD !



All the Mujahideen were trained by the ISI till at least 1992 ! This included Hekmatyar , Massoud, Rabbani ,Gillani ,Mullah Omar etc.



A.H Amin Blog
<http://low-intensity-research.blogspot.com/>

Ahmad Shah Massoud and Raheem Wardag meet the ISI

A.H Amin Blog

Pervez Musharraf

Ejaz Akram

Salman
One of the major Ustaads



By 1992 when the so called Mujahideen captured Kabul ,or rather when Kabul was handed over to them by design ,the Northern Alliance was a Russian controlled show ! The Russians had won at least politically !

In 2005 Kabul Times acknowledged on its front page that Ahmad Shah Massoud had been trained by the Pakistani intelligence !



Visiting Panjsher with a Parchami friend who fought against the so called Mujahids earlier

Post 9/11 Afghanistan is far more complicated than any other country in the grip of guerrilla war .

COL IMAM AS I KNEW

by

Brigadier General Yasub Dogar (Retired)

One of the direct participants of the Afghan War from 1978 till 2001

I had known Sultan Amir later on Col Imam since mid-1966. I had been commissioned about 6 months earlier than him. However, my unit Guides Infantry FF (formerly Queen Victoria's own) came to Lahore as a result of pull back of forces due to Tashkent Accord in 1966 about the time he was commissioned in the 3rd Pathans (FF).

Both of us young and energetic, plunged into the lives of young officers of that time which was divided in training and sports events, assaulting Xing water obstacles exercises. Even evenings were devoted to regimental dinner and guest nights, leaving very little time for fun and frolic. Only on Sundays one could indulge 'non-training events'. Most of us made up for our sleeplessness of the previous six days of the week on Sundays.

In December 1970 both of us found ourselves competing for selection into the elite SSG (Special Services Group). I must have just crawled through but Sultan Amir passed through the three days of gruelling selection tests with flying colours. Only 24 officers were selected from the large number of officers who had volunteered for the SSG.

The basic Commando Course started in early 1971. It was here we discovered the real Sultan Amir. Originally designed by the US Special Forces instructors, it was considered as one of the toughest courses in Pakistan if not

of other modern armies. He would carry the heaviest load to farthest distance not asking for relief or respite till one of us felt that we are not being fair to him. He was the most helpful among all of us, willing to carry anyone else's belongings though he was dead tired himself because of carrying his own weight, weapons, ammunition and other such items. After 25-30 miles night marches over the most rugged terrain, when we would just slump down he would run around to see our hideout, gather fire wood, cook food and see to the security drills of the hideout etc. It was here that his real leadership qualities came out.

A few days before we were to graduate from the course, he was with us in setting a record of crossing the Mangla Lake at its widest, approximately swimming 6 miles both ways in 2 hours and 45 minutes. This record remains unbeaten till today. He along with Brig Akram, later Commander SSG, came out with the highest grade in that course.

He was posted to the elite Tipu Company and I went over to 2 Commando Brigade (SSG). During the Dec 1971 war he had infiltrated behind the Indian troops in the Desert Sector and laid a blocking position. Unfortunately the Pakistani ground offensive just petered out. It goes to his credit that although lost, hungry and forsaken he was able to safely extricate along with his troops. By the end of 1973 he had undergone the US Special Forces Course at Fort Bragg along with Psychological Operations Course. His visit to the US was to bring about a marked change in him; appreciating their training methodology while criticising

the materialistic way of life that he saw there. Meanwhile, as the OC Parachute Training School he had also become a jump master with golden ensign (over 100 jumps).

We went up our career ladders, commanding our parent battalions and landed back together in 1976. I was the Commanding Officer (officiating) and he as the Second in Command. We went through hectic training, exercise, operations, etc. together. During this period we were involved in training of the Mujahedeen on a small scale courtesy General Naseerullah Khan Babar who was the architect of the forward policy and had advised Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to be proactive along the Durand Line and payback in the same coin for what the Afghans were doing in NWFP in particular. Promoted to the rank of Lt Col he commanded his Paltan and landed in the Afghan cell of the ISI in early 80's and was to become a larger than life legend. His stay there was to also change his earlier outlook towards life as well as profession. It was here that he adopted the nom de guerre of Col Imam which became a world famous identity.

Imam went after his job with single-minded devotion. Firstly, training the Afghan Mujahedeen and later leading them into operations against the Soviet troops. The animosity among Afghan groups was so great that Ahmad Shah Masoud and Hikmatyar killed more of each other's cadres than the Russians did. Without, belittling the efforts of the Mujahedeen it was the immense efforts of this small group of officers and men in coordinating operations inside Afghan which finally resulted in the Soviet withdrawal.

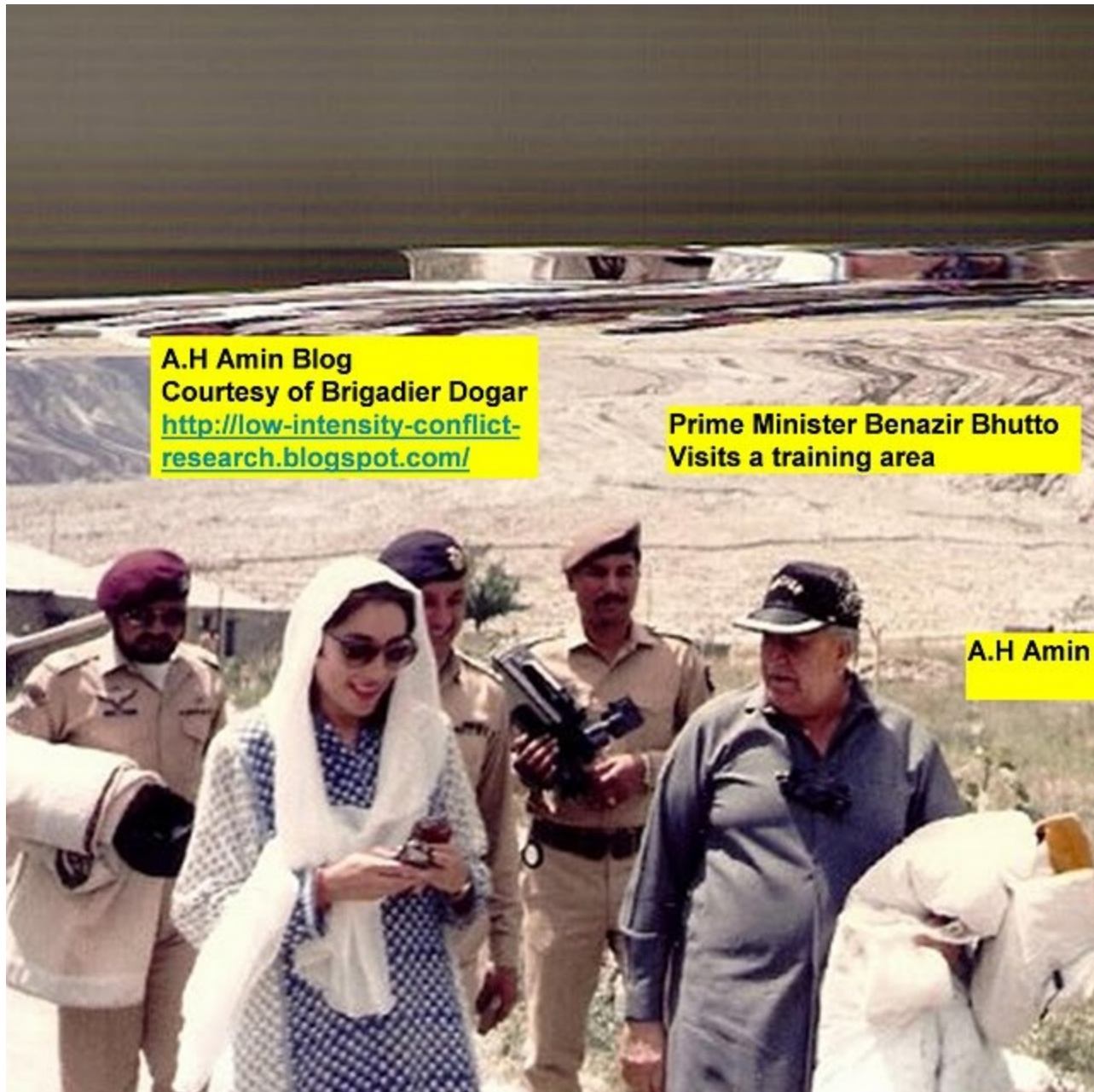
Imam had a low opinion about the operational capability of the Russian forces except the Spetnaz. He had a (healthy) high regard for them and thought that they were among the best Special Forces in the world. He always took pride in being the first stone in the dismemberment of the Evil Empire.

He was one of ISI operators who stayed the longest, went the deepest and earned total respect of the Mujahedeen for his operational handling, tact and coordination. This was also the most dangerous period with Soviet gunships ruling the sky with total air superiority, making any moves by Mujahedeen very difficult particularly by day. However Charlie Wilson's effort bore fruits and the induction of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles severely challenged the Soviet air superiority. Very few people know or understand that most difficult period. Were it not for the timely induction of these SAMs Dr Najibullah might have been still around. At the same time he was not without his detractors. While handing over the Afghan desk to me, my predecessor Gen Afzal Janjua remarked that one of the biggest worry he had was the personal security of Imam. He was apprehensive that Gulbadin Hikmatyar (GB) may eliminate him for his patronage of Akhunzada Nasim the leader of the Mujahedeen in Helmand Province who was vehemently anti GB. During my stay as the Head of the Afghan desk I too had to ensure that they do not come into each other's domain.

The Peshawar Accord of 1992 owed itself to hectic work of pushing the Mujahedeen leaders round the clock to

come out with a solution. Prince Turki Al Faisal Head of Saudi intelligence was also there to pressurize the Afghan leaders. However it was handful of people including Imam who utilized their friendship, influence, charm or arms twisting abilities to force the Afghan leaders to come out with an accord. Although not to the full satisfaction of Iranian diplomats waiting in line to exercise their own influence on future of Afghanistan. The efforts to bring out an accord were by itself one of the major achievements of ISI. Till the last moments there were hiccups and a possibility of its being sabotaged by many players who felt they were not being allowed their part in the game.

The Mujahedeen Government led by Hazrat Mujadadi was installed in April 1992. Most of our work in operations had finished. I asked for a posting out while Imam stayed there till his retirement. Afghanistan remained in a state of civil war even after the installation of the Mujahedeen Government. It was the period of the warlords, Turan Ismael in Herat, Gul Agha in Kandahar, Rashid Dostum Uzbek at Mazar I Sharif and the Ahmed Shah Massoud in Punjsher Valley and other Tajik areas. The Central Government was confined to parts of Kabul only.



A.H Amin Blog
Courtesy of Brigadier Dogar
<http://low-intensity-conflict-research.blogspot.com/>

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto
Visits a training area

A.H Amin

The Pakistan Foreign Service officers were not interested or keen in serving in a turbulent Afghanistan particularly after the assault on Pak Embassy and drubbing of our diplomats in Kabul. Col Imam came in handy and was appointed as Pakistan's Counsel General at Herat. Having very good personal relations with Turan Ismael and

his brother, he went after his job with gusto. There is no record of Imam having strayed beyond his official responsibility and interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. However his personal friendship with so many of them does not rule out his influence over them. As a Counsel General Imam strengthened these friendships further. He was also target of kidnapping and assassination more than once. Probably his detractors wanted to shoot two birds with one shot i.e. embarrass Pakistan besides eliminating him.

The Pakistan Government during this period was conceiving its own plan for opening up Central Asian Republics through over land routes through Afghanistan. His location at Herat and Kandahar was ideally suited for facilitating this purpose. The Interior Minister Gen Baber was particularly very keen though some saner elements had advised against this adventure. Unfortunately the very first convoy led by Imam got mired in the intra Afghan feuds and was made hostage. The timely arrival of the Taliban saved Imam and the convoy from annihilation. The arrival of the Taliban in 1996 onwards was a home grown affair in Afghanistan though it was laid at the doors of the Pakistani establishment. Imam's personal knowledge was most useful in establishing contact and ultimately recognizing the Taliban. This was done somewhat prematurely and without the input of the foreign office. One of the key figures of Charlie Wilson's war, he was personally known to everyone who mattered, from Charlie Wilson to the bigwigs in Pakistan, his input was considered vital in policy formulations in those crucial years.

Till the last he remained an admirer of the Taliban and prided in having been Mullah Omar's instructor. We had heated discussions on the subject particularly after the destruction of the largest Buddha's statue at Bamyán. However it was difficult to convince Imam. He basked in the limelight he was getting as mentor of Taliban. His impressive, tall and handsome looks with a white turban did knock off some pretty journalists. He also had a knack of impressing people with his candid and frank opinion particularly on the future of American occupation in Afghanistan. He felt that more innocent Afghans had been killed by the US forces – called euphemistically as collateral damage - than the Russians did. Understanding Afghan psyche he believed that the time and space was on the side of the locals.

Lastly what ultimately happened to Col Imam is the most difficult question to be answered by anyone close to him. His last public appearance was the marriage of my daughter on 5th of March 2010. A few days later he was apparently kidnapped by the Punjabi Taliban known as Asian Tigers on a visit to Waziristan along with Khaled Khawaja and Asjad Qureshi a British Pakistani journalist. Imam had earlier told me that during President Karzai's last call on President Musharraf Karzai had complained that rouge elements of ISI under Col Imam were training the Afghan Taliban. Imam was called upon by his old Directorate where he told them that if he was training them then they would surely know it because nothing remains hidden from the plethora of Intelligence agencies for long.

He was probably lured into coming to the tribal belt by one of the foreign funded Taliban groups with the aim of finding out what was ISI or Imam's linkages with the Afghan Taliban. When nothing came out he had to be eliminated otherwise the game would be up.

The incredible story of arrest of Raymond Davis and Imam's purported execution by the Pakistani Taliban soon after seems to be interwoven and interlinked somewhere. It also gives credence to the perception in Pakistan's establishment of Pakistani Taliban being a tool in the pay of distant paymasters as part of the new great game. It will remain a mystery till his remains are found, DNA tested and given a proper Islamic burial. His friends, colleagues and lastly his family will miss his colourful personality for a long time to come. It is very difficult to fill such vacuum.

***Brig (Retd) Yasub Ali Dogar, Former Head of
Afghan Desk***

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A.H Amin

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/21693873/Indo-Pak-Wars-1947-71-A-STRATEGIC-AND-OPERATIONAL-ANALYSIS-BY-A-H-AMIN>