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Background of Hafizullah Amin

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"Background of Hafizullah Amin", 1999, Wilson Center Digital Archive, A. A. Lyakhovskiy's "Plamya Afgana" ("Flame of the Afghanistan veteran"), Iskon, Moscow, 1999; Translated for CWIHP by Gary Goldberg
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Summary:

A background of H. Amin's childhood, interest in politics, and political activities in Afghanistan.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

[pp. 102-3, from "Amin's Dossier", probably from GRU sources, as are the other dossiers in his books]

Hafizullah Amin, a member of a small Pushtun tribe, the Kharatai, was born into the family of an office worker in 1927 in the small town of Paghman, not far from Kabul. He lost his father early and was raised by an elder brother who was then a schoolteacher and then secretary to the president of a very large cotton company, "Spencer" (he was president of this company after the 1978 Revolution).

He graduated a higher teacher's college and the scientific faculty of Kabul University. After graduation from the University he worked as an instructor, deputy director, then director of the "Ibn Sina" Kabul Lycee. In 1957 he went to the US to further his education where he received a master's degree. After return to Afghanistan he taught for some time at Kabul University, again occupied the post of director of the "Ibn Sina" Lycee, and then was director of the higher teacher's college and chief of the department of primary education of the Ministry of Education. During this period H. Amin had a reputation as a Pushtun nationalist.

In 1962 again went to the US to prepare and defend a dissertation. He had begun active political work by this time. In 1963 he was elected chairman of the federation of Afghan students in the US; he was expelled from the US for his activity in [the federation] not long before completing work on his dissertation.

After his return to Afghanistan during the period of preparation for the founding congress of the PDPA (1965) he established close ties with N. M. Taraki and took an active part in the work of the congress. During the split in the PDPA he firmly supported Taraki, winning his [Taraki's] personal sympathies and becoming his closest associate.

On Taraki's recommendation in 1967 he was made a member of the CC PDPA "Khalq". However, after a conflict with T. Badakhshi the January 1968 plenum of the CC PDPA demoted him from a member to a candidate member [for] departing from the principles of internationalism. In the plenum's decision it was written that he is described as a person "known from his past public life for fascist traits and associated with highly-placed functionaries with those same qualities."

In 1969 Amin was elected a deputy of the lower house of parliament. He used the parliamentary forum to sharply criticize the monarchy. After M. Daud came to power and right up to the military coup of 27 April 1978 he was no longer in government service, being completely involved in Party and political work. This aided the growth of his authority and influence in the "Khalq" faction.

In the summer of 1977 he was elected a member of the united CC PDPA and at the same time was the leader of the Khalq military organization of the PDPA in the army (after the Party united, the military organizations of the "Khalq" and "Parcham" operated separately). After the arrest of PDPA leaders in April of 1978, he led the direct preparations for the armed attack by the army against the M. Daud regime.

Having come to power, the PDPA appointed Amin Deputy Prime Minister and DRA Minister of Foreign Affairs by decision of the Revolutionary Council. He was elected a member of the Politburo and a member of the Secretariat, and after the removal of A. Kadyr from the post of Minister of Defense, he was authorized to "assist N. M. Taraki in carrying out the functions of Minister of Defense". All the weight of power was really in the army.

Amin gradually concentrated the hands-on work of party organization and government policy in his hands and established complete control over the operations

of the security agencies. The unlimited trust of Taraki and his outstanding personal qualities facilitated his rise. Amin is marked by great energy, a businesslike nature, a desire to get to the heart of the issue, and firmness in his views and actions. He also has the talent of attracting people to him who have subordinated themselves to his influence. In conversations he is precise, brief, and has a good memory. He is able to win his interlocutor over to his side.

Using his influence, he brought relatives and people personally devoted to him into the PDPA and the government bureaucracy. He knows English fluently, does not smoke, and does not abuse alcoholic beverages.

He is married and has seven children.

[Source: A. A. Lyakhovskiy's "Plamya Afgana" ("Flame of the Afghanistan veteran"), Iskon, Moscow, 1999; Translated for CWIHP by Gary Goldberg]