Bearden is a former 30 year senior officer of CIA’s clandestine service and Risen is a *New York Times* investigative reporter. *The Black Tulip* covers CIA’s covert operations in Afghanistan to defeat the Soviets. The heart of this fascinating book is the intelligence battle between the CIA and the KGB. In particular, from the mid-1980s on when KGB penetrations of CIA Aldrich Ames and the FBI Robert Hanssen wrought terrible damage on a carefully built constellation of CIA penetrations – moles – inside the KGB and GRU military intelligence and important Soviet government institutions and ministries. With inside information and details from both sides, this is a revealing account of some of the great Cold War cases run by CIA for many years under the eyes of the KGB. It also relates the tragedies that followed the betrayal of these assets by Ames and Hanssen.

This book is a fine read, and even the contributions from *The New York Times* are quite worthwhile. In essence the author, MiltBeardon, wrote the core of the book, from his experiences with the Soviet Division in the Directorate of Operations at the CIA, and in Afghanistan and Pakistan driving the Soviets in Afghanistan. The author has very capably exploited a number of former KGB and GRU officers whose recollections round out the story.

This is not, by any means, a complete story. Several other books to be posted in this blog add considerable detail to a confrontation that spanned the globe for a half-century. Yet, while it barely scratches the surface, this book is both historical and essential in understanding two facts that Afghanistan was the beginning of the end for USSR and CIA made it happen, once invigorated by President Ronald Reagan and DCI William Casey.
It may not be immediately apparent to the casual reader, but that is the most important story being told in this book: how the collapse of the Soviet effort in Afghanistan ultimately led to the collapse of Soviet authority in East Germany, in the other satellite states, and eventually to the unification of Germany and the survival of Russia as a great state but no longer an evil empire.

There are two other stories in this book, and both are priceless. The first is a tale of counterintelligence failure across the board within both the CIA and the FBI. The author excels with many insider perspectives and quotes, ranging from his proper and brutal indictment of then DCI Stansfield Turner for destroying the clandestine service, to his quote from a subordinate, based on a real-world case, that even the Ghanians can penetrate this place.

He has many lessons learned from the Howard and Ames situations, including how badly the CIA handled Howard’s dismissal, how badly CIA handled Yuchenko, to include leaking his secrets to the press, how badly both CIA and FBI handled the surveillance on Howard, with too many new guys at critical points of failure; and most interestingly, how both DCI Casey and CIA counterintelligence chiefs Gus Hathaway and his deputy Ted Price refused to launch a serious hunt for Ames and specifically refused to authorize polygraphs across the board although Ames beat a scheduled polygraph later. The author’s accounting of the agent-by-agent losses suffered by the CIA as Howard, Ames, and Hansen took their toll, is absolutely gripping.
The second story is that of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and how the anti-Soviet jihad nurtured by America and Pakistan ultimately turned back on both countries. Milt Bearden’s novel, *The Black Tulip*, is a wonderful and smoothly flowing account in novelized terms. From the author’s point of view, it was Afghanistan, not Star Wars that brought the Soviet Union to its knees. The author provides the reader with really superb descriptions of the seven key Afghan warlord leaders; of the intricacies of the Pakistani intelligence service, which had its own zealots, including one who launched jihad across in to Uzbekistan without orders; and how the Stingers, then anti-armor, and then extended mortars. In the novel, there is a combinations of Geographical Information System computers and satellite provided coordinates for Soviet targets, all 21st century equipment that was quickly mastered by the Afghan warriors which all helped turn the tide. As America continues to fail in its quest to reconstruct the road of Afghanistan, having severely misunderstood the logistics and other obstacles, one of the book’s sentences really leaps out:

…the supply chain to the rebels needed more mules than the world was prepared to breed.(BT: 17)

This book is concerned with intelligence, US-Soviet relations, Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Saudi funding of terrorism. It is a finely crafted personal contribution from someone who did hard time in the CIA, and made an enormous personal contribution, in partnership with the hundreds of CIA case officers, reports officers, all-source analysts, and especially CIA paramilitary officers including Nick Pratt and Steve Cash, forever Marines.
The *Black Tulip* is a provocative and suspenseful work of fiction that centers around the C.I.A.'s actual effort to kick perestroika into high gear by assisting the Afghanistan resistance with its struggles against Russia in the mid 1980s. Lucidly written by Milt Bearden, a C.I.A. veteran of 30 years who has spent considerable time in Pakistan and Afghanistan, *The Black Tulip* offers a fascinating and authentic insider's view of international espionage, and also packs a tremendous punch of exciting, fast-paced action and well-drawn characters.

Set in the treacherous mountains of Afghanistan and the equally hazardous headquarters of the CIA Operations Directorate in Washington, The Black Tulip is a fast-paced thriller, based on real events, by the legendary spy who masterminded the plot to arm Afghan freedom fighters in their holy war against the Soviets. A longtime veteran of the CIA, Bearden knows the tricks of the trade – the price of honour, the bonds of blood and the enduring lure of retribution.


In the beginning there Alexander Fannin is with us whereas in the last chapter the readers observe Gromov, who wanted arrangements to be just right. The body of hapless minesweeper had been quietly carried across the bridge before the press had time to reason that his blanket-wrapped from the last Russian soldier killed in the ten-year war.

In the center of the bridge, a lone Soviet tank had pulled to a halt. The diminutive figure of General Boris Gromov jumped nimbly
from the turret and strode purposely over the last hundred yards towards the Soviet side of the Oxus. Near the end of the bridge, his son Maksim, a slim, awkward fourteen-year-old, greet his father with a stiff embrace and presented him with a bouquet of red carnations.

Sasha a Klimenko watched a drama from beside the press pavilion. Sasha couldn’t resist sharing one last commentary.

“Tolya, I would probably cry were I not so strong. Everything is just perfect for our Hero of Afghanistan, except somehow they screwed up on the flowers. It shouldn’t have been a dozen red carnations. A single black tulip would have been just right for our hero.” (BT: 58)

The craft of espionage, and the political clout needed to keep afloat in the game, are bared in ex-agent Bearden's promising debut, a valentine to late CIA director Bill Casey set in the late 1980s during the Soviet war in Afghanistan. Hounded by eager mole-hunter Graham Middleton, Russian-born American agent Alexander Fannin opts out of the Agency, but Casey enlists him to freelance as his cat's paw in Afghanistan, supplying the Mujahideen and planning sorties against the Russians. Capture of a Russian general's son pits Fannin against his KGB counterpart Anatoly Klimenko coincidentally a cousin, who decides to defect and helps Fannin speed Russia's exit from Afghanistan barely a tense step ahead of a KGB official with a grudge against Klimenko. Bearden soft-pedals the horrors of the war and concentrates on the string pullers from both sides as KGB and CIA field agents dodge each other and their own hierarchies as they maneuver Afghan and Russian pawns to win the game. Deft twists
and battle scenes, crisply lucid technical details, hair-trigger tension and strong characters drive the plot, but the too-sparse dialogue slows the read. Still, the mechanics of Cold War espionage have seldom been so tangible.

In the Pathan country, the presence of women and children in a village may be taken as a sure sign that the men belonging to it do not mean to fight. The fact need not of course influence the decision to destroy it. Most Taliban field commanders have never heard of international treaties on the treatment of POWs. For them, you are just infidels invading their land. Father Schall surmises that American prisoners of Taliban forces might be tortured. Milt Bearden expected that American prisoners would be killed. As this is written, Northern Alliance successes have diminished either possibility. However, the threat remains both in Afghanistan and in other parts of the world in which U.S. Forces, trained to observe the law of war, will face warriors, not soldiers. The practices of the Taliban were graphically described by Milt Bearden who retired from the CIA in 1994 after spending thirty years in Clandestine Services and directing the final years of the Agency's covert war in Afghanistan.

Bearden wrote *The Black Tulip*, based on his Afghan experiences, when he retired. Early in the novel Taliban warriors ambush four Soviet soldiers, two of whom survive the attack. One of the Taliban, Salahuddin, approaches a survivor who:

Slowly raised his hands above his head in a primordial state of submission and settled into a sitting position on his knees... Professor
of Law, The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law. Thanks to Steve Young, reference librarian, for the sources and Laurie Frasier of the faculty support staff for putting it all together.

Operation Cyclone was the code name for the United States Central Intelligence Agency CIA program to arm and finance the Afghan Mujahideen prior to and during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, from 1979 to 1989. The program leaned heavily towards supporting militant Islamic groups that were favored by the regime of Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq in neighboring Pakistan, rather than other, less ideological Afghan resistance groups that had also been fighting the Marxist-oriented Democratic Republic of Afghanistan regime since before the Soviet intervention. Operation Cyclone was one of the longest and most expensive covert CIA operations ever undertaken; funding began with $20–$30 million per year in 1980 and rose to $630 million per year in 1987. Funding continued after 1989 as the Mujahideen battled the forces of Mohammad Najibullah's PDPA during the civil war in Afghanistan 1989–1992.

In April 1978, the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan PDPA seized power in Afghanistan in the Saur Revolution. Within months, opponents of the communist government launched an uprising in eastern Afghanistan that quickly expanded into a civil war waged by Islamist guerrilla mujahideen against government forces countrywide. The Pakistani government, that under general Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq since July 1977 had started the policy of aggressive islamization, provided these rebels with covert training centers, while the Soviet Union sent thousands of military advisers to
support the PDPA government. Meanwhile, increasing friction between the competing factions of the PDPA – the dominant Khalq and the more moderate Parcham – resulted in the dismissal of Parchami cabinet members and the arrest of Parchami military officers under the pretext of a Parchami coup.

By mid-1979, the United States had started a covert program to finance the Mujahideen. President Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was later quoted as saying that the goal of the program was to induce a Soviet military intervention, but later clarified that this was a very sensationalized and abbreviated misquotation and that the Soviet invasion occurred largely because of previous U.S. failures to restrain Soviet influence. According to Eric Alterman, writing in The Nation, Cyrus Vance's close aide Marshall Shulman

"He insists that the State Department worked hard to dissuade the Soviets from invading and would never have undertaken a program to encourage it, though he says he was unaware of the covert program at the time. Indeed, Vance hardly seems to be represented at all in [Robert] Gates' recounting".

In September 1979, Khalqist President Nur Muhammad Taraki was assassinated in a coup within the PDPA orchestrated by fellow Khalq member Hafizullah Amin, who assumed the presidency. Distrusted by the Soviets, Amin was executed by Soviet Special Forces in December 1979. A Soviet-organized government, led by Parcham's Babrak Karmal but inclusive of both factions, filled the vacuum. Soviet troops were deployed to stabilize Afghanistan under
Karmal in more substantial numbers, although the Soviet government did not expect to do most of the fighting in Afghanistan. As a result, however, the Soviets were now directly involved in what had been a domestic war in Afghanistan.

At the time some believed the Soviets were attempting to expand their borders southward in order to gain a foothold in the Middle East. The Soviet Union had long had a dearth of warm water ports, and their movement south seemed to position them for further expansion toward Pakistan in the East, and Iran to the West. American politicians, Republicans and Democrats alike, feared the Soviets were positioning themselves for a takeover of Middle Eastern oil. Others believed that the Soviet Union was afraid of Iran's Islamic Revolution and Afghanistan's Islamization would spread to the millions of Muslims in the USSR.

After the invasion, President Jimmy Carter announced what became known as the Carter Doctrine: that the U.S. would not allow any other outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf. He terminated the Soviet Wheat Deal in January 1980, which was intended to establish trade with USSR and lessen Cold War tensions. The grain exports had been beneficial to people employed in agriculture, and the Carter embargo marked the beginning of hardship for American farmers. That same year, Carter also made two of the most unpopular decisions of his entire Presidency: prohibiting American athletes from participating in the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow, and reinstating registration for the draft for young males.
Following the Soviet invasion, the United States supported diplomatic efforts to achieve a Soviet withdrawal.

On 3 July 1979, Carter signed a presidential finding authorizing funding for anticommunist guerrillas in Afghanistan. Following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December Operation Storm-333 and installation of a more pro-Soviet president, Babrak Karmal, Carter announced,

"The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan is the greatest threat to peace since the Second World War".

President Reagan greatly expanded the program as part of the Reagan Doctrine of aiding anti-Soviet resistance movements abroad. To execute this policy, Reagan deployed CIA Special Activities Division paramilitary officers to equip the Mujihadeen forces against the Soviet Army. Although the CIA and Texas Congressman Charlie Wilson have received the most attention for their roles, the key architect of the strategy was Michael G. Vickers, a young CIA paramilitary officer working for Gust Avrakotos, the CIA's regional head who had a close relationship with Wilson. Vicker's strategy was to use a broad mix of weapons, tactics, logistics, along with training programs, to enhance the rebels' ability to fight a guerilla war against the Soviets. Reagan's program assisted in ending the Soviet's occupation in Afghanistan. A Pentagon senior official, Michael Pillsbury, successfully advocated providing Stinger missiles to the Afghan resistance, according to recent books and academic articles.
The program relied heavily on the Pakistani President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, who had a close relationship with Wilson. His Inter-Services Intelligence ISI was an intermediary for funds distribution, passing of weapons, military training and financial support to Afghan resistance groups. Along with funding from similar programs from Britain's MI6 and SAS, Saudi Arabia, and the People's Republic of China, the ISI armed and trained over 100,000 insurgents between 1978 and 1992. They encouraged the volunteers from the Arab states to join the Afghan resistance in its struggle against the Soviet troops based in Afghanistan.

According to Peter Bergen, writing in Holy War,

No Americans trained or had direct contact with the Mujahideen. The skittish CIA had fewer than 10 operatives in the region because it feared it would be blamed, like in Guatemala. Civilian personnel from the U.S. Department of State and the CIA frequently visited the Afghanistan-Pakistan border area during this time, and the US contributed generously to aiding Afghan refugees.

The U.S.-built Stinger antiaircraft missile, supplied to the Mujahideen in very large numbers beginning in 1986, struck a decisive blow to the Soviet war effort as it allowed the lightly armed Afghans to effectively defend against Soviet helicopter landings in strategic areas. The Stingers were so renowned and deadly that, in the 1990s, the U.S. conducted a buy-back program to keep unused missiles from falling into the hands of anti-American terrorists. This program may have been covertly renewed following the U.S.
intervention in Afghanistan in late 2001, out of fear that remaining Stingers could be used against U.S. forces in the country.

With U.S. and other funding, the ISI armed and trained over 100,000 insurgents. On 20 July 1987, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country was announced pursuant to the negotiations that led to the Geneva Accords of 1988, with the last Soviets leaving on 15 February 1989. Soviet forces suffered over 14,000 killed and missing, and over 50,000 wounded.

The U.S. government has been criticized for allowing Pakistan to channel a disproportionate amount of its funding to controversial Afghan resistance leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who Pakistani officials believed was "their man". Hekmatyar has been criticized for killing other Mujahideen and attacking civilian populations, including shelling Kabul with American-supplied weapons, causing 2,000 casualties. Hekmatyar was said to be friendly with Osama bin Laden, founder of al-Qaeda, who was running an operation for assisting Afghan Arab volunteers fighting in Afghanistan, called Maktab al-Khadamat. Alarmed by his behavior, Pakistan leader General Zia warned Hekmatyar,

"It was Pakistan that made him an Afghan leader and it is Pakistan who can equally destroy him if he continues to misbehave."

In the late 1980s, Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto, concerned about the growing strength of the Islamist movement, told President George H. W. Bush,
"You are creating a Frankenstein."

The U.S. says that all of its funds went to native Afghan rebels and denies that any of its funds were used to supply Osama bin Laden or foreign Arab Mujahideen. However, even a portion of those native Afghan rebels would form parts of the Taliban, fighting against the US military.

Civilian death and destruction from the war was considerable. Estimates of Afghan civilian deaths vary from 850,000 to 1,500,000. 5–10 million Afghans fled to Pakistan and Iran, 1/3 of the prewar population of the country, and another 2 million were displaced within the country. In the 1980s, half of all refugees in the world were Afghan.

U.S. military personnel (with civilian far right, in suit) at Rhein Main Air Base, Frankfurt, Germany, a civilian volunteer with an Afghan NGO in Germany assists a blinded Afghan Mujahid off the air stair.

Felix Ermacora, the UN Special Rapporteur to Afghanistan, said that heavy fighting in combat areas cost the lives of more than 35,000 civilians in 1985, 15,000 in 1986, and around 14,000 in 1987. R.J. Rummel, an analyst of political killings, estimated that Soviet forces were responsible for 250,000 democidal killings during the war and that the government of Afghanistan was responsible for 178,000 democidal killings. There were also a number of reports of large scale executions of hundreds of civilians by Soviet and DRA soldiers. Anti-government forces were also responsible for some casualties. Rocket
attacks on Kabul's residential areas caused more than 4000 civilian deaths in 1987 according to the UN's Ermacora.

Along with fatalities were 1.2 million Afghans disabled Mujahideen, government soldiers and noncombatants and 3 million maimed or wounded.

Irrigation systems, crucial to agriculture in Afghanistan's arid climate, were destroyed by aerial bombing and strafing by Soviet or government forces. In the worst year of the war, 1985, well over half of all the farmers who remained in Afghanistan had their fields bombed, and over one quarter had their irrigation systems destroyed and their livestock shot by Soviet or government troops, according to a survey conducted by Swedish relief experts.

The population of Afghanistan's second largest city, Kandahar, was reduced from 200,000 before the war to no more than 25,000 inhabitants, following a months-long campaign of carpet bombing and bulldozing by the Soviets and Afghan communist soldiers in 1987. Land mines had killed 25,000 Afghans during the war and another 10–15 million land mines, most planted by Soviet and government forces, were left scattered throughout the countryside. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimated in 1994 that it would take 4,300 years to remove all the Soviet land mines in Afghanistan.

A great deal of damage was done to the civilian children population by land mines. A 2005 report estimated 3–4% of the Afghan population were disabled due to Soviet and government land
mines. In the city of Quetta, a survey of refugee women and children taken shortly after the Soviet withdrawal found child mortality at 31%, and over 80% of the children refugees to be unregistered. Of children who survived, 67% were severely malnourished, with malnutrition increasing with age.

Critics of Soviet and Afghan government forces describe their effect on Afghan culture as working in three stages: first, the center of customary Afghan culture, Islam, was pushed aside; second, Soviet patterns of life, especially amongst the young, were imported; third, shared Afghan cultural characteristics were destroyed by the emphasis on so-called nationalities, with the outcome that the country was split into different ethnic groups, with no language, religion, or culture in common.

The Geneva Accords of 1988, which ultimately led to the withdrawal of the Soviet forces in early 1989, left the Afghan government in ruins. The accords had failed to address adequately the issue of the post-occupation period and the future governance of Afghanistan. The assumption among most Western diplomats was that the Soviet-backed government in Kabul would soon collapse; however, this was not to happen for another three years. During this time the Interim Islamic Government of Afghanistan (IIGA) was established in exile. The exclusion of key groups such as refugees and Shias, combined with major disagreements between the different mujahideen factions, meant that the IIGA never succeeded in acting as a functional government.
Afghan guerrillas that were chosen to receive medical treatment in the United States, Norton Air Force Base, California, 1986

Before the war, Afghanistan was already one of the world's poorest nations. The prolonged conflict left Afghanistan ranked 170 out of 174 in the UNDP's Human Development Index, making Afghanistan one of the least developed countries in the world.

Once the Soviets withdrew, US interest in Afghanistan slowly decreased over the following four years, much of it administered through the DoD Office of Humanitarian Assistance, under the then Director of HA, George M. Dykes III. With the first years of the Clinton Administration in Washington, DC, all aid ceased. The US decided not to help with reconstruction of the country, instead handing the interests of the country over to US allies Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Pakistan quickly took advantage of this opportunity and forged relations with warlords and later the Taliban, to secure trade interests and routes. The ten years following the war saw much ecological and agrarian destruction—from wiping out the country's trees through logging practices, which has destroyed all but 2% of forest cover country-wide, to substantial uprooting of wild pistachio trees for the exportation of their roots for therapeutic uses, to opium agriculture.

Captain Tarlan Eyvazov, a soldier in the Soviet forces during the war, stated that the Afghan children's future is destined for war. Eyvazov said,
"Children born in Afghanistan at the start of the war... have been brought up in war conditions, this is their way of life." (BT: 67)

Eyvazov's theory was later strengthened when the Taliban movement developed and formed from orphans or refugee children who were forced by the Soviets to flee their homes and relocate their lives in Pakistan. The swift rise to power, from the young Taliban in 1996, was the result of the disorder and civil war that had warlords running wild because of the complete breakdown of law and order in Afghanistan after the departure of the Soviets.

The CIA World Fact Book reported that as of 2004, Afghanistan still owed $8 billion in bilateral debt, mostly to Russia, however, in 2007 Russia agreed to cancel most of the debt.

While there is no evidence that the CIA had direct contact with Osama Bin Laden and US funding was directed to Afghan Mujahedin groups, critics of U.S. foreign policy consider Operation Cyclone to be substantially responsible for setting in motion the events that led to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, a view Brzezinski has dismissed. William Hartung argues that the early foundations of al-Qaeda were built in part on relationships and weaponry that came from the billions of dollars in U.S. support for the Afghan Mujahadin during the war to expel Soviet forces from that country. According to Christopher Andrew and Vasily Mitrokhin, there is no support in any reliable source for the claim that the CIA funded bin Laden or any of the other Arab volunteers who came to support the Mujahideen. Peter Bergen writes that the real problem is not that the CIA helped bin
Laden during the 1980s, but that the Agency simply had no idea of his possible significance until the bin Laden unit was set up within the CIA in January 1996.

The United States provided financial aid and weapons to the Mujahideen through Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). ISI are believed to have access to bin Laden in the past. Bin Laden met and built relations with Hamid Gul, who was a Lieutenant General in the Pakistani army and head of the ISI agency.

The craft of espionage, and the political clout needed to keep afloat in the game, are bared in ex-agent Bearden’s promising debut, a valentine to late CIA director Bill Casey set in the late 1980s during the Soviet war in Afghanistan. Hounded by eager mole-hunter Graham Middleton, Russian-born American agent Alexander Fannin opts out of the Agency, but Casey enlists him to freelance as his cat’s paw in Afghanistan, supplying the Mujahideen and planning sorties against the Russians. Capture of a Russian general’s son pits Fannin against his KGB counterpart Anatoly Klimenko coincidentally a cousin, who decides to defect and helps Fannin speed Russia’s exit from Afghanistan barely a tense step ahead of a KGB official with a grudge against Klimenko. Bearden soft-pedals the horrors of the war and concentrates on the string-pullers from both sides as KGB and CIA field agents dodge each other and their own hierarchies as they maneuver Afghan and Russian pawns to win the game. Deft twists and battle scenes, crisply lucid technical details, hair-trigger tension and strong characters drive the plot, but the too-sparse dialogue slows
the read. Still, the mechanics of Cold War espionage have seldom been so tangible.

In this debut, Bearden draws on his experience as the CIA officer in charge of the covert war in Afghanistan to craft a thriller about a former CIA officer in Afghanistan who must hook up with a KGB colonel.

Set in the treacherous mountains of Afghanistan and the equally hazardous headquarters of the CIA Operations Directorate in Washington, The Black Tulip is a fast-paced thriller, based on real events, by the legendary spy who masterminded the plot to arm Afghan freedom fighters in their holy war against the Soviets. A longtime veteran of the CIA, Bearden knows the tricks of the trade, the price of honor, the bonds of blood, and the enduring lure of retribution.

Set mostly in Afghanistan during the Soviet Union’s ill-fated invasion, a first novel by the man who ran the CIA’s covert operation there. Clearly, Bearden knows whereof he speaks and can well follow the zigs and zags of geopolitical maneuvering, not to mention having an easy familiarity with sophisticated weaponry. When he details a high-tech rescue operation on behalf of beleaguered Afghan freedom fighters, you believe every word as he convincingly captures the excitement—and terror—of war. Bearden’s swiftness and sureness of pacing draw the reader in, but good storytelling also needs alluring characters whom readers can care about—and while his story clamors for rounded, complex people, Bearden doesn’t supply them. The plot
here centers on negotiations over a captured Soviet lieutenant who turns out to be the son of the Soviet commanding general. Helping the Afghans is Alexander Fannin, half Russian, half Ukrainian, and a naturalized American. Fannin is a former CIA officer and also a dedicated idealist who’s convinced the Afghan cause is just. On the opposite side is Anatoly Klimenko, a KGB colonel who just happens to have a close tie to Fannin, the nature of which will come as a surprise to both, though perhaps less so to the alert reader. These are men of sterling character, unflinching courage, endless resourcefulness—and an unfortunate absence of warts. What Bearden’s story desperately needs is someone like a George Smiley, who can be fooled, even betrayed, and whose vulnerability will make a reader root for his survival and rejoice in his occasional triumphs. Still, a better-than-average debut thriller from a writer, next time, may be willing to swap some technological complexity for the human kind.

The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001 offers revealing details of the CIA’s involvement in the evolution of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in the years before the September 11 attacks. From the beginning, Coll shows how the CIA’s on-again, off-again engagement with Afghanistan after the end of the Soviet war left officials at Langley with inadequate resources and intelligence to appreciate the emerging power of the Taliban. He also demonstrates how Afghanistan became a deadly playing field for international politics where Soviet, Pakistani, and U.S. agents armed and trained a
succession of warring factions. At the same time, the book, though opinionated, is not solely a critique of the agency. Coll balances accounts of CIA failures with the success stories, like the capture of Mir AmalKasi. Coll, managing editor for the Washington Post, covered Afghanistan from 1989 to 1992. He demonstrates unprecedented access to records of White House meetings and to formerly classified material, and his command of Saudi, Pakistani, and Afghani politics is impressive. He also provides a seeming insider’s perspective on personalities like George Tenet, William Casey, and anti-terrorism czar, Richard Clarke (“who seemed to wield enormous power precisely because hardly anyone knew who he was or what exactly he did for a living”). Coll manages to weave his research into a narrative that sometimes has the feel of a Tom Clancy novel yet never crosses into excess. While comprehensive, Coll’s book may be hard going for those looking for a direct account of the events leading to the 9-11 attacks. The CIA’s 1998 engagement with bin Laden as a target for capture begins a full two-thirds of the way into Ghost Wars, only after a lengthy march through developments during the Carter, Reagan, and early Clinton Presidencies. But this is not a critique of Coll’s efforts; just a warning that some stamina is required to keep up. Ghost Wars is a complex study of intelligence operations and an invaluable resource for those seeking a nuanced understanding of how a small band of extremists rose to inflict incalculable damage on American soil. –Patrick O’Kelley –This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.
After retiring, Bearden published *The Black Tulip*, in which his hero, Alexander Fannin, works closely with real-life CIA director William Casey to expand US support for the Afghan warriors battling the Soviets. Early in the novel, Fannin provides Stinger missiles to the Afghans, and later he conspires with a KGB colonel to bring an end to the war. Bearden doesn’t gloss over backstabbing at the CIA, but he obviously believes in the agency and is proud of his record.

In a novel based on the author's thirty-year career with the CIA, a former CIA officer ventures into Afghanistan to support the Afghan resistance against the Soviets and finds himself caught up in an unlikely alliance with a KGB colonel.

Alexander Fannin, top operative in the Agency's Operations Directorate, is energized by the arrival of the new Director of Central Intelligence, William Casey, who wastes no time in laying ambitious plans to widen the lengthening cracks in the Evil Empire. Burrowed deep in the Kremlin is a handful of CIA agents, who, under Fannin's careful handling, carry out their betrayals of the state. But then the agents begin to fall, one by one. Are they under KGB control? Paktia province, Afghanistan, 1986: Afghan rebels ambush a group of Soviet soldiers, and hand over to Fannin the sole survivor, a young lieutenant. In this simple prisoner exchange lies the beginnings of the most daring and most personal plot of Fannin's life. Commanding the contingent of Soviet officers with whom Fannin negotiates the lieutenant's release is a KGB colonel, whose life is as haunted as any of Fannin's agents in Moscow or Kiev. Alexander dares him to enter a dangerous conspiracy, one that winds its way from Afghanistan to
Moscow to Hong Kong and puts both men outside the control of their governments.

Nobody seems to know just when and where the black tulip story originated. One credible theory traces its origins to the early spring of 1980, and the death of a Lieutenant Semyon Popov in a field near Mazar-e-Sharif. He died clutching a rare black tulip, native to northern Afghanistan. It was an exquisite flower. He had picked it himself just seconds before and was admiring it when a sniper’s bullet found his heart and ended his life. For some reason, the story goes, one of his comrades threaded the tulip into the buttonhole of the fallen soldier’s tunic, and he went home with it stuck on his chest.

Sometime later in the war, the large transports flying dead soldiers home for burial took the name of the Black Tulip, and the rare flower of Afghanistan became established in the Soviet Union as a symbol of death.

Alexander Fannin had been a natural for the CIA’s clandestine operations directorate. Born to a Russian father and Ukrainian mother, both wartime refugees from Stalin’s USSR, he spoke each language without accent, along with near-native Polish and good German. He was recruited by the agency after a stint in the army flying helicopters in Vietnam, part of the time for CIA paramilitary operations. His first few years in the agency had been nonstop excitement, and even when a confused aimlessness set in and the agency’s mission blurred at the end of the turbulent seventies, he felt certain about who he was and the value of what he was doing.
As soon as Casey was sworn in as DCI in 1981, Alexander felt renewed energy at Langley. From the start, he got on well with the flamboyant New York Lawyer who brought the political clout of the close association with the new president.

By the end of Casey’s fourth year, he and Alexander had developed an easy friendship. They charted the widening fissures in the Evil Empire from Warsaw to Moscow, and both agreed the time had come for more creative efforts as the old man called them. They began making intricate, ambitious plans for what Casey called the endgame. Then Alexander’s troubles intervened.

It started as a purely personal matter. While travelling in Asia a year earlier he happened to meet Katerina Martynova, a stunning Ukrainian woman, and fall in love.

Katerina’s parents, refugees from wartime Ukraine, had met in the tight-knit Russian expatriate community in China during the turmoil of 1945. Lara Chumakova and Michael Martynov married in Shanghai and settled down to build their lives. But war and revolution forced them to flee with their infant daughter just ahead of Mao’s armies in the last days of 1949. They resettled again, this time among a growing population of Russian and Europeans who had fled China’s chaos for the safety of the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong.

Alexander’s formal notification of his intent to marry a foreign national tripped in CIA’s computers, and cryptic references to Katerina and her family’s suspected ties to underground Ukrainian opposition networks inside the USSR scrolled out. Alexander knew
about the contacts with the Ukrainian opposition but saw no incompatibility with his work for the agency. He had made his own discreet query of the databases and thought the raw data and Katerina and her family noncontroversial; he dismissed it as the usual émigré gossip. It was manageable, he thought.

But the CIA’s chief of counterintelligence, Graham Middleton, seized on the tantalizing tidbits, seeing an opportunity to knock an adversary out of play. Middleton viewed Alexander’s quick rise as an obstacle to his own career, but most of all, Alexander’s unconventional origins offended his squeamish Ivy League sensibilities. He resented him even more after Casey arrived at Langley. Alexander, in turn, saw Middleton as a plodder, an agency royalist who hesitated to exploit the nascent weakness in the USSR.

Alexander knew that if he reported this information to the CIA, the agency would not hesitate to exploit it, and in the process put Katerina’s family at risk. He detailed his misgivings to Casey, acknowledging that he was prepared to resign quietly if the DCI thought it best. Casey instructed him to use the phrase possibly details lacking to answer the portion of CIA questionnaire covering family members of the prospective spouse who might reside in a Soviet-bloc country. And then he should sit tight and see what happened.

A line of limousines deposits diplomats, political counselors and a sprinkling of intelligence operatives at the walled compound in Khartoum as CIA station chief Milt Bearden stands inside greeting dinner guests. He wants everyone who matters in the Sudanese capital
to know precisely how he and his French-born wife, Marie-Catherine, are spending the evening.

It's all a cover, of course. As wine flows and Bearden's 35 guests feast on roasted lamb, the burly Texan in a beige linen suit slips away from the patio, heads up to his rooftop satellite communications center and launches a massive covert operation to rescue 500 Ethiopian Jews stranded in the Sudanese desert.

With Khartoum's top spies and diplomats chit-chatting under the stars, CIA operatives and Delta Force commandos lead the Falashas, as the Ethiopian Jews are known, along a trail of prearranged beacons to a desolate airstrip 200 miles southeast of the Sudanese capital.

Gusting winds fill the night with sand, leaving the Falashas' American guides -- and their boss back in Khartoum -- wondering whether this carefully choreographed rescue plan will end in disaster. Discovery would embarrass the Islamic country's rulers and endanger their regime.

But as dawn breaks, the wind stops, and the first C-130 from Frankfurt appears almost magically in the orange sky, flying low to avoid Sudanese radar. The bulky transport drops onto the runway. Delta Force commandos riding knobby-wheeled motor-trikes zoom down the cargo ramp and set out navigational beacons for the rest of the air fleet, already in flight, to home in on as they approach.

Soon, the first group of Falashas, tethered hand to hand with yellow clothesline, scamper up the cargo ramp. The plane takes off for
Israel without ever shutting down its engines, just as the next inbound C-130 appears on the horizon.

When the last C-130 loaded with Falashas flies out of the desert three hours later, a small CIA plane appears on the horizon and touches down on the desert runway. Bearden has come to collect his men. They are all back at the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum drinking champagne with the ambassador before anyone even knows the Falashas are gone. Working in the Dark

The daring 1984 rescue was but one chapter in Bearden's spy thriller of a career, a 30-year journey through the Cold War in which this archetypal operative spied on China at the end of the Cultural Revolution, dueled the KGB across four continents and presided over the CIA's last and largest covert operation of the Cold War, funneling $1 billion in U.S. arms to the Afghan Mujaheddin -- or "holy warriors" -- which helped drive the Soviet army from Afghanistan.

But his exploits were completely unknown to the public, cloaked in CIA secrecy. The only notice he ever received came in 1994, on the eve of his retirement, and it was a rude introduction to the outside world. Milt Bearden, the article in U.S. News & World Report said,

"…warned traitor Aldrich Ames that he was suspected of being a KGB mole."

The accusation was untrue and probably the work of ideological opponents within the agency itself -- Bearden had disliked Ames and had even forced him out of the Soviet-East European Division.
But that didn't stop then-CIA Director R. James Woolsey from reprimanding Bearden several months later for the way he had dealt with Ames years before his eventual arrest.

Bearden didn't particularly like the role of fall guy. The Cold War was over. The good guys had won. There was nothing to keep quiet about anymore. After 30 years in the shadows, he was ready for the light. Tricks of the Trade

Now here sits Bearden, four years later, in front of a microphone on the second floor of Barnes & Noble on M Street NW in Georgetown, arms folded across his barrel chest, the most secret of men become the most public.

Copies of his first novel, *The Black Tulip*, are piled in front of him, ready for signing. A C-SPAN camera is filming the first stop on an East Coast book tour Bearden is making with two other Random House authors.

The spymaster tonight is Jon Karp, a Random House editor. He welcomes all to what he calls The X Files' live. Bearden is joined by Charles McCarry, also a former CIA man and author of *Lucky Bastard*, a book about a presidential candidate who claims to be the illegitimate son of JFK, and Neil Gordon, author of *The Gun Runner's Daughter*, a morality play that explores the murky world of international arms trading.

Karp asks each of them to name a scandal missed by the media. Gordon, playing the role of provocateur, says U.S. arms exports. Without mentioning Bearden by name, he notes that the U.S.
government had supplied the Afghan Mujaheddin with deadly Stinger missiles.

"How do we justify spending that kind of money when my daughter is in a substandard public school?" (BT: 123)

he asks, a rhetorical Stinger aimed directly at his fellow panelist.

Bearden never flinches.

"Once you've made the decision to arm someone in conflict, you better arm them to do something more than just die with a little bit of dignity," he says. "Let's say there's 250 Stingers still out there, and we had to pay $200,000 for each of them. That's $50 million. The Cold War cost $13 trillion." (BT: 145)

But someone in the audience pursues the point, asking whether arming the Mujahedden was wise, particularly now that terrorist financier Osama bin Laden and other Arabs who joined arms with the CIA to bring down the Soviets in Afghanistan are blowing up American embassies.

To get rid of the Soviets, Bearden replies that he is not an apologist for his behavior or CIA, Bearden further says that CIA was told by every president since Jimmy Carter to go and get the Soviets out of Afghanistan. We did that, and we did that rather well.

Richard C. Holbrooke, waiting to be confirmed as President Clinton's ambassador to the United Nations, calls Bearden a rare covert operative who is at once a secret agent and an intellectual.
"Most of the people I've known doing covert operations going back to Vietnam were very much unreflective people who did what they did, good or bad," said Holbrooke, who served as ambassador to Germany during Bearden's final posting as Bonn station chief. "Milt did all that, and yet he had an intellectual, analytical ability to stand back and see it on a different level." (BT: 199)

There is more than a little irony to Bearden's most overt of second careers as novelist, newspaper pundit, television commentator and screenplay adviser to actor Robert De Niro. He's taken the actor back to his old haunts in Berlin, Moscow and Afghanistan. And he's been a fixture on television since August. That's when two bombs devastated American embassies in East Africa and the Clinton administration retaliated by aiming 75 Tomahawk cruise missiles at a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum and base camps in Afghanistan linked to bin Laden, terrain Bearden knows well.

He's in demand as a talking head precisely because he feels no need to defend the CIA. Indeed, at Barnes & Noble, he calls the targeting of the Khartoum drug factory on the basis of exceedingly tenuous ties to bin Laden a scandal.

"Too many people complete their careers with the agency and then hang around the main gate," Bearden says at the end of the evening. "I haven't been back to CIA headquarters since I retired." (BT: 210-11)

But while he's no agency apologist, he's no CIA basher, either. Part of him still loves and honors the agency, no matter how shabbily he was treated in the Ames affair. And Bearden is frank in
recognizing his lifelong commitment to take certain secrets with him to the grave, lest people lose their lives for being outed as CIA assets.

Beyond the morality of it, he has a legal obligation to keep classified information secret, and everything he writes in his new life must be cleared in advance by the CIA's publications review board.

His novel thus became a perfect device for finessing agency censors. *The Black Tulip* named after the native Afghan flower, which became a symbol of death to Soviet soldiers draws heavily on Bearden's own experience, its taut narrative moving quickly from Washington to Afghanistan to Hong Kong to Moscow. Bearden deftly blends fact with fiction, but guarantees that his description of the first Mujaheddin shoot-down of an MI-24D Soviet helicopter gunship using U.S. Stinger missiles a capability that turned the war around is absolutely factual.

The book's hero, Alexander Fannin, a CIA operative of Russian-Ukrainian descent, is not Milt Bearden, who was born in Oklahoma, raised in Texas, educated in Chinese at Yale -- at least not exactly. But both Fannin and Bearden paid a price with CIA counterintelligence for marrying foreign women, and both were sent off by then-CIA Director William J. Casey to up the ante in Afghanistan with $1 billion in U.S. arms.

*The Black Tulip* begins like this:

Alexander Fannin pushed through the yellow door marked 7D70 -- DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE, in neat block letters. The bright color always struck him as quaintly festive, out of place with the more subtly shaded universe that lay behind it, but he
doubted Bill Casey even thought of it at all. . . . Casey was already talking when he entered the office. . . . (BT: 145)

And again,

"It's plenty bad, but it's not over yet," Casey grumbled. "The Soviet Air Force is murdering the mujaheddin. We're finally going to quit fooling around and give them whatever they need to turn this war around. To win it. That's where you fit in." (BT: 185)

"What could make that kind of difference?"

"Real weapons. Stinger missiles, for openers," Casey said. "We're going to stop pulling our punches. We're going to ignore George Shultz, the Foggy Bottom crowd fretting about pissing the Soviets off, and get serious." (BT: 166)

In real life, Bearden remembers Casey telling him to go out and kill me 10,000 Soviets until they give up.

Bearden first met Bill Casey at the beginning of the Reagan administration. Casey, an old New York lawyer and close friend of the president, had just become director of Central Intelligence. Bearden, at the ripe old age of 41, had just become CIA station chief in Nigeria.

Nigeria just happened to be the first stop on Casey's first overseas tour.

"He flew out in a black C-141, he stayed at my house for a couple of days, I cooked him breakfast, we did some stuff together, and then he flew out again," Bearden says.
"We hit it off -- and he was interested in everything about my career after that." (BT: 133)

Two years later, Casey made his protégé station chief in Khartoum and reveled in two daring rescues Bearden engineered. The first was the Falashas’ rescue, weeks before a military coup in the spring of 1984 toppled Sudan's pro-American regime.

The second stage took place shortly after the coup, when two Israeli Mossad intelligence agents, their cover blown, knocked on the door of Bearden's house, a Sudanese army unit close on their tail. The two were subsequently joined by two other Mossad colleagues fearful for their lives. Over the next month, Bearden moved them between his home, the home of another CIA official and a CIA safe house before devising a plan to load them into crates especially equipped with oxygen tanks and smuggle them out of the country on a flight to Kenya.

Bearden says,

"I had these four guys like Anne Frank, hanging out with Uzis in my attic.” (BT: 197)

Later that same year, he brought Bearden back to Washington as deputy director of the Soviet-East European Division, which is where Bearden first met Aldrich Ames. By then, most of Ames's damage had already been done: Many of the CIA's best Soviet agents were being rolled up by the KGB and executed in Moscow, and no one knew why. Bearden was enlisted to help devise a response to the 1985 problem, flying off at one point to meet with officials in the CIA's Moscow station.
The following year, Casey sent Bearden off to manage the flow of arms to the Mujahedden in Afghanistan.

Thus, Bearden found himself in charge of the CIA's largest and last covert operation of the Cold War from the CIA station in Islamabad, Pakistan. He says he was the first station chief who actually ventured into the war zone. He also became known as the biggest buyer of Soviet weapons on the border, shipping all sorts of captured missiles and materiel back to CIA headquarters in Langley.

He still remembers the time a mujahedden gunner brought down a Soviet Sukhoi fighter bomber with hardly a scratch. Bearden's phone started ringing as soon as the plane hit the ground.

He was about to hang up when the Pakistani officer added, almost as an afterthought. There was a pilot, a white-haired guy a colonel. This was a sensitive issue for Bearden, who'd been trying -- with limited success -- to stop the torture and murder of captured Soviet pilots and soldiers by the Mujahedden. He thought of a chilling photograph he'd been shown shortly after his arrival -- a downed Russian pilot in the snow, who, facing capture, had fired a bullet through his brain.

When he returned to Washington in the summer of 1989 as the Soviet division's new director with a mandate to shake the organization up the Soviets had pulled out of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union was crumbling. It was there, back at Langley, that he again encountered Ames.

He remembers Ames coming to him the following year and asking to be placed back inside the division close to information about
CIA assets in Moscow, where he could do his best work. At the time, both men's names were on an FBI list of 29 suspects inside the CIA who had knowledge of the agents killed back in 1985 and 1986, and Bearden remembers remarking to a colleague that Ames's request gave him the creeps.

But Bearden, like most other CIA officials, believed the problem -- whatever had caused it -- was over. The reason: The CIA was on a roll again in Moscow, recruiting defectors from the KGB with stunning regularity. By the time of the failed coup against the government of Russian President Boris Yeltsin in 1991, Bearden was meeting openly with KGB officials at their headquarters in Moscow, establishing a liaison to fight terrorism and the proliferation of nerve gas and germ warfare.

For this, Bearden paid the price three years later. It was then, on the eve of his retirement as station chief in Bonn, that agency conservatives started circulating a poison fax on Capitol Hill, alleging that Bearden had tipped off Ames that he was under investigation as a mole.

Middleton was gaiety listening to Soviet Division Chief Lee Tanner brief the DCI on Fannin’s contact with Adolf Tokarev in Moscow four night before. He was alert for any nuance or vagary Tanner might offer that would satisfy his own agenda for Fannin.

Graham Middleton had studiously cultivated his image as the CIA’s counterintelligence conscience, down to the affected tweedy, owlish appearance he thought befitting the solemnity of his k. Some thought he tried to capture the peculiar physical mystique of the CIA’s discredited counterintelligence legend, James Jesus Angleton, but he
never pulled it off. Most who understood Angleton’s destructive legacy wondered why he would even try.

Alexander did not call Casey when Wombaugh was arrested with Adolf Tokarev in Moscow on the night of June 9. It was a made-for-television production, a starburst of violence, beautifully choreographed, filmed and described in the Soviet media as exemplary service by the competent organs. Casey had not called him either; the arrest was too predictable, too anticlimactic for both men. But Wombaugh called him the day after he arrived in Washington after being released from Lubyanka Prison and expelled from the USSR. He told Alexander he had had twenty seconds with Tokarev before the KGB took them down, but that had been enough. He had told Tokarev thank you and Godspeed from Bill Casey and from Janos and from all of his friends. He said Tokarev looked calm, almost serene, in the seconds before his world came to an end. Wombaugh thought Alexander would want to know that.

During attack, Alexander shuffled through a flight bag that had been tagged with his initials and placed under the seat in front of him. Inside were a stack of briefing books on the situation in Afghanistan, biographies on the key Afghan and Pakistan players, and a sealed envelope with his name on it. Inside he found a personal note from an old friend, now director or the CIA’s Technical Services, advising him that the DCI had asked him to provide any and all support Alexander might need. At the bottom of the list he had written that Technical Services still held a pristine Polish Communist Party official by the name of GromekJasik, The second Polish Communist Party official by the name of GromekJasik. The second Polish identity, Janos Luks, had been retired because of a known compromise. Alexander reflected
on the retirement of Janos Luks and the frightened Adolf Tokarev. And then he thought of how much time it had taken him to build the GromekJasik identity, the painstaking backstopping that had been built into the nonexistent person. And he had never used it; it was still completely clean. He leaned back and willed himself to rest.

As the C-141 began its approach to Islamabad, Alexander felt the confining disadvantage of the Casey module – he couldn’t see out. There were fake windows, complete with diffused light coming through drawn curtains, but the light was only a thoughtful deception to comfort the claustrophobic, but the light was only a thoughtful deception to comfort the claustrophobic. Closing his eyes, he leaned back in his seat and waited for the touchdown. He felt the flaps extended and the landing gear lower into place, followed by the yawing motion as the pilot lined up with the runway.

Katerina stood alone on the veranda of the villa that had been her parents’ wedding gift to her and Alexander four months earlier. Wrapped in a shawl against the January chill she felt Alexander’s presence behind her before he spoke,

“I’m packed. Ling’s loading the last of it now. The rest of it, mainly the books I’ve set aside, will be picked up next week. Someone will call.” (BT: 101)

Latif and his two companions each poured half a clip of 7.62 mm submachine gun rounds into the rolling wreck and were moving toward it before the tracer rounds had burned themselves out.

The driver was dead. He was still wedged in his seat, the capsized jeep crushing his skull against the road. The other three soldiers had been thrown clear. Two lay motionless in the ditch, the
third lay sprawled on the road about teen feet away. As the three Afghans came abreast of the hissing wreck, he rose unsteadily to his knees, raised his submachine gun, and pulled the trigger. A single round kicked up a puff of dust five feet in the breach of the submachine gun locking open. Then there was silence. The ammunition clip must have been knocked out of the Kalashnikov when he was thrown from the jeep. The young man frantically slapped the earth searching for the missing clip.

Colonel Anatoly Viktorovich Klimenko had been at his desk at the sprawling headquarters of the Soviet Union’s 40th Army for more than fourteen hours. His routine day had been transformed two hours ago when he received an incident report on an action from the night before. With military understatement the first sketchy detail had been outlines, a skirmish had occurred during the late evening of August 24 on the Kabul the 105th Guards Airborne Division, one noncommissioned officer, and two conscript had apparently strayed too far south and run into a rebel ambush. A scouting patrol from the 105th had come upon the wreck of the jeep and the bodies of the NCO and two conscripts a few hours after they had broken off radio contact and had been reported missing. The NCO had apparently been executed, a single bullet in the back of his neck, though the report observed with sterile detachment that he had alone suffered several other wounds, any of which would probably have proved fatal.

After eight months in Afghanistan, Alexander blended almost perfectly into the setting. Deeply tanned and with a full black beard and longer hair, he was indistinguishable from the Afghan fighters trekking with him into the heart of the Soviet occupation. He and the Fashioner and a young fighter they just called the Boy took food and
tea from the grizzled old owner of the teahouse, a man of indeterminate age known only as Mullah Arif, a part-time Mullah and supporter of the jihad and full-time businessman whose smile displayed a single front tooth. Dressed in his oily shalwer chamise and a soiled turban and smelling of wood smoke he poured strong sweet tea into the small handleless cups, adding two cardamom seeds to each as small concession to extravagance and out of genuine respect for the Fashioner and his comrades.

The Black Tulip is full with numerous characters and incidents. They are shown disconnected all the time regarding the situation and time span. The incidents are highlighted with chronological order of dates. At every moment Alexander Fannin is shown connect with all these incidents and characters in different ways.

Suleiman was intensely devout Muslim who invoked whichever of the ninety-nine name of Allah fitted the desperate task at hand. The name of Ya-Qahhar, the Destroyer, had rolled over his lips more than seven hundred times when the Suzuki wheezed into Karim’s abandoned grove just three miles west of the massive ammunition dump at Kharga. The main farmhouse no longer had roof and three of the four walls had partially collapsed. The few outbuildings, except for one, were in almost as bad shape and everything had suffered from the two years of drought brought about by the destruction of the irrigation system. The Fashioner and Alexander were surveying the damage when they heard the thrashing complaint of Rambo’s Bedford as it pulled into the countryard. Within less than two minutes his men had unscrewed the bolts that secured the planks above the long I beams of the chassis supporting the bed. Nestled in the concealment
compartments of the specially engineered I beams were eighteen green wooden boxes, each containing a 107 mm free-flight rocket.

Mullah Salang was one of the other companions. He was doing what he did better than anyone, his imitation of the Islamic zealot. His audience was a ragtag band of eighteen Algerian fighters who had arrived in Paktia three months before looking for excitement and martyrdom. Until now they had done nothing for the jihad except disrupt the sense of order in Salang’s area. Now he was holding court with his five fighters and Algerians inside the mud-walled compound that they had commandeered for their headquarters. On the carpeted floor before them was a sumptuous meal that seemed out of place in the bleak setting. The centerpiece was a large goat that had been oiled oven. The glistening form lay on a bed of rice on an enormous serving tray. There were trays of pilaf with chunks of tender bend neck and chicken, raita, a yogurt salad of cucumbers, tomatoes, and cilantro, and side dishes of spicy dhal and chickpeas. Bowls held the Las mangoes of the Punjab season, and before each man was a long, flat loaf of Afghan man, a sort of edible dinner plate.

The Algerians were lounging on the food-laden carpet when the radio-signal set off two claymore miners packed neatly inside the chest cavity of the goat. Each mine contained three hundred and sixty steel balls, all of which dispersed in an arc of sixty degrees, so that the field of coverage on either side was almost complete. The explosion sent roasted goal and mortally wounded Algerians flying against the walls. Three of the men sitting at the far ends of the carpet were not directly hit, but were stunned by the force of the blast and lay helpless, listening to the cries of their dying comrades until Salang’s
three fighters entered the room at med with Kalashnikovs. It took them half a minute to finish the job.

The 1989 to 1992 phase of the Afghan Civil War began after the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, leaving the Afghan communist government to fend for itself against the Mujahideen. After several years of fighting, the government fell in 1992. However, the civil war continued with infighting between the government, and from 1994 insurgents such as the Taliban attempting to bring down the new government which they accused of corruption.

After the Soviet withdrawal in February 1989, the U.S. intelligence agencies expected the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime to collapse within three to six months. However, this estimation did not take into account several assets available to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) government. The first of these was the large quantities of military hardware donated by the Soviet Union. In 1989, the army and pro-government militias still had 1568 tanks, 828 armoured personnel carriers, 4880 artillery pieces, 126 modern fighter-bombers and 14 attack helicopters. Also, the DRA continued to receive massive aid from the Soviet Union, valued between two and six billion dollars a year, and Soviet military advisors were still present in Afghanistan. The government forces also came to rely on the use of large quantities of Scud missiles: between 1988 and 1992 more than 2000 of these were fired inside Afghanistan, the largest amount of ballistic missiles used since World War II. This considerable amount of firepower was sufficient to keep the Mujahideen at bay.

Another strength of the DRA were the pro-government militias, of which the most effective was Abdul Rashid Dostum's Jozjani
militia, officially called the 53rd Infantry Division. Numbering 40,000 men drawn from the Uzbek minority, it took its orders directly from Najibullah, who used it as a strategic reserve. After 1989, this force was the only one capable of carrying out offensive operations.

Meanwhile, some of the Mujahideen benefited from expanded foreign military support from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, China, and other nations. The primary beneficiary of U.S. support, delivered through its middleman Pakistan, was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. The primary beneficiaries of Saudi support, especially financial one, were Rasul Sayyaf and Jalaluddin Haqqani who had had strong contacts to Arab fighters in the war against the Soviets. The U.S. provided Ahmad Shah Massoud with close to no support despite the Wall Street Journal calling him

The Afghan won the cold war and was primarily responsible for the mujahideen victory. Part of the reason why he still got only minor support was that the U.S. permitted its funding and arms distribution to be administered by Pakistan, which favored Gulbuddin Hekmatyar who considered himself the archenemy of Massoud. Massoud was also seen as too independent.

Primary advocates for still supporting Massoud instead were State Department's Edmund McWilliams and Peter Tomsen, who were on the ground in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Others included two Heritage Foundation neoconservative foreign policy analysts, Michael Johns and James A. Phillips, both of whom championed Massoud as the Afghan resistance leader most worthy of U.S. support under the Reagan Doctrine. During the Sino-Soviet split, strained relations between China and Soviet Russia resulted in bloody border clashes and mutual backing for the opponents enemies. China and
Afghanistan had neutral relations with each other during the King's rule. When the pro Soviet Afghan Communists seized power in Afghanistan in 1978, relations between China and the Afghan communists quickly turned hostile. The Afghan pro Soviet communists supported China's enemies in Vietnam and blamed China for supporting Afghan anti-communist militants. China responded to the Soviet war in Afghanistan by supporting the Afghan Mujahideen and ramping up their military presence near Afghanistan in Xinjiang. China acquired military equipment from America to defend itself from Soviet attack. The Chinese People's Liberation Army trained and supported the Afghan Mujahideen during the war. The training camps were moved from Pakistan into China itself. Anti-aircraft missiles, rocket launchers and machine guns, valued at hundreds of millions, were given to the Mujahideen by the Chinese. Chinese military advisors and army troops were present with the Mujahidin during training.

By the spring of 1989, the Afghan government showed no signs of falling apart, and the American and Pakistan supporters of some of the Mujahideen decided to hasten its demise. An operation was planned, under the impulsion of U.S. ambassador to Pakistan Robert B. Oakley, and the Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto, to capture Jalalabad. The Americans and the Pakistanis both wanted a conventional victory, each for their own reasons. The Americans wished to humiliate the Marxists, and send them out of Afghanistan clinging to their helicopters, and thus avenge the fall of South Vietnam. Pakistan wished to retaliate against the Soviet Union as the latter had long unconditionally supported the former's regional rival, India. Upon conclusion of the battle, Pakistan intended to install a new government under Gulbuddin Hekmatyar with its provisional
capital based in Jalalabad. The Pakistan-backed Afghan Interim Government included Gulbuddin Hekmatyar as Prime Minister and Abdul Rasul Sayyaf as Foreign Minister. The central organizer of the offensive on the Pakistani side was Lieutenant-General Hamid Gul, Director-General of the ISI.

Involved in the operation were forces of Hekmatyar's Hezb-i Islami, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf's Ittihad-i Islami and Arab fighters, totalling 10,000 men. The attack began on March 5, 1989, and went well at first for the Mujahideen, who captured the Jalalabad airfield before being counterattacked. When government troops started to surrender, however, they, along with unarmed civilians, were tortured and executed by Hekmatyar's and Sayyaf's forces, making the option of surrender impossible for the communists who then fought harder. Consequently, the attacking forces were soon blocked by the main Afghan army positions held by the 11th Division, that were protected by bunkers, barbed wire and minefields. The government troops could count on intensive air support, as the Afghan air force flew 20 sorties a day over the battlefield. An-12 transport aircraft, modified to carry bombs, flew at high altitude out of range of the Stinger missiles used by the Mujahideen; cluster bombs were used intensively.

Three Scud firing batteries, deployed around Kabul, fired more than 400 missiles in support of the Jalalabad garrison. Despite their imprecision, these weapons had a severe effect on the morale of the mujahideen, who could do nothing to prevent them. By the middle of May, they had made no headway against the defenses of Jalalabad, and were running low on ammunition. In July, they were unable to prevent the Afghan Army from recapturing Samarkhel, and Jalalabad was still firmly in the hands of Najibullah's government. The
mujahideen suffered an estimated 3,000 casualties during this battle. An estimated number of 12,000 – 15,000 civilians were killed, while 10,000 had fled the fighting.

Contrary to U.S. and Pakistani expectations, this battle proved that the Afghan Army could fight without Soviet help, and greatly increased the confidence of government supporters. Conversely, the morale of the mujahideen involved in the attack slumped and many local commanders of Hekmatyar and Sayyaf concluded truces with the government. In the words of Brigadier-General Mohammed Yousaf, an officer of the ISI, "the jihad never recovered from Jalalabad". In particular of course Pakistan's plans to promote Hekmatyar were also harmed. Both the Pakistani and the United States governments were frustrated with the outcome. As a result of this failure, General Hamid Gul was immediately sacked by Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and replaced with General Shamsur Rahman Kallu as the Director-General of the ISI. Kallu pursued a more classical policy of support to the Afghan guerillas. In this respect he cut off the barrier that his predecessors, Akhtar Abdur Rahman and Gul had placed between the mujahidin and the United States' secret service, which for the first time had direct access to the mujahidin. The former Pakistani spies, such as Gul, had argued that this gave the United States an opportunity to both undercut Pakistan's interests as well as to weave discord among the Mujahidin something which Pakistan's promotion of Hekmatyar had of course done as well.

Indeed, with direct American access to the mujahidin—in particular that of the envoy Peter Tomsen, whose attitude towards independent Afghans was arrogant and arguably hostile in that he deemed them
dangerous extremists without direct US supervision—any segment of mujahidin unity crumbled. Traditionally independent mujahidin leaders, such as Yunus Khalis, Jalaluddin Haqqani, who had tried to unite the mujahidin enemies Massoud and Hekmatyar, now moved closer towards Pakistan because of their suspicion of the United States' intentions. Others, like Abdul-Haq and Massoud, instead favoured the United States because of their tense relations with Pakistan. While Abdul-Haq remained hostile towards the communist government and its militias, Massoud would go on to make controversial alliances with former communist figures. Massoud claimed that this was an attempt to unite Afghanistan, but his enemies such as Hekmatyar attacked him for this. Hekmatyar's push were also supported by Pakistan, so that by 1990 there was a definite (if loose) pair of competing axes—one promoted by Pakistan and including Hekmatyar, but also other mujahidin leaders such as Khalis, Jalaluddin Haqqani, & other mujahidin leaders who were unsympathetic to Hekmatyar—and the other promoted by the United States and led by Massoud, but also including other leaders such as Abdul-Haq who were unsympathetic to Massoud.

The government forces further proved their worth in April 1990, during an offensive against a fortified complex at Paghman. After a heavy bombardment and an assault that lasted until the end of June, the Afghan army, spearheaded by Dostum's militia, was able to clear the mujahideen entrenchments.

The Jalalabad operation was seen as a grave mistake by some mujahideen leaders such as Ahmad Shah Massoud and Abdul Haq, who did not believe the mujahideen had the capacity to capture a major city in conventional warfare. Neither Massoud nor Haq had
participated in the attack on Jalalabad. Massoud even said it was by BBC radio that he learned about the operation. Haq advocated the pursuit of coordinated guerilla warfare, that would gradually weaken the communist regime and cause its collapse through internal divisions. Abdul Haq was also quoted as asking:

"How is that we Afghans, who never lost a war, must take military instructions from the Pakistanis, who never won one?"

Ahmad Shah Massoud criticized the go-it-alone attitude of Pakistan and their Afghan followers stating:

"The damage caused by our meaning the Mujahideen forces lack of a unified command is obvious. There is a total lack of coordination, which means we are not launching simultaneous offensives on different fronts. As a result the government can concentrate its resources and pick us off one by one. And that is what has happened at Jalalabad." (BT: 205)

The forces of Ahmad Shah Massoud, that were in north to central Afghanistan, controlled the strategically important Salang highway and made steady progress to capture the Bagram airbase just outside Kabul.

After an eleven-year siege, Khost fell to Jalaluddin Haqqani's troops, that were in east Afghanistan, on April 11, 1991, following a negotiated surrender of the communist garrison. This was a coordinated effort where the final push came in an assault with Ibrahim Haqqani acting as stand-in for Jalaluddin, who had been abroad at the time to raise funds and links. The commandant Gul Aqa was captured. It was claimed that much of the garrison had switched
sides because the mujahidin fighters were offering amnesty and lenient treatment, partly an indication of Haqqani's skilful diplomacy. There was considerable irritation by Haqqani's forces when some Pakistani outlets claimed that Hekmatyar had acted as leader, in spite of the similarly close relationship between Haqqani and Pakistani soldiers. At this time Pakistan were strongly in favour of Hekmatyar, who would be their primary proxy until 1994 when they switched to Taliban movement. However, the veteran Pakistani reporter Rahimullah Yusufzai confirmed that it had been a coordinated effort with Jalaluddin Haqqani as overall leader. Haqqani also offered to mediate between the bitter opponents Massoud and Hekmatyar, though this came to naught.

According to published reports during the 1980s, Hekmatyar's Hezb-i Islami developed a reputation for attacking other resistance forces, especially those of Ahmad Shah Massoud, and raiding or blocking their food and arms supplies as well as caravans of relief organizations. According to author Steve Coll, Hekmatyar attacked Ahmad Shah Massoud so often that Washington who was supporting him through Pakistan feared he might be a secret KGB plant whose mission was to sow disruption within the anti-communist resistance. Reports suggest that Hekmatyar's commanders were saving their men and weapons to establish Hezb-i Islami as the dominant organization once the Soviets departed.

In 1989 Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's forces once again conducted an attack on forces of Ahmad Shah Massoud, this time targeting Massoud and the senior leadership of Shura-i Nazar – Massoud's military and political alliance of 130 northern commanders. While they were not able to kill or injure Massoud, Hekmatyar's forces killed
and tortured to death 30 of Massoud's men, some of whom were close friends of Massoud. Survivors describe the torture as pulling their eyes out, cutting their ears and noses off, and cutting their stomachs open. Massoud consequently ordered an operation to hunt down the murderers. Shura-i Nazar were able to capture the assassins, but instead of revenge killings, Massoud sent them to Peshawar to have them tried before a court. The courts sentenced them to death.

Ahmad Shah Massoud for the sake of Afghan unity declared:

"My message to Hekmatyar's people is that without a united front we cannot succeed, we cannot achieve anything in Afghanistan." (BT: 150)

Roy Gutman of the United States Institute of Peace considered Massoud the only Afghan leader with an integrated vision.

It is worth noting, however, that through this period (1987–89) both Massoud and Hekmatyar had been frequently fighting each other and killing each other's officers, and Massoud's rhetoric was rarely matched by action. In 1988, for instance, Massoud's forces attacked Hekmatyar loyalists in Badakhshan Province. In 1989 Massoud arrested and executed one of Hekmatyar's local officers, Jamal Agha, whom he accused of having murdered a number of Jamaat-e-Islami commandants: Mohammad Izzatullah, Mohammad Islamuddin, Mulla Abdul-Wadoud, and Payinda Mohammad.

However, Hekmatyar's supporters accused Massoud of having killed these commandants to centralize his authority in Jamaat's ranks and framed Jamal, whom they claimed had good relations with the victims. This was stated by Hizb-e-Islami supporter Mohammad Tanwir Halim in his book published in 2013. However, this version of
the story is uncorroborated and it is worth noting that Hekmatyar was widely unpopular in any case for his vicious murders, though this was not necessarily true of his commanders some of whom like Abdul-Rauf Safi, Abdul-Sabour Farid and perhaps Jamal enjoyed decent relations with other groups. Massoud later appointed Abdul-Rauf Safi as Kabul commandant. Hekmatyar's supporters also accused Massoud of treachery because of his ceasefires with Russian forces and in this they had the support of Jamaat leader Mohammad Eshaq who also criticized Massoud for his ceasefire with the Russians during the second half of the occupation. It appears that Massoud was trying to form a base independent of Pakistan, and in this endeavour he did make deals with governments traditionally hostile to the mujahidin, including India and Russia. During the 1990s Massoud would corroborate with Russia in his conflict against Taliban forces. Hekmatyar exploited this to attack Massoud, whom he called the ruler of the Panjsher and a traitor.

However, accusations of treachery by both sides seem far-fetched. The Pakistani coordinator, Mohammed Yousaf, does not challenge Massoud's version of Jamal story despite Pakistan's hostility towards Massoud, and in any case it has become a fait accompli. Similarly, Palestinian mujahidin leader Abdullah Azzam claimed that Massoud was a legendary fighter, though Azzam notably rarely criticized any mujahidin leaders to avoid friction.

Despite its military successes, the communist regime was still plagued by its traditional internal divisions, namely the opposition between the Khalq and Parcham factions.

The DRA defense minister, Shahnawaz Tanai, disagreed with Najibullah's policy of National Reconciliation with the mujahideen.
Also he had become convinced that his Khalq faction was losing its share of power in favour of Najibullah's Parcham. For these reasons he entered in secret negotiations with Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and plotted against Najibullah. Launched on 6 March 1990, his coup failed, despite almost killing Najibullah, and Tanai was forced to flee to Pakistan, where he joined Hekmatyar. A severe repression followed, as Najibullah ordered the army to be purged of Tanai's supporters. In the ensuing fighting, several airports were bombarded, damaging 46 military aircraft. This episode reinforced Najibullah's suspicions and led him to govern through his personal allies rather than the government apparatus, further deepening the rift between Khalqis and Parchamis.

By 1992, Afghanistan was in dire straits. Reserves of natural gas, Afghanistan's only export, had dried out since 1989, rendering the country completely dependent on Soviet aid. This amounted to 230,000 tons of food per year, but by 1991, the Soviet economy was itself faltering, preventing the Soviets from fulfilling their commitments.

In August 1991, following his arrival in power, Boris Yeltsin announced that all direct assistance to Najibullah's regime would be curtailed. In January 1992, the Afghan Air Force, which had proved vital to the survival of the regime, could no longer fly any aircraft through lack of fuel. The army suffered from crippling food shortages, causing the desertion rate to rise by 60 percent between 1990 and 1991.

The pro-government militias that had grown to replace the army in many of its assignments, were faithful to the regime only so long as it could deliver enough weapons to enable them to conserve their
power. With the end of the Soviet aid, the government could no longer satisfy these demands, and the loyalty of the militias began to waver.

Finally, after negotiations between communist General Abdul Rashid Dostum and Ahmad Shah Massoud, the Junbish militia defected to the mujahideen. This reversal of fortunes effectively turned the tables in favour of the resistance, and forced Najibullah to resign.

With the end of the Soviet Union, Najibullah's regime lost all credibility and by 1992, after a Russian decision to end fuel shipments to Afghanistan, Najibullah's regime began to collapse. In April 1992, General Dostum defected to the forces of Ahmad Shah Massoud and began to take control of Kabul. On April 14, 1992 it was confirmed that Massoud and his forces had taken Charikar and Jabalussaraj in Parwan province with only minimal fighting. At this point it was reported that Massoud had approximately 20,000 troops stationed around Kabul. It was further reported that the Government's Second Division had joined Massoud. General Mohammad Nabil Azimi then proceeded to reinforce Bagram Air Base and sent further reinforcements to the outer perimeter of Kabul. By mid-April the air force command at Bagram had capitulated to Massoud. With no army to defend it, Kabul had become completely defenseless.

Najibullah had lost internal control immediately after he announced his willingness on March 18 to resign in order to make way for a neutral interim government. As the government broke into several factions the issue had become how to carry out a transfer of power. Najibullah attempted to flee from Kabul on April 17, but was stopped by Dostum's troops who controlled Kabul International Airport. Najibullah then took refuge at the United Nations mission
where he remained until 1995. A group of Parchami generals and officials declared themselves an interim government for the purpose of handing over power to the dominant and most popular military force: Massoud.

Massoud was hesitant to enter Kabul, waiting for the political parties to reach a peace and power-sharing agreement first. In April 1992, with the Peshawar Accords, an interim government was formed with a Supreme Leadership Council, and a transitory presidency that was given to Sibghatullah Mojaddedi for two months, after which Burhanuddin Rabbani was to succeed him. Hekmatyar was given the post of Prime Minister, but he did not accept this position for he did not want to share power and Pakistan was urging him to take power for himself. Massoud in a recorded conversation tried to convince Hekmatyar to join the peace agreement and not to enter Kabul.

Hekmatyar's Hezb-i Islami forces began to infiltrate Kabul. This forced Massoud to advance on the capital in order to preserve the Peshawar Accords and prevent the establishment of a Hekmatyar dictatorship.

The different Mujahideen groups entered Kabul from different directions. Hezb-i Islami made the first move and entered the city from the south. Hekmatyar had asked other groups such as Harakat-Inqilab-i-Islami and Khalis faction to join him while entering Kabul, but they declined his offer and instead backed the Peshawar Accords like Massoud. Hekmatyar's men were armed and financed by Pakistan. Jamiat-i Islami had seized massive amounts of weapons while overrunning the communist garrisons in Bagram, Charikar, Takhar, Kunduz, Fayzabad and other northern cities. Adding to that, all the forces of Abdul Rashid Dostum's Junbish-i Milli had aligned
themselves to the Jamiat, and the former communist government of Afghanistan had decided to surrender all its weapons to Jamiat, instead of Hezb. All the Parchamis had fled abroad through the Jamiat controlled areas. Jamiat had seized massive stockpiles of heavy weapons such as T-62 and T-55 tanks, Scud missiles and MiG-21s.

The Hezb forces were very far from key points of the city such as the Presidential Palace, Prime Minister's office, Kabul International Airport, the Defense Ministry and many other important government offices, and much of the city lies in the North Bank of the Kabul River. The Jamiat forces quickly took control of these strategically important offices. Although Hezb forces had arrived to the gates of the Ministry of Justice, they also claimed control of the Ministry of Interior and they were quickly repulsed after bombing from the Afghan Air Force, which was supported from artillery shells fired from TV Tower onto Jade Maiwand. Hundreds of Hezb Fighters were killed or taken prisoner, including some foreign fighters.

In the western sector of the city, the Hezb forces crossed the Kabul River and arrived at the northern bank after taking control of the Kart-e-Seh area. While charging towards the Kort-e-Sangi and Kabul University, Sayyaf's forces attacked Hezb forces from the Ghazi School area in a surprise move, and the Hezb forces were separated into two groups after being cut off by Jamiat forces. Throughout the night, the exhausted and demoralized forces of Hezbi Islami suffered heavy casualties. Hezb forces in the southern bank, fled out of Kabul towards Logar and deserted their positions.

Kabul completely came under the control of The Islamic State of Afghanistan on April 30, 1992. Though the situation was far from stabilized, the Hezb-i Islami had been driven out, but they were still
within artillery range, and soon started firing tens of thousands of rockets into the city supplied by Pakistan.

When Hekmatyar's forces had overrun Pul-e-Charkhi prison while still in the centre of Kabul, they had set free all the inmates, including many criminals, who were able to take arms and commit gruesome crimes against the Afghan civilian population. With the government institutions either collapsing or participating in the factional fighting, maintaining order in Kabul became almost impossible. The events led to the Afghan Civil War of 1992-1996.