

Advertisement

NEWS | POLITICS | OPINIONS | BUSINESS | LOCAL | SPORTS | ARTS & LIVING | GOING OUT GUIDE | JOBS | CARS | REAL ESTATE | RENTALS | CLASSIFIEDS

SEARCH:  go | Search Archives

Latest Entry: [The Daily Goodbye](#)

Washington Post staff writers offer a window into the art of obituary writing, the culture of death, and more about the end of the story.

[Read more](#) | [What is this blog?](#)

More From the Obits Section: [Search the Archives](#) | [XML RSS Feed](#) | [Submit an Obituary](#) | [Twitter](#)

David Kimche, 82

## David Kimche dies; Israeli spy involved in Iran-contra scandal

By Patricia Sullivan

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

David Kimche, 82, the Israeli spymaster-turned-diplomat who engineered the swap of American hostages in Lebanon for arms to Iran, touching off what became the Iran-contra scandal of the 1980s, died March 8 of brain cancer at his home in Israel.



Former Israeli official David Kimche in 1987 as he left the Federal Courthouse in Washington. (Darrel Ellis/the Washington Post)

[Buy Photo](#)

Mr. Kimche, a top foreign ministry official and former deputy director of Israel's Mossad intelligence service, told U.S. national security adviser Robert C. "Bud" McFarlane in a 1985 meeting that more than a dozen Americans held by the terrorist group Hezbollah in Lebanon could be freed if the U.S. agreed to pick them up.

No strings were attached to the initial offer, but Mr. Kimche's Iranian intermediary soon upped the ante, demanding that the Americans provide 100 antitank missiles in trade for the hostages, who had been individually seized over the previous three years.

Knowing that the U.S. government would not send arms directly to Iran, Mr. Kimche suggested that Israel provide the weapons, as long as the Americans agreed to sell replacement weapons to Israel. President Ronald Reagan agreed, although the one-step-removed deal violated an international embargo. Some of the profits from the subsequent sale to Israel funded anti-Communist rebels in Nicaragua known as the contras, an action that violated a Congressional ban on providing aid to those rebels.

The agreement resulted in freed hostages, although the Israelis ultimately provided more than four times as many weapons as the intermediary, arms dealer Manucher Ghorbanifar, originally estimated. The deal remained secret until November 1986 when a small Lebanese magazine broke the story. The urbane and cerebral Mr. Kimche (pronounced KIM-khee), was often

Advertisement

## UMUC CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMS

- Undergraduate and graduate degree or certificate programs
- No SAT, GRE or GMAT required
- Interest-free monthly payment plan available

**Enroll now.**

**TOOLBOX**

AAA Resize Print E-mail

Yahoo! Buzz

Constant Contact TRY EMAIL MARKETING FREE FOR 60 DAYS!

**WHO'S BLOGGING** powered by **sphere**

» [Links to this article](#)

**Sponsored Links**

**Acai Berry EXPOSED**  
Warning: Health Reporter Discovers The Shocking Truth!  
www.ConsumerProductsDaily.com

**Hot Stock Alert - EHSI**  
Profit From Healthcare Explosion New Millionaires Created Today  
www.EmergingHealthcareSolutionsInc.

[Buy a link here](#)

Advertisement

## TRUCK MONTH

**0% APR FOR 60 MONTHS** FOR QUALIFIED BUYERS ON '10 SILVERADO

TOP JOBS

The Washington Post

- Business Jobs
- Computer Jobs
- Construction Jobs
- Education Jobs
- Engineering Jobs
- Healthcare Jobs
- Legal Jobs
- Management Jobs
- Media Jobs
- Non-Profit Jobs
- Sales Jobs
- Science Jobs

Find Your Dream Job Now!

keywords  location



\* Monthly payment is \$16.67 for every \$1,000 financed. Example down payment is 14.9%. Some customers will not qualify. See dealer for details. Take delivery by 3/31/10. Not available with other offers.

LEARN MORE →

compared to author John le Carré's fictional spy George Smiley. Sophisticated, mannerly and speaking English with a British accent, Mr. Kimche was known for using Israel's military and economic power to influence

the internal politics of Third World countries, news reports indicated.

A former soldier in Israel's 1948 war of independence, he was deeply dedicated to the Jewish state and helped direct Israel's revenge by assassination of the Palestinian terrorists who seized and massacred 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

"The aim was not so much revenge but mainly to make them frightened," he told the London Jewish Chronicle. "We wanted to make them look over their shoulders and feel that we are upon them. And therefore, we tried not to do things by just shooting a guy in the street -- that's easy."

He was key in opening relations between Lebanese Christians and Israel in the 1970s, which provided the groundwork for Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Later that year, he was Israel's chief delegate at the talks ending that war.

Mr. Kimche's role as an architect of the invasion "destroyed his reputation as a cautious operator," Leon T. Hadar, a former Israeli journalist who is now a Cato Institute research fellow, wrote [in a 1991 profile](#) for the Washington Report on Middle East Affairs. "It was Irangate, however . . . that destroyed what was left of the career of Israel's 'sophisticated spy.'"

McFarlane wrote in "Special Trust," his 1994 memoir, that Mr. Kimche in 1985 proposed the assassination of Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, in order to clear the path for a more moderate Iranian faction. McFarlane told the "60 Minutes" television show that Mr. Kimche told them that "there was a way of gradually infusing poison, that [Khomeini] would consume presumably in food." Mr. Kimche denied he suggested such a plot, but McFarlane at the time said the proposal was "clear and unambiguous."

Mr. Kimche was subpoenaed but avoided having to testify before a U.S. federal grand jury about the Iran-contra affair after Israel protested and provided documents about the matter sought by special prosecutor Lawrence E. Walsh. The once-undercover Mr. Kimche was mobbed by the press when he left the courthouse after he was excused from testifying.

Born in London to a Swiss Zionist family whose ancestors included noted rabbinical scholars, Mr. Kimche immigrated to Palestine in 1946 when he was 18 years old. He graduated from Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where he also received a doctorate. He also studied at the Institute for African and Asian Studies at the Sorbonne in Paris. He co-authored a book, "Both Sides of the Hill," with his brother Jon, detailing the diplomatic and military developments of that war. He also briefly worked for the Jerusalem Post as a journalist.

Mr. Kimche joined Mossad in the early 1950s and was among those who designed its doctrine and method of operations, according to the Israeli newspaper Haaretz. In the 1950s, he exposed Avri Elad, an Israeli intelligence officer who told Egyptian military about local Jews working for Israeli intelligence. In the 1960s, he served undercover in Africa, posing as a journalist, when the continent was seen as a key to Israel's security.

He had been "the man with the suitcase," Hadar wrote in 1991, who would "appear in an African country a day or two before a major coup and leave a week later after the new regime was firmly in control, often with the aid of Israeli security teams." Mr. Kimche later supervised agents who infiltrated Arab countries. Haaretz said he was involved in the unit responsible for the security of Jews around the world and was a founder of Mossad's research department.

Mr. Kimche rose to Mossad's second-highest post but left the agency in 1979 over a dispute with his superior. He became director general of Israel's Foreign Ministry, a job he held until 1986, then turned to private enterprise. He also authored another book, "The Last Option: After Nasser, Arafat and Saddam Hussein" (1992).

He was recently president of the Israel Council of Foreign Relations and was involved in initiating peace talks with the Palestinians. Two years ago, he signed a petition supporting talks with Hamas.

Survivors include a wife and four children.

Jobs by [SimplyHired](#)

#### FEATURED ADVERTISER LINKS

[Law suit: Yaz Gallbladder, Cochlear Implant \(VP\), Toyota Recall , Whistleblower](#)

[Erin Brockovich, Asbestos & Boilers, Lung Cancer, Mesothelioma, Fracking](#)

[Roll over your old 401\(k\)s to Fidelity Investments.](#)

[Get peace of mind now with Equifax ID Patrol.](#)

[Russia Now: In-Depth Coverage of Russia News, Business, and More.](#)

[Double Your Vanguard Profits with the Best Funds to Own Now](#)

[Click to add the Wash Post App to your Yahoo! Homepage](#)

Sponsored Links

Acai Berry EXPOSED

Warning: Heath Reporter Discovers The Shocking Truth!
www.ConsumerProductsDaily.com

Hot Stock Alert - EHSI

Profit From Healthcare Explosion New Millionaires Created Today
www.EmergingHealthcareSolutionsInc.

What's in Cramer's Portfolio?

See exactly what Jim Cramer is doing with stocks like BAC, VISA, and GS.
www.ActionAlertsPLUS.com

Buy a link here

2 diggs

digg it

Share

13 tweets

retweet

More ways to share this Article...

Reddit

Twitter

myspace

del.icio.us

NewsTrust

Stumble It!

You might also like...

- Israeli spy Kimche dead at 82
Israel tries to jump-start calls for Iran nuclear sanctions
Israel seeks a stronger stance on Iran from U.N. Security Council and U.S.
Australia warns Israel over Dubai assassination
Israeli minister says Hamas not untouchable

Most Viewed Metro Articles

- Killing of D.C. teen linked to 'gun' ruse that angered suspect
'Surreal' arrests disrupt Va. family
Va. law makers plan to do less with less
Defendant in cabbie's killing called insane
» Top 35 Metro Articles | Most Popular on washingtonpost.com

More in the Obituary Section



Post Mortem

The art of obituary writing, the culture of death, and more about the end of the story.

- About this New Blog



From the Archives

Read Washington Post obituaries and view multimedia tributes to Pope John Paul II, Ronald Reagan, James Brown and more.

- Effi Barry, 1944 - 2007
Gerald R. Ford, 1913 - 2006



A Local Life

This weekly feature takes a more personal look at extraordinary people in the D.C. area.

- After retiring, lawyer took a cruise: sailing across the Atlantic, solo

© 2010 The Washington Post Company

NEWS | POLITICS | OPINIONS | BUSINESS | LOCAL | SPORTS | ARTS & LIVING | GOING OUT GUIDE

JOB | CARS | REAL ESTATE | RENTALS | CLASSIFIEDS

SEARCH: [input field] go Search Archives

washingtonpost.com: Contact Us | Work for Us | Advertisers | Site Map | Search Terms | Topics Index | Make Us Your Home Page | Newsletters | Mobile | RSS | Widgets
The Washington Post: Subscribe | Home Delivery Service | Advertisers | PostPoints | e-Replica | Online Photo Store | The Washington Post Store | About The Post
The Washington Post Company: Information and Other Post Co. Websites

© Copyright 1996-2010 The Washington Post Company | User Agreement and Privacy Policy | Rights and Permissions

Help | Contact Us