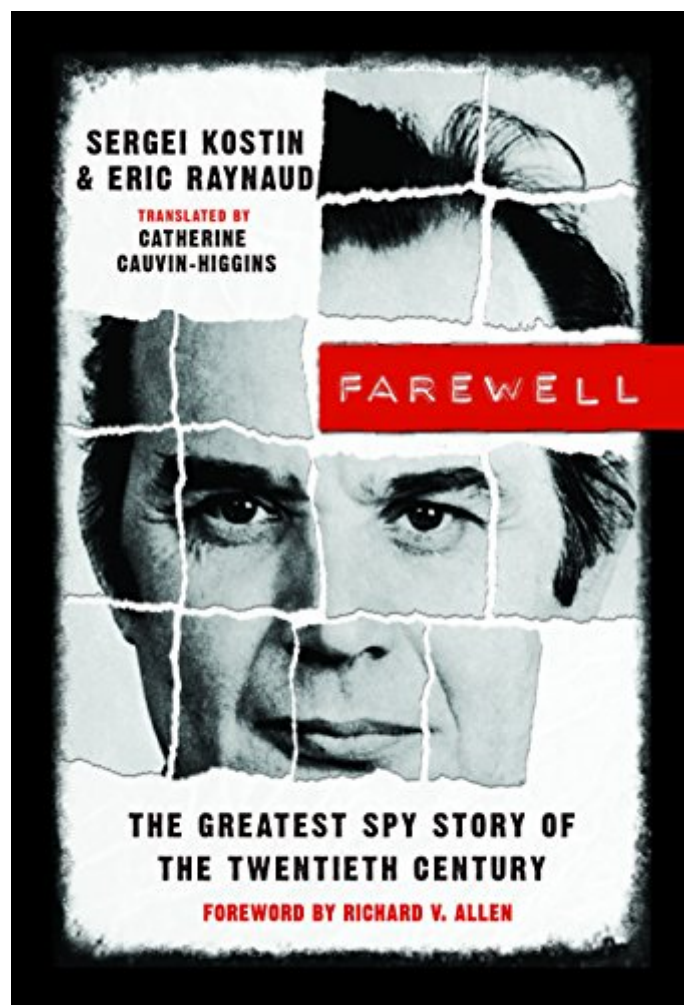


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Farewell: The Greatest Spy Story Of The Twentieth Century



Synopsis

1981. Ronald Reagan and François Mitterrand are sworn in as presidents of the United States and France, respectively. The tension due to Mitterrand's French Communist support, however, is immediately defused when he gives Reagan the Farewell Dossier, a file he would later call "one of the greatest spy cases of the twentieth century." Vladimir Ippolitovitch Vetrov, a promising technical student, joins the KGB to work as a spy. Following a couple of murky incidents, however, Vetrov is removed from the field and placed at a desk as an analyst. Soon, burdened by a troubled marriage and frustrated at a flailing career, Vetrov turns to alcohol. Desperate and needing redemption, he offers his services to the DST. Thus Agent Farewell is born. He uses his post within the KGB to steal and photocopy files of the USSR's plans for the West "all under Brezhnev's nose. Probing further into Vetrov's psychological profile than ever before, Kostin and Raynaud provide groundbreaking insight into the man whose life helped hasten the fall of the Soviet Regime.

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Customer Reviews

When Vladimir Vetrov was asked by his French contact, Patrick Ferrant what would happen to them if they were caught, Vladimir also known as Volodia replied, "For me it will be a bullet in the back of the head; for you, a stupid accident, with your wife; a truck perhaps, or an unfortunate fall on the subway track in front of an oncoming train" (quoted from page 167). This book is about the life story of Vladimir Vetrov, a KGB intelligence officer who voluntarily became a double agent working for the French, through their agency called DST, which in some respects resembled the American FBI. The DST did not normally engage in foreign activity of this kind but recognizing the significance of the offer, they proceeded with caution. To their surprise and amazement, the quality of the information passed on by Volodia was priceless. It contained some of the most highly damaging information that the Soviets had obtained via espionage about Western defense systems and technology related to the military/industrial complex. Volodia's reasons for becoming a double agent are examined in this book and his life story is told from his family origins to his successful placement into the most prestigious engineering University in Moscow and how he managed to become a KGB intelligence officer in the PGU (also called the First Chief Directorate). The authors interviewed significant people in Volodia's life, his wife Svetlana, his son, Vladik, his good friends, many French witnesses to these events and many coworkers, along with examining KGB secret archival information from that time which has since become available to the public.

Farewell is an interesting book loaded with detail and informed speculation about the activities of a disgruntled KGB officer who was determined to do damage to the organization and officials who, in his view, shunted him aside and prevented him from attaining a position of prominence and deserved affluence. During the first two years of the 1980's, Lt.Col. Vladimir Vetrov copied, photographed, and passed on to the West truly massive amounts of evidence that Farewell's authors, Kostin and Raynaud, present as demonstrating the near-total reliance of the Soviet Union on espionage rather than its own research and development to maintain parity in the arms race that characterized the long Cold War from the end of WW II until the collapse of Eastern Europe's multi-state edifice of communism in 1989. Contrary to what a casual observer unfamiliar with the case might imagine, Vetrov did not work through the American CIA, the British MI6, or any other well developed western intelligence organization. Instead, Vetrov cleverly contacted the French, who at the time had no intelligence operatives in the Soviet Union. With an added touch of irony, while working as a KGB officer in France, Vetrov made his initial overtures to the French DST (Directorate of Territorial Surveillance), an internal counter-intelligence organization roughly comparable to the FBI. The DST had neither the experience nor the legally mandated authority to

handle foreign agents in intelligence gathering. However, when the first documents provided by Vetrov were brought to the attention of the newly elected French President, Francois Mitterand, he supported the DST in its efforts to continue with Operation Farewell.

P. 83 "The communist regime was in a visible state of slow decomposition.In addition to the external erosion, the inside was rotting away since, as already mentioned, the PGU officers recruited in the seventies were vastly inferior to the generation of the sixties." A WWII hero asks, "Is this what I went to war for?" P. 145 The Defense Minister in Mitterand's French government was a Soviet spy. Even though communists were ministers in the government, Reagan changed his mind about Mitterand when Mitterand provided the US with lists of spies and collaborators sending NATO and technological plans to the KGB. P. 168 "What Vetrov meant was that, through corruption and nepotism, totally inept and incompetent individuals were holding very highly responsible positions with the regime, and in a world where nuclear weapons kept multiplying, the situation could become dangerous." P. 169 Beginning in 1981 Andropov and Ustinov (the next two leaders of the USSR) believed the US would start WWIII. "When Ferrant brought it up, Vetrov simply explained that at the KGB the shooting of the pope was a subject of joking at the expense of the Bulgarians, the main suspects in this affair. On a more serious note, he told Ferrant that there had been a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs way before the assassinate attempt. Gromyko himself had confided to the Warsaw Pact member representatives that the problem with the pope would be soon taken care of." "Vetrov felt, in the long run, stealing scientific and technical secrets could only come back to haunt the instigator. When we need a fastener for one of our rockets, our research organizations don't even ask themselves what would be the best type but wonder which workshop in Cape Canaveral would have it.

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