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Jeffrey T. Richelson

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JEFFREY T. RICHELSON

“Truth Conquers All Chains”: The U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity, 1981–1989

In January 1982, shortly after becoming the United States Army’s Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff of Intelligence for Intelligence Systems and Automation, then Brigadier General Harry Edward Soyster received a call from a staff member of a Congressional intelligence oversight committee. The staffer, a long-time friend, wanted to know what “ISA” was. When Soyster responded by referring to the Defense Department’s well-known International Security Affairs unit, the staff member reminded him that “This is me, Ed.”¹

But General Soyster was not being deceptive. What he would learn only upon investigation was that the ISA being referred to was a relatively new, highly-secret, intelligence organization named the U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity (USAISA). The USAISA was the successor to an ad hoc organization established in 1980 to support a possible second mission to rescue the American hostages held by Iran. From its initial limited purpose the organization would grow in terms of personnel, the scope of its missions, and the areas of the world where it operated.

The focus here is on ISA’s activities from its creation in 1980, to its disestablishment in 1989 qua ISA, and its apparent classified resurrection. By relying on documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, interviews, and public sources, it is possible to explore, inter alia, ISA’s creation, disclosure, structure, operations, the prolonged process that resulted in its disestablishment, its

Dr. Jeffrey T. Richelson, a Senior Fellow at the National Security Archive in Washington, writes extensively on intelligence matters. The fourth edition of his book The U.S. Intelligence Community has been published this year by Westview Press/Perseus Books Group.

rebirth, and the problems involved in attempting to operate such an unconventional organization.

THE CREATION OF ISA

In April 1980 U.S. military forces, including men from the Special Operations Forces Detachment–Delta, landed in Iran to carry out Operation RICE BOWL — the ultimately unsuccessful attempt to rescue the 72 Americans who had been taken hostage in Tehran. The period between the seizure of the U.S. embassy on 4 November 1979 and the Carter Administration’s decision to abort the mission in April 1980 revealed significant problems in providing relevant intelligence support to the military in such a situation. Although the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) did have one deep-cover agent who provided information, its embassy-based officers were among those being held hostage, while many of its Iranian assets had fled the country or had been killed. The remaining assets were concerned with their survival. According to one official, “the agency [CIA] people were preoccupied with keeping their cover and could not provide equipment or information for the [rescue] operation. They had enough to do covering their skins.”²

An additional problem was the nature of the information required by the rescue planners. According to a former Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, “During the first Iran mission, the CIA couldn’t deliver support to the military. The intelligence the Agency provided was virtually useless in operational terms — the military needed peripheral on-the-ground intelligence, which the Agency didn’t have the capability to provide.” At least two teams of individuals were recruited on an ad hoc basis to enter Tehran, using false passports, and attempted to collect the required on-the-ground intelligence.³

The failure of the initial mission was followed by planning for a second rescue attempt, designated SNOWBIRD. On 25 August 1980 Secretary of Defense Harold Brown officially appointed the Army as “Executive Agent” for Defense Department “operational support activities relating to Operation SNOWBIRD.” One result of that appointment was the creation of the Field Operations Group (FOG), “an ad hoc organization composed of selected personnel who were trained to fill critical intelligence and operational [needs].” FOG consisted of 50 temporary duty personnel under the operational control of the Army’s Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Major General Edmund R. Thompson.⁴

Selected to head FOG was Colonel Jerry King, who had served as chief of staff for the first rescue operation. The information collected by FOG personnel included the number of rounds in the guards’ rifles and the type of locks being used on the embassy gates. Three–man FOG teams were also to be inserted into

Iran to help disable its anti-aircraft, radar, and communication installations. Other FOG personnel were to arrange the lighting of the drop zone and flight paths for the arriving U.S. forces.⁵

The non-military resolution of the hostage crisis brought about the disbanding of the Operation SNOWBIRD rescue force. But FOG did not disappear. In a 10 December 1980 memo to Lt. Gen. Eugene Tighe, Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Lt. Gen. Philip C. Gast, the Joint Staff's Director for Operations, observed that:

A review of the intelligence collected during the past year to support Iranian contingency planning revealed a serious and persistent information deficiency. This deficiency revolves around the need of military planners to have accurate and timely situation oriented operational and environmental data. . . .⁶

Gast went on to observe that the "current DOD/Service HUMINT structure is not organized to satisfy these requirements," and recommended consideration of developing within the Defense Department [DOD] a capability to provide such information.⁷

Such sentiment allowed FOG to move from ad hoc to permanent status. The conclusions expressed by General Gast were shared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and concurred in by two key incoming Reagan Administration officials — William J. Casey, the incoming Director of Central Intelligence, and General Richard G. Stilwell, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. As a result, FOG became the U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity.⁸

Formal Army approval for creation of ISA was given by Army Chief of Staff Edward C. Meyer in a 29 January 1981 memorandum to Lt. General William E. Odom, who had succeeded Thompson as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence. Responsibility for establishing the organization and handling administrative requirements was assigned by Odom to the Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM), which had performed both the human and signals intelligence missions for the army since its formation in 1977.⁹

A little more than a month later, on 3 March 1981, the ISA was formally established by INSCOM Permanent Orders 8-1. The order, classified SECRET at the time, provided relatively little information. The unit's mission was described as conducting "intelligence activities as directed by Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army." Its initial authorized personnel strength was 50, with its ultimate strength envisioned to be about 250, although it would eventually exceed 300.¹⁰

The ISA straddled the intelligence and special operations world, and its classified existence mirrored that of the most elite U.S. military special operations forces that had been or would be established: the 1st Special Forces Operational

Detachment–Delta; the Naval Security Coordination Team (Red Cell); and Seal Team Six. To help hide its existence, it was given an official cover title, the Tactical Concept Activity. In addition, ISA was established as Special Access Program OPTIMIZE TALENT. Those not specifically cleared into the program, irrespective of the number or level of their other clearances, were not permitted to know of ISA’s existence or purpose. Further, to add to the confusion, the name of the special access program would be changed over the years — to POWDER KEG, GRANITE ROCK, ROYAL CAPE, and finally, GRANTOR SHADOW.¹¹

In addition to receiving a name, cover title, and codename, the new unit also received a blazon with a shield, a crest, and a motto — which were heavy in symbols and messages. An eagle grasped a claymore (a Scottish two-handed sword), which symbolized “the aggressive nature needed by USAISA in accomplishing its mission.” A broken link in a chain symbolized the failed rescue mission, while eight complete links represented the U.S. servicemen who died on the mission. Enshrined on the blade of the claymore was the phrase “SEND ME” — derived from the Book of Isaiah: “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; SEND ME.” But the new organization’s primary motto was *Veritas Omnia Vincula Vincit* (Truth Conquers All Chains) — “Truth, the end result of USAISA’s mission is capable of overcoming all bonds (Chains), physical, mental, and philosophical.”¹²

FOG’s commander, Jerry King, became the first commander of ISA. With an initial budget of \$7 million, \$500,000 of which came from the CIA, the organization soon grew to 100 members. In addition to the special forces veterans who were carried over from FOG, two new groups were added — signals intelligence collectors and human intelligence specialists.¹³

BO GRITZ, A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE, AND A CHARTER

On 22 March 1983, James G. “Bo” Gritz, a former Special Forces lieutenant colonel, spent two-and-a-half hours in front of the Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Gritz was there to tell the committee of his attempts, or at least his version of them, over the preceding five years, to locate Americans allegedly still being held as prisoners of war in Southeast Asia. Those hearings had been prompted by the continuing belief that some Americans remained in captivity, a decade after the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam. Gritz, earlier in the year, had been quoted in a number of newspaper articles to that effect.¹⁴

At one point in the hearing Gritz stated that:

... in June 1981 ... I was approached by a member of a special intelligence activity (referred to as “The Activity”). I was advised that “The Activity” hoped to shortly obtain the charter for the rescue of American POWs and was invited to participate in its operation.¹⁵

That such an organization might exist was indicated by the remarks during that same hearing of Admiral Allen G. Paulson, Assistant Vice Director of Collection Management for the Defense Intelligence Agency. Paulson acknowledged that “[at] one point there was a government organization, a Department of Defense organization, that proposed an operation, using Mr. Gritz in a collection capacity.”¹⁶

But Admiral Paulson’s vague comment was either missed by the press or not treated as an indication that there was some secret unacknowledged intelligence organization within the Pentagon. And not only was Gritz’s reference transitory, but his credibility was considered questionable after criticisms of his private rescue “efforts” by senior Defense Department officials and representatives from POW/MIA relatives organizations.¹⁷

But there was some truth to Gritz’s statement. There had been contact with the Intelligence Support Activity with regard to a mission into Laos. Official U.S. government interest was heightened in late 1979 by overhead photography, from an SR-71 aircraft and KEYHOLE satellites, of a camp in central Laos. What appeared to be the figures “B” and “52” in the ground was considered to be a possible signal to reconnaissance flights. The images also had standing figures whose shadows indicated to photogrammetrists that they were taller than Asians.¹⁸

In the spring of 1981 the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) approved a secret operation into Laos, in an attempt to determine if any American POWs were being held there. Eventually, members of the Delta Force were to infiltrate into Laos, with ISA and the Army Special Operations Division playing supporting roles. But the initial stage of the operation would rely on Laotian mercenaries living in Thailand to cross the border and photograph the site.¹⁹

At the same time, but without knowledge of the Joint Chiefs, Gritz was organizing to conduct his own mission into Laos, Operation VELVET HAMMER. Aided by funding from private citizens, he had signed up 25 Special Forces veterans for the mission. In March, according to Gritz, a Pentagon official asked him to cease all of his efforts so that there would be no interference with the JCS-sponsored mission. While Gritz told the official that he would cease operations, he continued training and preparations at a Florida cheerleading academy.²⁰

In a late March letter to the White House, Gritz informed senior Reagan Administration officials of his preparations for a private rescue mission, and requested that he be authorized to initiate his operation in support of the JCS-approved mission. In June 1981, the Pentagon was considering its next step, after the Laotian mercenaries’ exploratory mission had failed to turn up any evidence of POWs. In October, an ISA acquaintance of Gritz submitted a proposal for an operation that included Gritz’s participation in a collection capacity. Soon after, he was allegedly informed about a new operation, codenamed GRAND EAGLE, to search for POWs in Laos.²¹

According to ISA's commander, Jerry King, Gritz's involvement with the ISA stemmed from a chance meeting at a special forces convention. The ISA member later briefed King on his meeting with Gritz. Considering Gritz "a loose cannon," King went to ACSI Odom, and asked to have Gritz recalled to active duty so that he would be governed by the Universal Code of Military Justice. Although Odom refused, King did consent to provide Gritz with some help. That aid allegedly included cameras worth tens of thousands of dollars, polygraph equipment to help determine the credibility of Asian sources, radio communications systems, and plane tickets to Bangkok, Thailand. It also reportedly included satellite photographs and other intelligence information, on the basis of which Gritz began to organize the new operation.²²

According to published reports, the action proposal never rose above the first level in the approval process, and ISA, following its rejection, informed Gritz that he did not enjoy any official support. During the last half of 1981, while preparations for the JCS GRAND EAGLE mission continued, word of Gritz's planned operation reached Admiral Paulson. Believing Gritz to be an unstable glory seeker, Paulson was furious when he learned that ISA had given him money. He ordered that all government aid to Gritz cease.^{23*}

When confronted by the wrath of higher levels, including Paulson's, ISA officials reportedly argued that they had notified the JCS and had received tentative approval to employ Gritz for intelligence collection purposes. While insisting that they were not involved in a rogue operation, they allegedly conceded that they had been too generous with Gritz, and that he had "jumped the gun." Gritz had apparently been approached by an ISA official, merely to ask him for minimal help in gathering intelligence about POWs/MIAs in Laos. "The game plan was not to use Gritz or his people," an intelligence officer told author Steven Emerson. "It was simply to gain as much information as possible, so we'd know where to start. And what happened is that Gritz's aide very smartly kept stringing him [the ISA officer] along, saying, 'Well, I need a camera, I need a ticket to Bangkok, I need some money.' So the [ISA] guy rolled over and gave him all this s—." But the ISA's King says that ISA gave Gritz, not thousands of dollars of camera equipment, but "one used camera with fixed lens and one used portable polygraph."²⁴

ISA was ordered to terminate its relationship with Gritz. But ISA had been severely wounded, and that wound almost proved fatal. The Gritz episode, as well as other ISA activities that some considered questionable, led to an investigation by the Department of Defense Inspector General. The result was a spring 1982 report which was extremely critical of ISA, a report King characterizes as "badly flawed," partially due to the unfamiliarity of at least one civilian investigator with an organization such as ISA. ISA, the study concluded, lacked proper oversight mechanisms for its missions and its expenditures. Further, it judged some

*It is not clear whether Paulson's order came after the proposal was disapproved.

acquisitions — such as a hot air balloon, a Rolls-Royce (actually obtained from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)), and a dune buggy — questionable.²⁵

The report was read by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, who was already angry over the entire Gritz episode. ISA thus became the first of several intelligence incidents during Weinberger's tenure that caused him to hit the roof (the others were the disclosure of KH-11 images to *Jane's Defence Weekly* and the Jonathan Pollard case). He ordered the unit disbanded.²⁶

The official notice of termination was relayed by Deputy Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci in a one-page memo dated 26 May 1982. In that memo, Carlucci observed that he found the inspection report on ISA “disturbing in the extreme,” and that “We seem to have created our own CIA, but like Topsy uncoordinated and uncontrolled.” He also observed that:

Unquestionably, ISA contains much talent and probably even more dedication. There may also be a need, but that is less clear. But we should have learned the lesson of the 70's on controls over [deleted]. Accountability is the essence and we have created an organization that is unaccountable.²⁷

In the next paragraph, Carlucci went on to both pronounce a death sentence as well as set the stage for an appeal. “Action will be taken to terminate all ISA operations within 30 days; or effect transfer thereof to other competent organizations.” Yet, the next sentence specified that if it were “desired to continue ISA in some form” it would be necessary for Carlucci to receive, prior to 15 June, a concept plan; a list of requirements; a command structure, indicating to whom it is accountable and how; a list of controls to be established, particularly over [deleted]; a fiscal management and accountability plan; a program for working with appropriate committees of Congress; and the concurrence of the DCI and the General Counsel for all of the above.²⁸

Given an opportunity to reverse the death sentence, Army officials acted. A retired general in military intelligence noted that “There were problems with the baby, but it didn't mean we had to kill it.” Intense lobbying, particularly by Army intelligence chief William Odom, persuaded Weinberger and Carlucci to give ISA a second chance.²⁹

It is not clear whether any of the conditions specified in the 26 May memo were satisfied by 15 June, but the lifting of the death sentence from ISA began a year-long process of addressing the concerns in the memo. During that process ISA operations were restricted. A 19 October 1982 memorandum from Deputy Defense Secretary Carlucci to General Odom, responding to his memo of 5 October 1982 on “Resumption of USAISA Activities,” indicated no objection to resumption of some activities, apparently those involving clandestine collection, as long as they conformed to agreed guidelines. As one official explained it, “ISA was put into

suspended animation, with no new enterprises . . . undertaken, although certain ongoing programs continue[d].”³⁰

Official Authorization

The process culminated in the production of a formal charter for the organization — which was approved by the National Security Planning Group, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Army Adjutant General, and issued by the Secretary of Defense on 5 July 1983.³¹ In a covering memorandum for the Secretary of the Army, Defense Secretary Weinberger noted that:

In light of the requirement for this Charter, and the current Congressional environment concerning [deleted, but almost certainly “special activities”] we must be extremely cautious in assignment of new tasks or missions to USAISA. In addition to special controls and approvals required by the Charter and cited references, please advise me, on a monthly basis, of any new tasks or operations, undertaken or initiated by USAISA.³²

The eight-page charter “outlined three broad missions”:

- [clandestine] military operational support for the Army, other DOD components, and non-DOD agencies
- [clandestine] HUMINT and SIGINT collection in support of Army, JCS, and DOD contingency and wartime operations
- [clandestine] HUMINT and SIGINT collection in response to high priority or quick reaction Army, JCS, or DOD requirements.³³

Beyond defining ISA’s missions, the charter also specified guidelines, restrictions, and general policies under which the organization would operate. Operational control was to be exercised by the Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence. The charter specified that “USAISA will be directed to undertake activities only when other intelligence or operational support elements and resources are unavailable or inappropriate to accomplish the tasking.” It also directed that “USAISA activities, especially those involving U.S. persons, will be pursued in a responsible manner that is consistent with the Constitution and respectful of the principles upon which the United States was founded.”³⁴

The charter established numerous requirements to ensure that ISA missions were approved by higher authorities in and out of the intelligence community. Thus, special activities could be undertaken by ISA only following a Presidential Finding assigning the mission to the Defense Department, tasking of the Army by the Secretary of Defense, and tasking of ISA by the Secretary of the Army. All requests for operational support, including those from higher levels in the DOD and JCS, were to be forwarded by the ACSI and coordinated with the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.³⁵

Clandestine collection operations were required to be developed and coordinated “in strict compliance with DOD, DIA and DCI directives,” including DCID 5/1 (“Coordination of U.S. Clandestine Foreign Intelligence Activities Abroad”) and DOD S-5105.29 (“Human Resources Intelligence Activities”), which meant that DIA and CIA would have to approve any collection activity. Meanwhile, signals intelligence collection operations would have to be submitted to the ACSI for approval after coordination with the Director of the National Security Agency (NSA). NSA would exercise operational and technical control over ISA SIGINT activities.³⁶

In addition, USAISA was not to accept tasking from *any* organization without it being submitted to and approved by the Army intelligence chief. Nor was ISA to engage in any activity outside the scope of approved actions without ACSI approval. Nor was it to engage in liaison arrangements with foreign governments without ACSI approval.³⁷

The charter also specified that, unless otherwise authorized by law, “no funds may be made available to USAISA through transfer, reprogramming, or other means for any intelligence or operational support activity other than as previously justified to Congress,” unless the DCI or the Secretary of Defense notify the House and Senate Intelligence and Appropriations committees of their intent.³⁸

In order to maintain operational security, ISA was authorized to take a number of steps, apparently including the relocation of the unit, and, possibly, the retitling of the organization. Intelligence Information Reports produced by ISA were to be identified as emanating from the DAMI-ISH (that is Chief, Intelligence Systems (HUMINT), Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence).³⁹

DISCLOSURE TO THE PUBLIC

Oddly, by the time its charter was formally approved, the existence of ISA had already become public knowledge. The initial revelation came from Jay Peterzell who, at the time, held the covert action account at the Washington-based Center for National Security Studies (CNSS). Peterzell’s article appeared as sidebar to his longer piece on control of the CIA that appeared in the Outlook section of the 24 April 1983 edition of *The Washington Post*. The following months saw additional accounts, with varying degrees of accuracy, appear in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Los Angeles Times*.⁴⁰

But disclosure did not initially lead to declassification. Indeed, INSCOM responded to a Freedom of Information Act by the CNSS in mid-1983 by first claiming that all the relevant records were classified. An appeal was filed in September 1984, pointing out that the Army’s response acknowledged the existence of the organization — otherwise there could be no relevant records.⁴¹

The Army quickly backpedaled. In a letter to the CNSS, Darrel L. Peck, the Army Deputy General Counsel (Military and Civil Affairs), stated that INSCOM’s response “should not be interpreted as a confirmation of the existence of any such unit.” The letter offered a bizarre explanation, stating that INSCOM had simply assumed that “if any records did exist regarding an intelligence unit such as that described by the media, they would be classified,” and therefore, it invoked “a blanket exemption for any documents which may exist.” INSCOM did not, according to Peck, “review any specific documents” and, thus, “its reply should have been worded to make clear that it was neither confirming nor denying the existence of any documents responsive to your request.” Mr. Peck refrained from closing his letter with the statement “That’s our story, and we’re sticking to it.”⁴²

ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION

ISA’s organizational structure appears to have remained fairly stable through at least the latter part of its existence — exhibiting evolution but not radical change. As of 1985, the headquarters organization consisted of the Commander, Deputy Commander, Executive Officer, four directorates, three offices, and the Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC). Its four directorates were Operations, Operational Security, Intelligence, and Personnel and Administration. The offices included the Finance and Accounting Office, the Special Security Office, and the Military Intelligence Support Officer.⁴³

The Directorate of Intelligence had been established in August 1984 from the Research and Analysis Division of the then Directorate of Operations and Intelligence. The Directorate was “responsible for the acquisition, analysis, and dissemination of comprehensive, accurate, all-source intelligence in support of ISA operations.”⁴⁴

The Directorate consisted of three divisions: Research and Analysis (with Latin American, Middle East and North Africa, and Exploitation branches); Administration; and Management and Threat. The Research and Analysis division provided “all-source intelligence support for ISA for the planning and execution of [deleted, but probably “special activities”] and in support of military operations.” Among its products were Country Intelligence Estimates.⁴⁵

The Management and Threat Division procured and disseminated all-source intelligence from national producers (e.g., CIA, NSA, DIA). It also provided counterintelligence/counterterrorism analysis to ISA, “including estimate and current research to minimize the threat from foreign counterintelligence services and terrorist activities.”⁴⁶

Operational activities were conducted through three squadrons — Operations, SIGINT, and Communications. Data from the 1986 ISA history indicates that the

Operations Squadron had three subelements: Troop A, Troop B, and Troop C. Subordinate to the SIGINT Squadron was the Exploitation Troop and the Direct Support Troop.⁴⁷

By 1986 some changes had been made in the ISA Command Group. In addition to the Commander, Deputy Commander, and Executive Officer, there was now a Deputy for HUMINT, Command Judge Advocate, the MISO, a Psychologist, the Special Security Office, a Comptroller, and the HHC. In 1987 the group consisted of the Commander, Deputy Commander, Deputy for HUMINT, Executive Officer, Command Sergeant Major, Command Psychologist, Command Judge Advocate, RT&E Staff Manager, Staff Action Control Officer, Secretary-Stenographer, and Administrative Sergeant/Driver.⁴⁸

Sometime during the 1986 fiscal year the Directorate of Intelligence had become the Directorate of Intelligence and Security — apparently as the result of the merger of the Directorates of Intelligence and Operational Security. Its mission was subsequently described as “the acquisition, analysis and dissemination of comprehensive, accurate, all-source intelligence in support of ISA operations and the maintenance of physical, personnel, information, and special security in the command.”⁴⁹

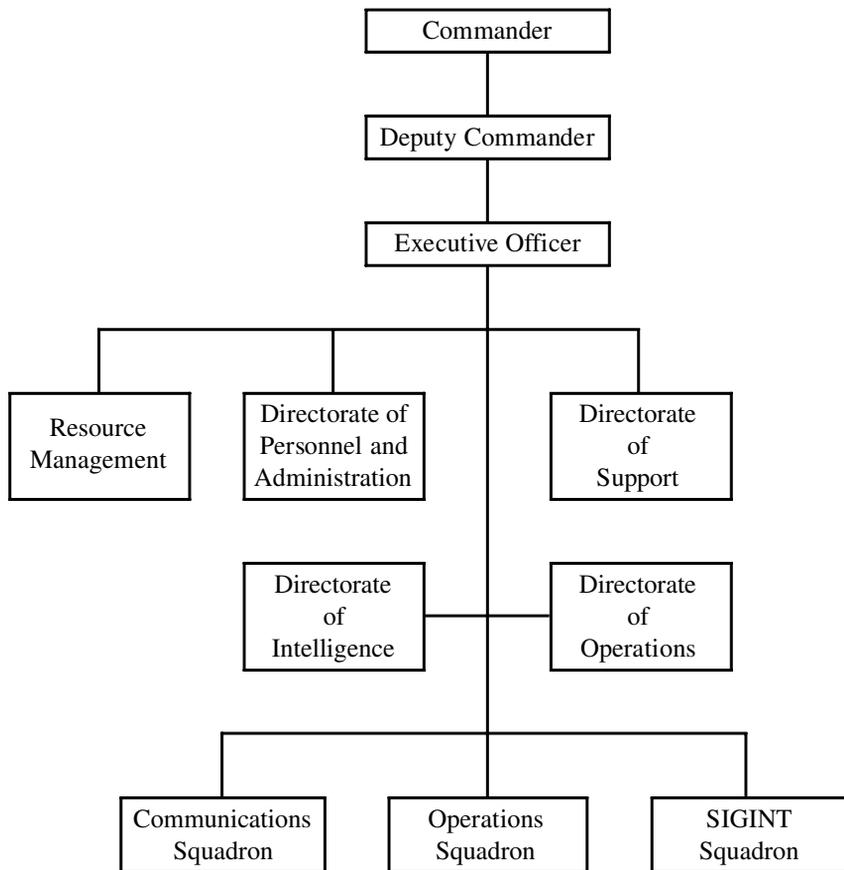
Its Latin America and Middle East/Africa Divisions were to “provide accurate and comprehensive all-source intelligence support to operations within their regions” by producing “intelligence reports, estimates, annexes, and information papers.” The Exploitation Division provided liaison with the national imagery and exploitation community (the CIA’s National Photographic Interpretation Center and DIA). It was responsible for maintenance and development of target folders, foreign equipment recognition data bases and a library of imagery exploitation products.⁵⁰

Sometime during the 1987 fiscal year Troop C was apparently moved outside the jurisdiction of the Operations Squadron, and a new independent Detachment R was established. In addition, a Directorate of Support was formed. Also in 1987, the Directorates of Operations and Intelligence co-located the regional analysts under the direct supervision of the operations desk chiefs.⁵¹

As a result of such evolution, the organization of ISA in the October 1987-September 1988 period was as depicted in Figure 1.

RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND EXERCISES

As noted earlier, ISA recruits came from three major areas: special forces, human intelligence, and signals intelligence. With respect to individuals who would be required to provide intelligence or operational support abroad, ISA made an effort to recruit ethnic Americans — Hispanic, Oriental, and Middle Eastern — who could pass for local citizens in various countries. Some of the recruits held valid passports from their original homelands.⁵²



Source: USAISA Organization Chart Fiscal Year 1988

Figure 1. The ISA’s Main Components

ISA’s training and selection program would prove extremely rigorous. When a vacant position in the unit would be identified, a list of all special qualifications would be drawn up. The Army’s Military Personnel Center would then enter the request into a computer system, which would produce a roster of personnel having those qualifications. The section with the vacant slot reviewed the roster and identified the individuals to be interviewed.⁵³

Unit commanders devised their own specific “assessment and selection” programs, in which prospective candidates were subjected to an array of severe physical and psychological tests. One test involved placing a candidate in the desert without either food or communications equipment. At points along the way, he or she was given instructions and equipment to perform certain tasks, such as setting up

satellite communications or weapons systems. Immediately after the desert test, the candidate was placed in a city, deprived of sleep, and required to perform various clandestine assignments. The entire exercise could go on for a month.⁵⁴

Acceptance into the unit did not mean an end to such activities, for training was a continuous process. It involved wilderness survival training, parachuting, weapons training, and “tradecraft” specialization — and would take place all over the United States, including a missile test site in Nevada, a farm in Florida, and an Army fort in Virginia.⁵⁵

Beyond individual training and training of small groups, ISA took part in a number of exercises, often joint exercises with other clandestine intelligence or special operations units, such as a joint exercise with Seal Team 6, codenamed EXILE PIRATE. From 1-20 July 1985, ISA participated in exercise LATCH APEX, designed to evaluate the unit’s capability to deploy on short notice, train, and execute a mission which was structured in a near-combat scenario under live-fire conditions. Major training objectives included conducting High-Altitude High Opening (HAHO) and High-Altitude Low Opening (HALO) infiltrations.⁵⁶

On 26 August 1985 members of ISA deployed in support of exercise QUINCY AID. The unit’s mission was to provide support to another unit’s mission by providing a reception party, contact plans, transportation, safe sites, a non-technical communications net, and assist in its exfiltration. A liaison team was also deployed to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the headquarters for Delta.⁵⁷

On 10 September, members of ISA completed their support to QUINCY ACID, with ISA providing assistance to Delta’s assets, establishing a SATCOM line with Fort Bragg, and assisting in exfiltration of the force.⁵⁸

From 14 to 30 March 1986 ISA participated in exercise POWERFUL GAZE, conducted in the vicinity of Jacksonville/New Bern, North Carolina. Its mission was to provide sub-unit and headquarters level HUMINT and SIGINT to a counterterrorist team (probably either Delta or Seal Team 6). It was also tasked to receive, sustain, and exfiltrate the counterterrorist team. A major problem occurred when eight of its members were surveilled and later detained by the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI), who believed they were involved in drug smuggling operations. The exercise concluded without incident, after two ISA counterintelligence representatives were dispatched from headquarters to the exercise area. The outcome led the ISA’s Director of Operations to decide that ISA counterintelligence personnel would be present on-site during any future exercises.⁵⁹

ACTUAL OPERATIONS

Intelligence Support Activity operations differed in a number of ways from the traditional operations of a military clandestine collection organization. While other

human intelligence collection units, particularly Navy units, often became involved in various forms of technical intelligence collection, ISA was the only such unit to conduct SIGINT operations.

But perhaps most importantly, ISA’s mission included operational intelligence support, military assistance, and various special activities. Rather than merely collecting intelligence that would guide policy decisions, ISA’s collection and other operations were geared towards providing information that allowed U.S. forces to implement the government’s policy decisions.

Over its lifetime ISA conducted operations in Italy, Morocco, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Iran, Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and approximately ten Latin American countries.⁶⁰ Based on what is known about these operations, ISA engaged in or prepared for the following types of (sometimes overlapping) operations:

- Intelligence collection
- Pathfinder missions
- Foreign leadership protection
- Security and intelligence assessment
- Pre-strike reconnaissance
- Operational support
- Training of foreign personnel
- Hostage rescue
- Acquisition of foreign weapon systems

a. *Intelligence Collection*

In late 1981 or January 1982, the CIA requested that the National Security Agency provide communications intelligence on attempts by left-wing guerillas and right-wing death squads to disrupt the March 1982 El Salvadoran elections. The elections would allow voters to elect a Constituent Assembly, which would write a new constitution and pick an interim government. But the NSA’s limited Central American capability did not permit it to intercept the communications of the groups’ moving transmitters.⁶¹

In January 1982 NSA passed the job on to the Army’s ACSI, General Odom, emphasizing that the mission must begin as soon as possible, since the elections were less than eight weeks away. Odom turned to INSCOM, but it, too, lacked the resources.

Aware of the ACSI’s inability to fulfill the requirements, the Army Special Operations Division (SOD) seized the opportunity, arguing that it could undertake the mission and be ready within a month. Special Operations would use its covert aviation unit, SEASPRAY, later renamed QUASAR TALENT, which could fly

planes equipped with COMINT receivers. The Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations agreed that the Division should undertake the mission. Final approval was given on or about 2 March 1982, when a TOP SECRET GRID CIRCUIT decision paper on the proposed “Covert Central American Signals Intelligence Mission” was approved by several senior uniformed Army officials, along with Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh, and Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Richard Stilwell.⁶²

The division leased a Beechcraft King Air 100, a forty-foot long, highly versatile airplane, with a range of 1,200 nautical miles. The plane was flown to Nashua, New Hampshire, where Saunders Associates, which had a long involvement in signals intelligence operations, installed state-of-the art communications, electronic eavesdropping, and aerial reconnaissance equipment.⁶³

SOD officers rented a safe house in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. ISA contributed radio technicians to operate the communications equipment on the back of the plane. By the time formal approval was given, the operation was ready to start, and the CIA and NSA gave their approval. SEASPRAY transported its plane to San Pedro Sula, and the mission began. The intercepts included emissions revealing rebel locations and giving advanced notice of planned attacks. The intelligence was forwarded to NSA and relayed to the Salvadoran government. The Salvadoran Army was then able to take defensive measures or attack the leftist forces.⁶⁴

The original SIGINT mission was extended from 30 to 90 days, and then went on for three more years. Under the codename QUEENS HUNTER, the mission grew. Several more Beechcraft were modified with even more sensitive detection capability to pick up high frequency (HF) radio and local citizen-band transmissions. The planes monitored suspected cross-border intrusion and weapons supply routes, in addition to the communications between Sandinista forces in Nicaragua and leftist rebels in El Salvador and Honduras. Much of the time, the planes flew over Nicaraguan border regions, occasionally entering Nicaraguan airspace. It was difficult to recall that SEASPRAY’s operation had started with a single Beechcraft.⁶⁵

The King Airs flew at least six hours a day. Some planes averaged 1,500 hours per year. The QUEENS HUNTER operators sent the intercepted intelligence directly to NSA headquarters at Fort George Meade, Maryland, via satellite. The planes, at a distance of 30 miles from the transmitters, picked up radio traffic between Salvadoran rebels and Sandinista forces, which showed that the latter were helping to coordinate military attacks against the Salvadoran government. The NSA immediately relayed the data back to Defense Department and CIA officials in El Salvador and Honduras, who in turn supplied the information to local Army commanders. As more sophisticated equipment was added to the planes, the operators were able to pick up ground communications between battle units as they coordinated attacks against Salvadoran government forces. According to Army officials, by intercepting these plans, QUEENS HUNTER was able to prevent,

during just one period of intensified guerilla warfare, at least fifteen ambushes of government forces.⁶⁶

The operation in El Salvador was soon expanded to provide the CIA with use of the data to assist the Contras in attacking targets in Nicaragua. Since the data on Nicaraguan troop movements was being collected under QUEENS HUNTER anyway, the CIA relayed the intelligence data to Contra paramilitary operatives in Honduras for use against the Sandinistas.⁶⁷

Two further intelligence collection missions, about which few details are available, were codenamed GRAZING LAWN and GLASSMAN. On 27 April 1985 four members of ISA’s SIGINT element began participation in GRAZING LAWN, an aircraft collection program conducted from Honduras in conjunction with a unit codenamed CAYMAN JAWS, probably an element of the Army’s Special Operations Division. GLASSMAN was an operation in which ISA SIGINT personnel participated in December 1986.⁶⁸

b. *Pathfinder Missions*

A major emphasis of several ISA operations was to establish “pathfinders” — secretly marked routes and support facilities — in the event American forces were sent to a country, possibly in response to the seizure of the U.S. embassy. ISA set up a number of business fronts — including refrigeration companies and butchers — to provide cover and legitimacy to U.S. intelligence or special operations personnel entering a foreign country. Particular emphasis was placed on pathfinder efforts in Nicaragua, where the U.S. intelligence community feared a Sandinista-led assault on the U.S. embassy. Using third-country tourist or business covers, ISA personnel set up clandestine safe houses, landing zones, and other support mechanisms to assist U.S. forces. Before 1984, ISA personnel had entered Nicaragua using false credentials showing that they were part of the U.S. embassy staff. By 1985 they began using false passports from neighboring countries to gain entry.⁶⁹

c. *Foreign Leadership Protection*

In 1981, ISA and the Army’s Special Operations Division cooperated with the CIA on a mission to slip Lebanese Christian leader Bashir Gemayel back into Lebanon after a secret visit to the United States, thereby frustrating a Syrian plot to assassinate him.⁷⁰

During the 1981–1982 period, and after, ISA also provided protection to various princes of the Saudi Royal Family. In 1982, ISA personnel arrived in Khartoum to help protect the Sudanese president, Gaafar Nimeiry, and his vice president from Libyan-sponsored assassins. Libya’s dictator Muammar Qaddafi had tried to destabilize the Sudanese regime, and his efforts grew more intense after the 1981 assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat. U.S. intelligence received

reports that the Libyan leader had offered a reward for killing Nimeiry and other Sudanese officials. ISA demolition experts, personal security specialists, and explosive-sniffing dogs and their handlers were sent to the Sudanese capital, along with \$200,000 worth of protective equipment. As “military advisers,” ISA agents helped protect Nimeiry, and also set up a security system for him and his vice president. The payoff to the several-week mission was good contacts with top Sudanese authorities, which later proved helpful in collecting new intelligence.⁷¹

d. *Security and Intelligence Assessment*

On 25 August 1982, eight hundred U.S. Marines landed in Lebanon to help evacuate the Palestine Liberation Organization from Beirut, a move supported by Defense Secretary Weinberger on the grounds that it would remove both a “very volatile, unpredictable group” and any Israeli rationale for moving into the city. The Marines also had a second mission — the protection of Palestinian non-combatants living in Beirut.⁷²

On 1 September the last of the PLO left Beirut, and nine days later the Marines returned to their ships. But on 14 September Bashir Gemayel was killed by a bomb planted by an agent of Syrian intelligence. Two major events followed: an Israeli move into West Beirut and a massacre of Palestinians by Gemayel’s followers. As a result, the Reagan Administration agreed to a Lebanese request for the Marines to return.⁷³

On 29 September the Marine Battalion Landing Team returned, along with Italian and French troops, and established its headquarters at the Beirut airport. That the multinational force might be the target of a terrorist attack was more than a logical possibility. The National Security Agency had intercepted and decoded Iranian diplomatic messages which indicated that a major attack on the multinational force was being planned. However, the messages did not reveal the time, the specific target, or the type of attack.⁷⁴

But the clearest demonstration of the threat came on 18 April 1983 when a delivery van packed with explosives blew up in front of the American Embassy in Beirut, killing 63 people. Among the seventeen Americans killed were Robert Ames, head of the CIA’s Office of Near East and South Asian Analysis; Kenneth Haas, the CIA Chief of Station in Lebanon; and virtually all the personnel of his station.⁷⁵

In addition to clearly demonstrating the threat, the explosion further damaged U.S. intelligence collection efforts about possible future threats. The result was that the Marines were overwhelmed “with raw data of unknown reliability.” The Defense Department dispatched a five-man team from ISA to evaluate the situation. Included in the team was Marine Lt. Col. William V. Cowan, who had just been appointed deputy director of operations for ISA. Cowan and his group arrived in Beirut on 26 May 1983. Over the next ten days the team conducted extensive interviews with U.S. Special Forces personnel involved in training the Lebanese Army, Marine

commanders, embassy and CIA officials. The reception from the Marines, embassy, and CIA was reported to be a chilly one.⁷⁶

The ISA team discovered that key intelligence regarding terrorist threats and the vulnerabilities of U.S. facilities was neither shared nor acted upon. Nor was there any coordination of intelligence produced by various organizations and their operators. In addition, the team found derelict security procedures at the Marine headquarters.⁷⁷

Upon returning to Washington, the team drew up a detailed critique of U.S. intelligence and security shortcomings in Beirut. Its major recommendation concerned the need to properly exploit and disseminate intelligence. The team urged the creation of a "fusion center" that would seek to extract useful intelligence from the avalanche of reports from representatives of the Marine Corps, CIA, Special Forces, embassy, the multinational force, and the Lebanese Army — and promptly disseminate it. The report also warned that the Marine headquarters was an inviting target for terrorist attack. But the reaction of the European Command, which was responsible for military operations in Lebanon, consisted of assigning a single intelligence officer to the Office of Military Cooperation.⁷⁸

Noel Koch, who was in charge of special operations for the Defense Department, was scathing about the European Command's response to the ISA report. "Their report reflected adversely on people who outranked them and . . . had been submitted with no opportunity for the military system to sanitize their findings." Koch later wrote, "This led to denials, ass-covering, and all-around outrage that the survey had been done at all. Thus, it was decided that there were no problems and that even if there were, they had been fixed."⁷⁹

At 6:20 AM on 23 October 1983 a large Mercedes truck driven by a terrorist in green military fatigues entered the empty, and unguarded, airport public parking lot. The explosion that followed killed 241 Americans. A second bomb went off at the headquarters of the French forces, killing 59.⁸⁰

e. Pre-Strike Reconnaissance

Communications intercepts and other intelligence made clear to the Reagan Administration who was responsible for the attack on the Marines. Decrypted messages had established that Iran's Foreign Ministry had urged the Iranian Ambassador in Damascus, Syria, to arrange for a major attack on the U.S. forces. Other intercepts revealed that the Revolutionary Guards in Baalbek had asked the Damascus embassy for permission to launch the attack. Human intelligence indicated Syrian complicity. And, arms and explosives clearly could not be moved through Syrian Army checkpoints without Syrian cooperation.⁸¹

On 10 November the JCS decided to send another team to Beirut, with multiple missions. Besides conducting additional evaluation of security and intelligence practices, the team was to conduct reconnaissance of numerous sites that had

been selected by Pentagon planners as potential targets of a retaliatory strike. Those targets might be attacked by aircraft or a U.S. commando force (numbering anywhere from 30 to 300). But, due to a lengthy approval process, involving the CIA, DIA, Army, and European Command, the team, which again included Cowan, did not actually depart until 1 December.⁸²

Once in Beirut, the group cased everything from the personal residences of Sheik Fadlallah and Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, leader of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah and Hezbollah's spiritual adviser respectively, to the garage in Fadlallah's neighborhood where the suicide truck had been prepared, to Syrian anti-aircraft/surface-to-air missile positions. After discovering that Syrian missile sites were vulnerable to troop penetration, Colonel Cowan recommended that commandos fire .50-caliber rounds from silenced-rifles into anti-aircraft antennas, in order to disable the missile batteries. The Syrians would not be able to definitively link such an attack to the United States.⁸³

Just as after the Beirut embassy bombing in April, this ISA team had been sent to Lebanon without the knowledge of the European Command, which would be responsible for carrying out any retaliatory strike. The new deputy European commander, Gen. Richard Lawson, was less than pleased when he discovered the ISA operation. "I didn't even know ISA was there until I found out accidentally during a walk through a building after the bombing . . . I threw them out. Just three more Americans that could be captured," he said.⁸⁴

f. *Operational Support*

A third aspect of Col. Cowan's December 1983 mission was to prepare for an operational support role, should U.S. forces be instructed to conduct a retaliation mission. The ISA unit had to prepare for several possibilities — special forces attacks on the garage or other locations, or for carrier-based strikes against the terrorists. Cowan's team traveled throughout Beirut, to the Christian-held port of Juneih to the north, to chaotic Sidon in the south, and to the Druze sectors. New contacts were made with key members of the Christian community and their intelligence operatives.⁸⁵

The ISA team also located landing zones for special forces personnel arriving from the sea, and drop zones for those arriving by parachute. It identified locations in Beirut where cars could be rented to transport the new arrivals to leased safe houses, where they could hide until called on to launch their attack. The team also identified trucks and buses that might either be leased or hot-wired and stolen, as well as remote sites for storing communications equipment and weapons.⁸⁶

One member of the ISA team obtained Lebanese license plates from the government motor vehicle bureau. As a possible option Delta members could be parachuted in with their own cars, which could then be "legitimized" with genuine

Lebanese plates. The ISA team even considered bringing in a Mercedes, or the Rolls-Royce it had obtained from the Drug Enforcement Administration. According to one author, "with local plates and a Lebanese flag hoisted on its hood, the car would have made a good decoy for a load of Delta commandos trying to get past Shiite guards."⁸⁷

The ISA team returned home shortly after 1 January 1984. Upon their return, Cowan and an associate assembled a classified report which listed the team's findings on intelligence and security problems, and included a section on retaliatory possibilities. They submitted the report, but no action was taken. An impediment to action, according to Joint Staff officials, was the concern that too many bystanders might be hurt in any retaliatory action.⁸⁸

g. Training of Foreign Personnel

In Saudi Arabia, ISA conducted counterterrorism and bodyguard training for Saudi security forces. In late 1982, Crown Prince Abdullah, head of the 20,000 member national guard, asked U.S. officials for assistance in creating an elite unit, to be called the Saudi Arabian National Guard Special Purpose Detachment. The new force, which Abdullah was willing to spend \$40 million to establish, was to provide additional protection to royal family members and their palaces, as well as conduct special security and counterterrorist operations. The new unit would be manned by 400 Bedouins.⁸⁹

Beginning in December 1982, members of ISA, as well as personnel from Delta, went to Saudi Arabia, where they spent several months setting up the force. They also developed a close, continuing relationship with Abdullah's son Meteib, who helped oversee the detachment.⁹⁰

h. Hostage Rescue

On 17 December 1981, the senior U.S. Army officer in NATO's southern Europe command, Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics and Administration Brig. Gen. James Dozier, was abducted from his apartment in Verona, Italy. The kidnappers were members of Italy's Red Brigade.⁹¹

To locate Red Brigade hideouts, and hopefully Dozier, an ISA SIGINT team was deployed to Italy. Manning special helicopters outfitted with electronic direction finding equipment, the ISA team helped pinpoint Red Brigade sites. The helicopters "locked" onto suspected Red Brigade radio communications, then pinpointed the origins of the radio transmissions and other electronic communications of the terrorists. The helicopters units, as well as on-the-ground technicians using stationary electronic detection equipment, monitored the airwaves in various areas of Italy. By mid-January, ISA intercepts, along with those of the NSA, enabled the Italian authorities to locate several suspected Red Brigade safe houses. In one

instance, using coordinates provided by the ISA team, the Italian police arrested several more Red Brigade members.⁹²

Ultimately, the leads produced by U.S. and Italian intelligence and police agencies would lead to a 28 January raid on a Red Brigade site by ten Italian anti-terrorist commandos. The commandos were able to grab the terrorist who had a gun pointed at the head of the blindfolded and chained Dozier before he could fire.⁹³

On 19 July 1982 David Dodge, acting president of the American University in Beirut, became the first of several Americans to be kidnapped and held by Iranian-supported militants. In the first half of 1984, another four Americans were seized, including the CIA station chief in Beirut, William Buckley.⁹⁴ While the Reagan Administration was determined not to become prisoner to a hostage crisis, as the Carter Administration had been, its strong desire was to have the hostages either rescued or released through diplomacy.

Intelligence reports about suspected hostage locations flowed daily from a variety of sources, with the quality of the reports ranging from totally wrong to highly accurate. Local contacts developed by the CIA — particularly those made following the Buckley kidnapping in March — proved valuable. As a result, Pentagon officials believed they had a good idea as to the location of many of the hostages.⁹⁵

A contingency plan was proposed, in which ISA members were to secretly enter Beirut, positively identify the holding sites, and arrange safe houses and other logistical support necessary for the rescue of the hostages and their departure from Lebanon. Delta and SEAL forces would secretly enter Beirut in small groups, assemble at those safe houses, and — with support from Christian forces — simultaneously raid the sites where it was believed the hostages were held.⁹⁶

In the end, however, rescue planners decided that the intelligence was not sufficient to justify launching a mission. Although some officers from the Joint Staff and Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) lobbied for an attempt to be made, the majority believed the risk was too great and the mission was put on hold.⁹⁷

In a 31 May computer message to national security adviser John Poindexter, Oliver North suggested “that if the current efforts [negotiations with the Iranians] fail to achieve release then . . . a [rescue] mission should be considered.” North then stated the CIA had “botched” the effort to free hostage Peter Kilburn. The JCS, he continued, had “steadfastly refused to go beyond the initial thinking stage unless we can develop some hard intelligence on [the hostages’] whereabouts. We already have one ISA officer in Beirut but no effort has been made to insert [Defense Department] personnel since we withdrew the military mission to the LAF [Lebanese Air Force].”⁹⁸

On 6 June, President Ronald Reagan gave his authorization for planning to proceed on ways to extricate the hostages using force. Four days later, North relayed that approval to Duane “Dewey” Clarridge, the head of the CIA’s Directorate of Operations–European Division. North told Clarridge that, “Given the lack of

progress with the various initiatives to free our hostages, I require that [the] CIA immediately intensify its current effort to locate the hostages and to prepare the clandestine delivery system to enable the U.S. Military to rescue the hostages.”⁹⁹

Although CIA officials then began working on the problem, the JSOC and ISA were soon told to develop a plan for locating and extracting the hostages. On 30 June, an ISA operative carrying false documentation traveled from Cyprus to Lebanon, escorted by members of the Lebanese Front, the Christian militia. With the Front’s protection, he surveyed Beirut and received intelligence from the Front on the suspected locations of several hostages. An agreement was then concluded under which the Front would supply continuous intelligence to Pentagon counterterrorism units.¹⁰⁰

On 7 July, the officer left Beirut and returned to headquarters. Soon after his arrival, ISA began receiving daily intelligence reports from the Christians. But, in mid-September the CIA ordered ISA to halt all contact with the Lebanese Christian forces. CIA officials, whose own relations with the Lebanese Christians had gone bad in 1985, told Defense Department representatives that the Christians could not be trusted. ISA officials suspected that the CIA was simply jealous of ISA’s success.¹⁰¹

But four weeks later, the ISA was directed to immediately develop a plan to liberate the hostages. On the basis of intelligence from the Lebanese Front, ISA believed it knew the location of at least three hostages. ISA’s plan called for creating a local support system, made up of Front members, to assist the entry of clandestine special operations units. The Christians would provide safe houses, and obtain and drive cars and trucks to transport the American special forces. Delta would be the principal strike force, with assistance from the special forces of various European allies.¹⁰²

ISA awaited the order to begin the operation, but once again nothing happened. Later, ISA agents were told they had “bumped up against Ollie North,” who was deeply involved in a new round of negotiations with Iran. The fear was that an attempt to rescue the hostages, if unsuccessful, would, at the very least, derail the negotiations.¹⁰³

i. Acquisition of Foreign Weapon Systems

One of ISA’s first Middle East operations, codenamed GREAT FALCON, was a late 1981 attempt to acquire a T-72, at the time the most advanced Soviet tank, as well as other military equipment from Iraq. In exchange the United States would provide 175-mm cannons.¹⁰⁴

In secret meetings in Europe and Washington, Iraqi representatives offered to give the United States a T-72 and a Hind-D attack helicopter in exchange for the 175-mm cannons, the most powerful artillery in the Army’s inventory. The Iraqi negotiators also offered a Soviet MiG-25. The deal was approved by the JCS and

Secretary Defense Weinberger, and ISA was ready to make the exchange. But the deal fell through at the last moment when the Iraqi agents proved unable to get final authorization from their government.¹⁰⁵

DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE FORCE

ISA survived Deputy Secretary Carlucci's May 1982 termination order. In 1983, when ISA was first brought to public attention, official sources assured reporters that the organization was under control. In response to questions, a White House official said, "The agency is now very much under control . . . Its organizational control is proper. It is not causing us trouble."¹⁰⁶

But ISA had a hard time fitting into the Army intelligence community. While its first commander, Jerry King, had a good relationship with Edmund Thompson, the ACSI who oversaw the creation of FOG, his relations with Lt. Gen. Odom were strained. According to King, Odom was someone who one day would instruct ISA to "set the Middle East on fire," but the next day would complain "Oh lord, what are you doing?" Odom, in King's view, was "scared to death" that ISA's activities might interfere with his career. Such a "yo-yo effect," as King described it, would have a major impact on ISA's morale. King recalls that in one instance his disagreement with Odom became heated, with King telling Odom that he didn't need lessons in leadership from him.¹⁰⁷

King was replaced in early 1984. Rather than being succeeded by his deputy, Calvin Sasai, as King wished, the new ISA commander came from outside the organization. Colonel Howard J. Floyd's Army career started in 1960 with the 101st Airborne division; in 1963, he began a series of tactical and strategic military intelligence assignments, which included service with the U.S. Army Photographic Interpretation Center, and the 501st Military Intelligence Group in Korea.¹⁰⁸

Recalling that one of his primary functions as commander was attempting to demonstrate the need for a unit such as ISA, Col. Floyd spoke "to ambassadors [and] staffers, trying to explain why it was needed," and why its operational support missions "can't be done on an ad hoc basis."¹⁰⁹

But while Floyd believed that an ISA was needed, he also found the restrictions under which it operated stifling. The approval process, he recalls, was "atrocious." In contrast to the British Special Air Service, which required approval from only one level of the bureaucracy, ISA, at times, had to brief seven different general counsels on its plans. In Floyd's view, rather than being provided with the tools needed to complete assigned tasks, ISA was faced with a series of roadblocks.¹¹⁰

The type of waits which bothered Floyd are evident in the 1987 ISA annual history (covering a period after Floyd had departed). A proposed Latin American operation, GOTHIC JAGUAR, which had been submitted for coordination in October 1986, remained there in February 1987, while the coordination process for two other

proposed Latin American operations, ROOSTER COURT and ROOT PAIN, which had been submitted before December, was not concluded until June 1997.¹¹¹

As a result of such frustrations, Floyd asked to be relieved of command on several occasions. Finally on 16 January 1986, he wrote to the head of the Army Intelligence and Security Command, responsible for supervising ISA, that "It is in the best interest of this command to deactivate USAISA." He also requested that "approval for this action be expedited, and coordination [deleted - but possibly "with CIA"] be effected for earliest possible accomplishment."¹¹²

A decade later, Floyd recalled that he may have been pushing someone to make a decision, hoping that his memo would help to streamline approval and oversight arrangements, while feeling that unless that could be done, it would be better not to continue ISA's operations.¹¹³

A 14 March memorandum from Brig. Gen. George J. Walker, INSCOM Chief of Staff, addressed to Headquarters, Department of the Army, requested approval for disestablishment of ISA. But in a 31 March memo, Brig. Gen. Randall A. Greenwalt, the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, noted that "ISA has a special relationship with DOD, JCS and National agencies for oversight and coordination — a unilateral decision such as this proposal would 'ricochet' throughout the system — this effect should also be weighed and judged." Greenwalt also observed that "This is a matter that the ACSI himself should decide."¹¹⁴

Colonel Floyd was replaced, at his own request, in June 1986 by Col. John G. Lackey III, commander of the 66th Military Intelligence Brigade. The next month, the ACSI, Lt. Gen. Sydney T. Weinstein, met with General Soyster, who had become INSCOM commander in 1984, to discuss ISA's fate. Weinstein, either out of concern for the ricochet effect, or for other reasons, decided that ISA should remain in existence.¹¹⁵

But once again, this time in March 1988, a head of ISA, now Colonel Lackey, recommended to INSCOM the deactivation of ISA and the associated ROYAL CAPE Special Access Program. And once again the proposal may have been the outcome of the operational restrictions on ISA rather than a real belief the unit should be disestablished.¹¹⁶

At least one event in the following months certainly did nothing to help ISA's reputation. In September, a grand jury in Nashville, Tennessee indicted a former member of ISA, Major Michael L. Smith. From 1981 until August 1984, Smith, serving as unit Adjutant, was authorized to purchase weapons, supplies, and other equipment for the unit. But he retained possession of more than 200 weapons, and falsified records to make it appear as if the unit had purchased ammunition and other expendable items, rather than the pistols and rifles. Because of statute-of-limitation problems, Smith was charged, not with theft of government property or falsification of records, but with interstate transportation of stolen firearms and other stolen

property as well as other offenses — actions which had occurred in 1986 and 1987. He entered a guilty plea in 1991.¹¹⁷

On 6 March 1989, Major General Soyster's successor as INSCOM commander, Major General Stanley Hyman, gave verbal orders to terminate ISA. INSCOM Permanent Orders 24-3 put that order in writing on 16 March, with an effective date of 1 April, along with additional instructions that "disposition of existing unit assets will be made in accordance with applicable Army Directives."¹¹⁸

On 31 March the ISA's Commander issued a memo ordering that "Effective 2400 HRS., 31 Mar 89, the term "United States Army Intelligence Support Activity" (USAISA) will be discontinued. "USAISA" or "ISA" should not be used in any communications/correspondence after that date." It also ordered that the nickname of the related Special Access Program, which had been changed from ROYAL CAPE to GRANTOR SHADOW, would also be terminated.¹¹⁹

RESURRECTION

Disestablishing an organization such as ISA involves, in addition to terminating its organizational identity, disposing of its assets — physical property (headquarters, safe houses, and proprietaries) and programs — and transferring or letting go its employees. Other intelligence agencies may want to acquire some of its property, employees, and especially ongoing programs. But it appears that rather than being dismembered and distributed among assorted agencies, ISA simply received a new identity and a new boss.

One logical home for ISA's assets was the Army Intelligence and Security Command, which also conducted, through its Army Operational Group, clandestine HUMINT operations. But the U.S. Special Operations Command was also interested in ISA, on the ground that many of ISA's activities were geared to supporting U.S. special operations forces. It was reported in May 1990 that "the U.S. Special Operations Command has over the last year quietly gained control of . . . the 'Intelligence Support Activity.'" The same source also reported that the decision to transfer control of ISA to USSOCOM was made by Deputy Defense Secretary William Taft, over Army objections.¹²⁰

According to the *Intelligence Newsletter*, an anonymous Army officer assigned to JSOC stated that "the Pentagon still has the capability of the original ISA in one place and it's just being called something different, that's all." According to the report, in addition to counterterrorism, the unit is becoming increasingly involved in counter-proliferation, economic espionage, and information warfare. In the counter-proliferation area it is reportedly providing intelligence on black markets in nuclear and bio/chemical weapons by infiltrating agents into gangs engaged in such activity. A former senior intelligence officer has noted that ISA had a great mission and "still does."¹²¹

The Special Operations Command, ex-ISA head Colonel Floyd came to conclude, is an appropriate home for an ISA-type unit. According to Floyd, “conventional people have conventional thoughts and do things in conventional ways,” but special operations and intelligence support to those operations require a different way of operating.¹²²

FUNDAMENTAL TENSIONS REMAIN

The history of the Intelligence Support Activity raises a variety of questions with regard to issues such as secrecy and oversight. The ISA was established as a classified organization, as were the Navy’s clandestine collection organization, known as Task Force 157, and the National Reconnaissance Office. The classified existence of such organizations raises the general question of whether public understanding and debate concerning intelligence activities are significantly, and unnecessarily, limited by such secrecy. In the case of ISA, its secret existence allowed the Army to hide its existence not only from the public, but from congressional overseers.

Absolute secrecy may also harm the organizations themselves. The presumption that such secrecy leads to abuses may result in the darkest interpretation being placed on revelations of operations or procurement activities. In her account of U.S. special operations, former Pentagon official Susan Marquis argued that “even when the reported misdeeds were few, they reinforced the impression that special operations forces, in general, were out of control or at least not under the control of U.S. military leadership.”¹²³

Thus, some of the equipment acquired by ISA — including a Rolls Royce and hot-air balloon — and initially taken as a sign of wasteful spending, was actually acquired from other government agencies at no expense. But the perception of abuses may, particularly when combined with any real shortcomings, push such an organization to the brink of extinction.

At the same time, the secret existence of an organization may tempt some higher authorities to use that secrecy to avoid reporting special activities to Congress, while restricting knowledge of an operation to a narrower group of individuals, farther removed from top government officials. Thus, according to a former senior ISA officer, sometime between 1984 and 1986 a senior White House official arrived with a letter from the White House requesting ISA to perform a particular covert operation. The officer recalls that the request was rejected, and the official told that ISA would respond to findings, but that a letter was not sufficient.¹²⁴

ISA’s history also illustrates the fundamental tension between the exercise of careful oversight of such an organization and the need that it not be buried in paperwork and a prolonged bureaucratic approval process. Part of ISA’s problem clearly stemmed from the number of different organizations and actors that had a legitimate interest in, and legal responsibility to consider the impact of, its activities

— the DCI, who is responsible for coordination of human intelligence and covert action operations; the Secretary of Defense; the Director of DIA; the Director of NSA (when SIGINT was involved); the Secretary of the Army; and the Army's intelligence chief.

Yet, a multi-layered approval and coordination process that seeks to allow all “equities” to be represented can make it difficult or impossible for such an organization to accomplish the mission it was created to perform. Under those circumstances, a commander might indeed logically suggest that it would be better to close down the organization than attempt to operate in such an environment.

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- ³ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 21.
- ⁴ U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity, “Brief History of Unit,” 1983; Thor Hanson, Director, Joint Staff, Memorandum for General Vaught, Subject: Intelligence Support for SNOWBIRD (TS) and Related Matters (TS), 25 August 1980; W. Graham Claytor Jr., Deputy Secretary of Defense, Memorandum for the Secretary of the Army, Subject: Intelligence Support to SNOWBIRD, 25 August 1980; 902d Military Intelligence Group, *Operations Security Evaluation of U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity Conducted by 902d Military Intelligence Group, 26 October 1986 to 31 January 1987*, 1987, p. 3. It has often been reported that FOG was formed to provide intelligence for the first rescue mission; for example, see Caryle Murphy and Charles R. Babcock, “Army’s Covert Role Scrutinized,” *The Washington Post*, 29 November 1985, pp. A1, A8–A9. It has also been reported that the designation for the planned second rescue mission was HONEY BADGER. But HONEY BADGER was a component of SNOWBIRD, and focused on developing an aviation capability to mount special or counterterrorist operations in the Middle East and Persian Gulf areas. See Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 17.
- ⁵ Telephone interview with Colonel Jerry King, 5 February 1996; Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, pp. 22–23. Emerson (p. 22) reports that in 1979 a Special Forces unit entered Nicaragua, using false passports and cover identities, because U.S. officials feared the embassy might be seized as a result of the revolt against long-time dictator Anastasio Somoza. The unit photographed the entire perimeter of the embassy, and noted the type of locks on internal and external doors, the number of exits and windows, the internal layout, and any structural impediments. The practice was repeated in a number of countries. A mission to Iran was scheduled when the embassy was seized.
- ⁶ Lt. Gen. Philip C. Gast, Director for Operations, Memorandum for Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, Subject: Intelligence Capability, 10 December 1980.

- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity “Brief History of Unit,” 1983. Raymond Bonner, “Secret Pentagon Intelligence Unit Disclosed,” *The New York Times*, 11 May 1983, p. A13; Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 50.
- ⁹ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 50; Edward C. Meyer, Army Chief of Staff, Memorandum for Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Subject: Operational [HUMINT] Capability, 29 January 1981; United States Army Intelligence and Security Command, Permanent Orders 8-1, United States Army Intelligence Support Activity AS (W4GXAA), 3 March 1981.
- ¹⁰ United States Army Intelligence and Security Command, Permanent Orders 8-1; 902d Military Intelligence Group, *Operations Security Evaluation of U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity Conducted by 902d Military Intelligence Group, 26 October 1986 to 31 January 1987*, p. 4.
- ¹¹ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, pp. 50–51; “United States Intelligence Support Activity, Organized 3 March 1981”; Letter, Autmer Ackley Jr. to Colonel Hector Perez-Lebron, Special Investigating Officer, Subject: Notification of Respondent, 8 December 1986.
- ¹² “United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, Organized 3 March 1981.”
- ¹³ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 51. A \$2 million figure for the initial budget is given in George C. Wilson, “Secret Army Intelligence Unit Lived on After 1980 Iran Mission,” *The Washington Post*, 23 August 1983, p. A6.
- ¹⁴ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 80; Ben Bradlee, “Trained to Free Indochina POWs, He Frets at Home,” *Boston Globe*, 7 July 1981, pp. 1, 8.
- ¹⁵ U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *New Information on U.S. MIA-Pows in Indochina?*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 23.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 79.
- ¹⁷ Ibid; U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, *POW/MIAs*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), p. 314.
- ¹⁸ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 78; Susan Katz Keating, *Prisoners of Hope: Exploiting the POW/MIA Myth in America*, (New York: Random House, 1994), p. 131.
- ¹⁹ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, pp. 78–79.
- ²⁰ Ibid., p. 79; Caryle Murphy and Charles R. Babcock, “Army’s Covert Role Scrutinized,” *The Washington Post*, 29 November 1995, pp. A1, A8–9; U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, *POW/MIAs*, p. 314.
- ²¹ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 79; U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, *POWs/MIAs*, p. 314; Keating, *Prisoners of Hope*, p. 132.
- ²² King interview; Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 79; George J. Church, “The Secret Army,” *Time*, 31 August 1987, pp. 12–14; U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, *POW/MIAs*, p. 314.
- ²³ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 79.
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 80; King interview.

- ²⁵ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 81; King interview; Telephone interview with Jerry King, 16 October 1996. King also questions why the Department of Defense would look into the activities of an Army unit, and speculates that the report might have been intended to facilitate ISA's absorption into a proposed Department of Defense HUMINT program designated MONARCH EAGLE. FOIA requests to the Defense Department Inspector General and the Army Intelligence and Security Command for the report have produced "no records" responses.
- ²⁶ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 81.
- ²⁷ Frank C. Carlucci, Memorandum to the Deputy Under Secretary for Policy, 26 May 1982.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 81.
- ³⁰ Toth, "White House to Put Limits on Army's Secret Spy Unit"; Frank C. Carlucci, Memorandum for the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Army. Subject: Resumption of USAISA Activities, 19 October 1982.
- ³¹ U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity, "Brief History of Unit."
- ³² Caspar Weinberger, Memorandum for the Secretary of the Army, Subject: United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, July [day illegible], 1983. According to one account, those special controls (which the ISA's Brief History of the Unit characterized as "extraordinary") prevented travel by ISA officers outside the Washington area without specific permission from the Secretary of the Army. See George J. Church, "The Secret Army," *Time*, 31 August 1987, pp. 12–14. The cited references were the 26 May memo, the 19 October memo, and two Deputy Secretary of Defense memos: Establishment of Corporations, 2 June 1982, and Provision of DOD Cover, Operational and Logistic Support, 20 December 1979.
- ³³ U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity, "Brief History of Unit"; United States Intelligence Support Activity, Mission Statement, apparently circa 1983.
- ³⁴ *Charter of the U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity*, July 1983.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 3.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ⁴⁰ Jay Peterzell, "What is the Army's ISA Up to?," *The Washington Post*, 24 April 1983, pp. C1, C4; Raymond Bonner, "Secret Pentagon Intelligence Unit Disclosed," *The New York Times*, 11 May 1983, p. A13; Toth, "White House to Put Limits on Army's Secret Spy Unit"; Wilson, "Secret Army Intelligence Unit Lived on After 1980 Iran Mission."
- ⁴¹ Letter, Penny Bevis, CNSS to John O. Marsh, Secretary of the Army, 10 September 1984.
- ⁴² Letter, Darrell L. Peck, Deputy General Counsel (Military and Civil Affairs), U.S. Army, to Penny Bevis, CNSS, 2 October 1984.
- ⁴³ "FY 85 Key Personnel Report," in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1985 Historical Report*, n.d.

- ⁴⁴ “Directorate of Intelligence (DI) Historical Report FY 85,” in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1985 Historical Report*, n.d.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 2.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- ⁴⁷ “FY 85 Key Personnel Report,” in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1985 Historical Report*, n.d.; United States Intelligence Support Activity, *1986 Historical Report*, n.d., Organization Chart.
- ⁴⁸ “FY 86 Key Personnel Report,” Organizational Chart, in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1986 Historical Report*, n.d.; ISA Historical Data Fiscal Year 1987, p. 1.
- ⁴⁹ “Directorate of Intelligence and Security FY 86 Report,” in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1986 Historical Report*, n.d.; Mission Statement, Directorate of Intelligence and Security, in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1987 Historical Report*, 23 October 1987.
- ⁵⁰ “Mission Statement, Directorate of Intelligence and Security 1987,” in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1987 Historical Report*.
- ⁵¹ “1987 Historical Data, Directorate of Operations,” p. 1 in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1987 Historical Report*, 23 October 1987.
- ⁵² Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 52.
- ⁵³ 902d Military Intelligence Group, *Operations Security Evaluation of U.S. Army Intelligence Support Activity Conducted by 902d Military Intelligence Group, 26 October 1986 to 31 January 1987*, 1987, p. 27.
- ⁵⁴ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, pp. 51–52.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁶ “Annex C, Operations/Training 1985,” p. 4 in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1985 Historical Report*.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ⁵⁹ “ISA Historical Data FY 1986,” in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1986 Historical Report*.
- ⁶⁰ Church, “The Secret Army”; Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, pp. 89–92; 185–188.
- ⁶¹ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, pp. 85, 87.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 87–88; Information Memorandum for: Senator [Barry] Goldwater, Senator [William] Cohen, Subject: Army Special Operations Forces (SOF), 1 April 1985, Tab D. GRID CIRCUIT was the codename for Army Special Operations Division operations.
- ⁶³ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 89.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 89–90.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 92–93.

- ⁶⁸ “1987 Historical Data, Directorate of Operations,” p. 1 in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1987 Historical Report*; Military Intelligence Battalion (Security), USAINSCOM 902d Military Intelligence Group, Subject: After Action Report for Operation CANVAS SHIELD (U), 30 July 1985. CANVAS SHIELD was an operations security assessment of GRAZING LAWN.
- ⁶⁹ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, pp. 91–92.
- ⁷⁰ Church, “The Secret Army.”
- ⁷¹ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 186.
- ⁷² David Martin and John Walcott, *Best Laid Plans: The Inside Story of America’s War Against Terrorism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. xvii, 93.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xvii, 105.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xvii, 105, 109.
- ⁷⁶ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, pp. 185–188.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 188.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*; Martin and Walcott, *Best Laid Plans*, p. 109.
- ⁷⁹ Martin and Walcott, *Best Laid Plans*, pp. 109–110.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xvii; Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 189.
- ⁸¹ Martin and Walcott, *Best Laid Plans*, p. 133; Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 191.
- ⁸² Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 192–194; Martin and Walcott, *Best Laid Plans*, pp. 133–134; William V. Cowan, “Intelligence, Rescue, Retaliation, and Decisionmaking,” n.d., p. 2.
- ⁸³ Martin and Walcott, *Best Laid Plans*, pp. 133–134. Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 194.
- ⁸⁴ Martin and Walcott, *Best Laid Plans*, pp. 133–134.
- ⁸⁵ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 194–195.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 196.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 197.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.
- ⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 67.
- ⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.
- ⁹⁴ Martin and Walcott, *Best Laid Plans*, pp. xviii, 100–101.
- ⁹⁵ Emerson, *Secret Warriors*, p. 209.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 209–210.
- ⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 210.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 231.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰² Ibid.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 233.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 185.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 185–186.
- ¹⁰⁶ Toth, “White House to Put Limits on Army’s Secret Spy Unit.”
- ¹⁰⁷ King interview, 5 February 1996.
- ¹⁰⁸ King interview, 16 October 1996; Resumé of Howard J. Floyd, n.d.
- ¹⁰⁹ Floyd interview, 7 February 1996.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid. Among the organizations exercising oversight were the Army’s Technology Management Office and the HUMINT Staff (ADCSOPS-H) of INSCOM.
- ¹¹¹ “1987 Historical Data, Directorate of Operations,” in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1987 Historical Report*.
- ¹¹² [deleted] Col, MI Commanding to Commanding General, Intelligence and Security Command, Subject: Deactivation of USAISA [deleted], 16 January 1986.
- ¹¹³ Telephone interview with Howard J. Floyd, 1 October 1996.
- ¹¹⁴ George J. Walker, Chief of Staff (INSCOM), To: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Subject: Request for Approval of Concept, 14 March 1986; Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, To: LTC [deleted], Ref: attached staff action, 31 March 1986.
- ¹¹⁵ “1987 Historical Data, Directorate of Operations,” p. 1, in United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, *1987 Historical Report*.
- ¹¹⁶ Col. MI Commanding, United States Army Intelligence Support Activity, Memorandum for: Commander, U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, Subject: ROYAL CAPE, 24 March 1988.
- ¹¹⁷ Jeff Gerth, “Major is Charged in Weapon Theft,” *The New York Times*, 15 September 1988, p. A23; Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, *Annual Historical Review, 1 October 1990–30 September 1991*, n.d., pp. 5–27; United States Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, Nashville Division, United States v. Michael Lynn Smith, Indictment, 14 September 1988.
- ¹¹⁸ United States Army Intelligence and Security Command, Permanent Orders 24-3, 16 March 1989, United States Army Intelligence Support Activity (W4GXXA), Arlington Hall Station.
- ¹¹⁹ CDR USAISA, Subject: Termination of USAISA and “GRANTOR SHADOW,” 31 March 1989.
- ¹²⁰ “Military Special Ops Take Control of Secret ‘Intelligence Support’ Agency,” *Inside the Army*, 14 May 1990, pp. 1, 10.
- ¹²¹ “Covert Unit Alive and Kicking,” *Intelligence Newsletter*, 29 June 1995, p. 4; Interview. The new organization is apparently still located at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. Its name is changed every two years, its codename every six months. One of its recent names may have been the Tactical Coordination Detachment.

¹²² Floyd interview, 7 February 1996.

¹²³ Susan L. Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1997), p. 20.

¹²⁴ Interview.