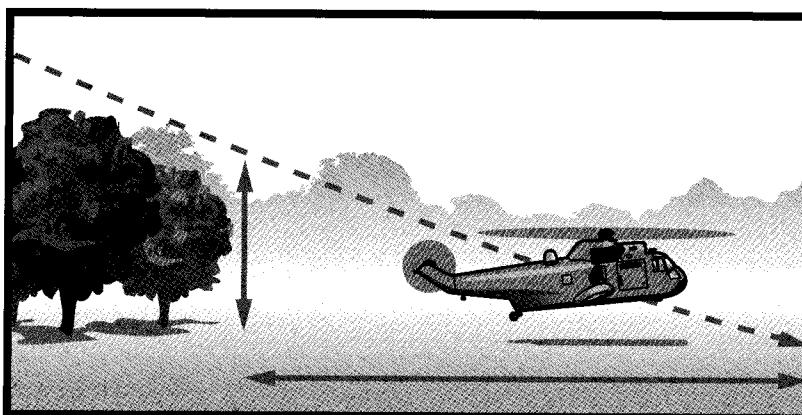


INFILTRATION

divers and from sonar devices discovered the tracks of several small submarines apparently working from a mother ship. Comparable activities were also discovered off the coast of Scotland.

AIR

Insertion by air is particularly good, as it allows the operators to be lifted directly into enemy territory; it also provides a rapid means of extraction. Most air operations require a landing site (LS), where troops are infiltrated by helicopter and are actually placed on the ground, or a landing zone (LZ) for dropping personnel by parachute. In instances where a helicopter can infiltrate an enemy area but not actually land – such as in a jungle or built-up areas – personnel would normally reach the ground by rope. A similar system can be used for "hot extraction" from a hostile area. While these are the main methods for clandestine operations, many others have also been tried.



▲ Helicopters, although noisy, have the capability to deliver agents directly to a given point thus avoiding borders. They can either land or hover while troops descend by rope or ladder.

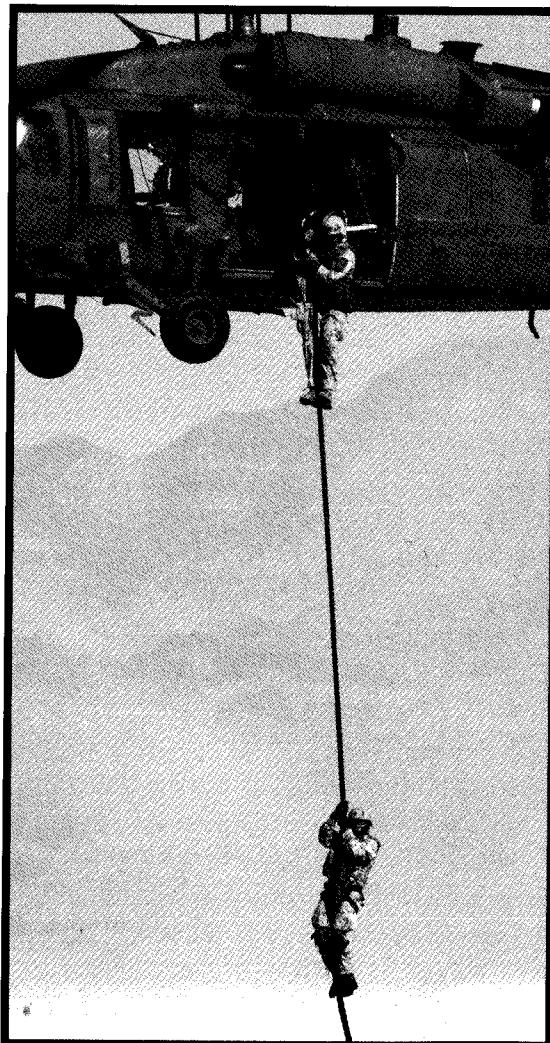
ADVANTAGES OF AIR

- ▶ The speed of delivery.
- ▶ The accuracy of delivery.
- ▶ Short exposure to enemy.
- ▶ The ability to perform simultaneous missions.

DISADVANTAGES OF AIR

- ▶ Vulnerability to enemy air defences.
- ▶ Reliance on favourable weather conditions.
- ▶ The risk of possible injury to personnel and damage to equipment.
- ▶ The possible compromise of DZ or LZ.

Fast Rope Insertion/Extraction System (FRIES)



◀ FRIES is a fast rope insertion and extraction system. This enables personnel to be lowered into places where the helicopter can not land.



▲ Some systems can deliver or snatch up to 10 personnel.

FRIES is a rope, manufactured from high-tensile, multifilament nylon, that incorporates eight nylon rope loops in the last few metres. This rope is suspended from a helicopter and the soldiers can attach themselves to it. The system is designed to be non-rotating, enabling problem-free deployment. It also has a high extension capability, can absorb dynamic loads and ensures a smooth descent when troops need to be "snatched" out quickly.

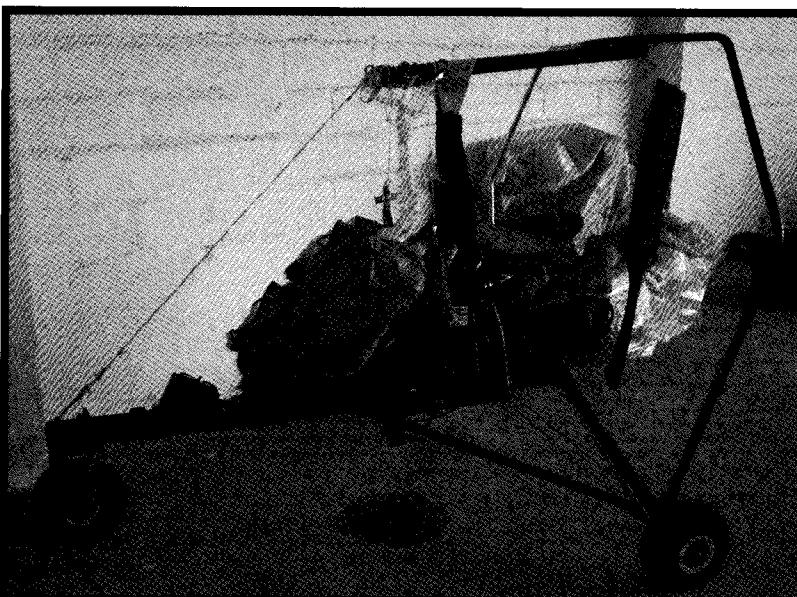
FRIES enables agents and Special Forces personnel to be deployed into, and retrieved from, dangerous situations by simply clipping themselves and their equipment to the loops with quick-release karabiners. The system increases the deployment speed of airborne forces and reduces the risk of helicopter and personnel vulnerability. A Blackhawk helicopter, using a two-rope system, is capable of delivering a group of 12 men in a little over ten seconds once it is in the correct hover position.

Individual Flying Platforms

During the 1960s, the American military researched the effectiveness of jetpacks. Although they achieved a working model, it was not deemed to be efficient as the amount of fuel required to fly it was incompatible with the amount of time a soldier would be required to fly it. There has been some renewed interest in individual flying frames in recent years, but, at

the time of writing, no working model is available other than the powered paraglider.

The Para Hawk is a propeller-powered platform that uses a parachute as a means of flying. Although the idea was first developed in the United States, it was then taken up by a retired SAS pilot, who started designing his own aircraft near to the SAS headquarters in Hereford. The first models were ready during the mid-1980s and the SAS carried out field trials on the Microlight aircraft, as it was then known. The aircraft consisted of a three-wheeled trike and a Ram-Air parachute. The trike had a rear-mounted engine, the propeller of which was housed in a protective cage. The pilot was strapped into an open seat in front of the engine where his right foot would control the accelerator. Revving the engine would speed the trike forward, forcing the ram-air parachute that was attached to the trike to act as a wing. The Microlight required little room for take-off and landing, added to which a pilot could be taught to fly it in less than a day. Despite the fact that it was almost impossible to stall the Microlight, SAS trials were discontinued after several messy landings. Newer forms of backpack-mounted Para Hawks manufactured in the United States are much improved and their evaluation is still ongoing.



▲ This is one of the original Para Hawks used by the British SAS. It was found in a small airfield in Namibia, close to the CIA's abandoned intelligence centre.

Parachuting

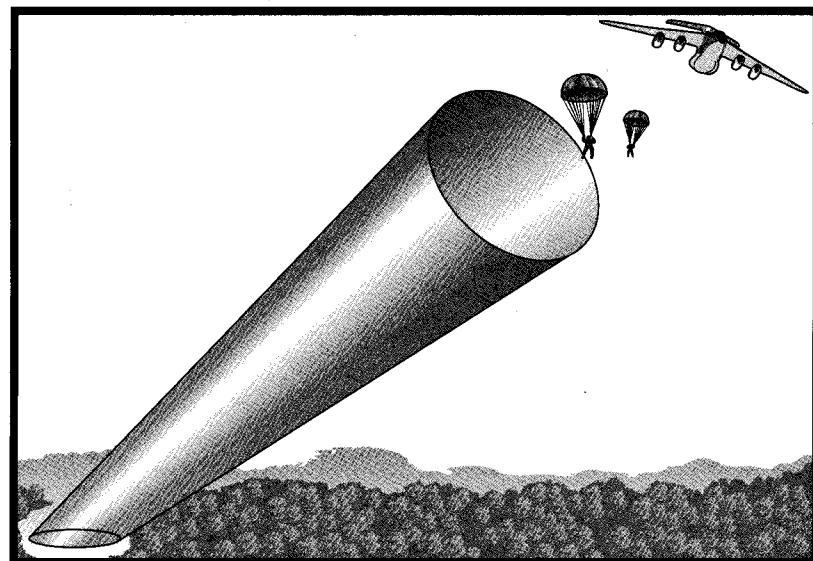


▲ Parachuting provides a good method of infiltration.

Most Special Forces are taught basic parachuting skills. A normal course involves making four low-altitude 60 metre (200 ft) static line jumps, seven normal 240 metre (800 ft) jumps and two water jumps. Standard British parachutes are the PX1 Mk 4, the PX Mk 5 and the PR7 reserve, all of which have an equipment suspension strap and an integral jettison device. Once on the ground, the parachutist can jettison the canopy and clear the Drop Zone (DZ) immediately. All parachutes, whether they are American, Russian or British, are very similar in style. However, modern parachutes open very quickly, thus allowing for a lower altitude jump.

HAHO (High Altitude High Opening)

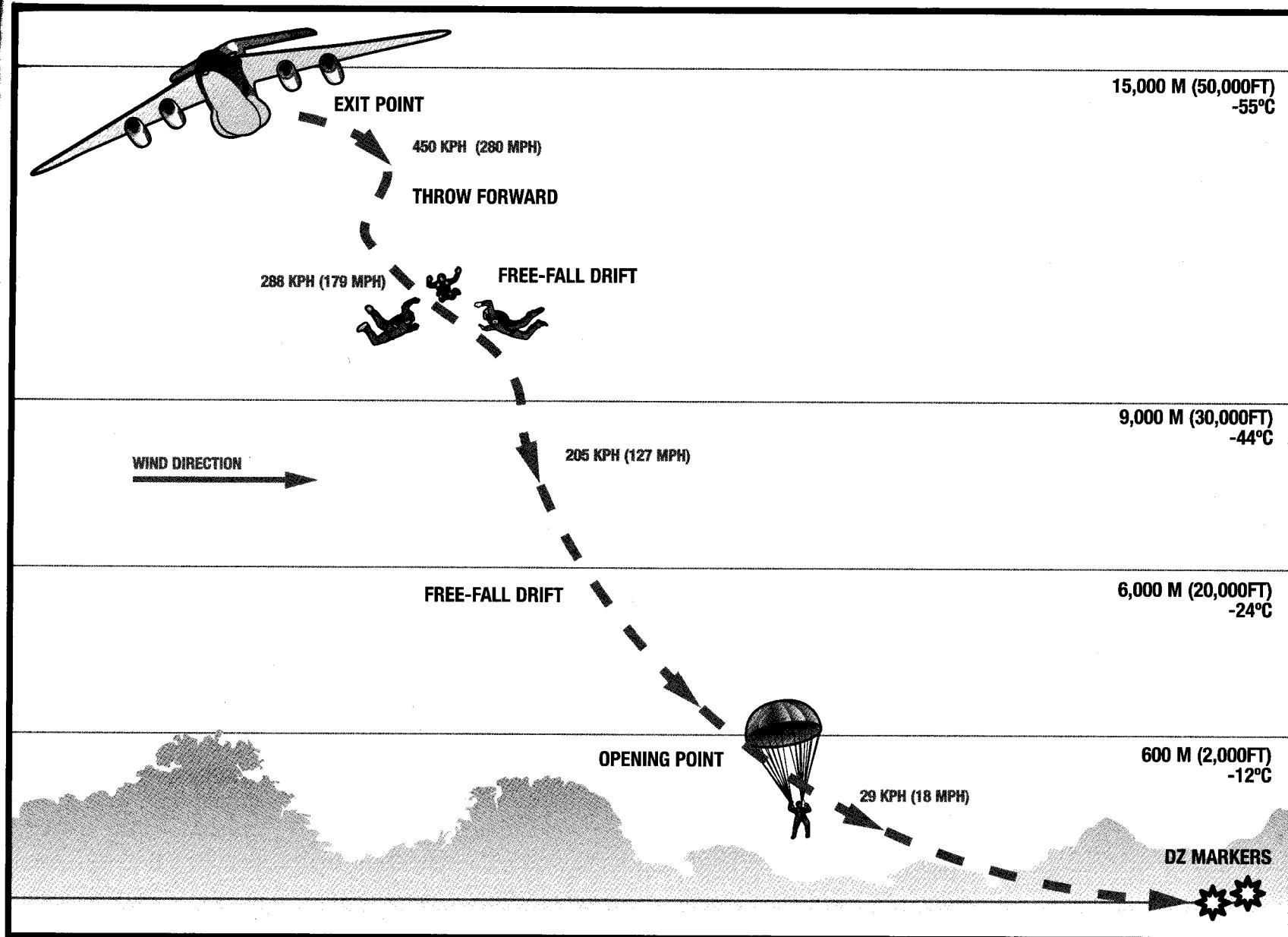
HAHO is a method of air insertion where the parachutist exits the aircraft at a height of up to 9,000 metres (30,000 ft) and opens his parachute immediately. Using a RAM Air parachute, the parachutist can then glide for several miles; this allows the parachutist to infiltrate the enemy area undetected, across borders or major enemy concentrations. GPS can be used in-flight to track the individual's position in relation to the earth's surface and assess drift to the LZ area. In the early 1980s, the British SAS dropped a team of free-faller parachutists off the south coast of England using the HAHO principle; all of them made it into France.



▲ HAHO means the parachute is deployed very high. The height allows them to drift up to 30 kilometres, an ideal way of crossing borders undetected.

HALO (High Altitude Low Opening)

In a HALO drop, the parachutes do not open until approximately 750 metres (2,500 ft) above the ground. This requires the parachutist to free-fall for most of the way – a method of infiltration that is fast, silent, accurate and tends to land the team in the same spot. The speed of descent in free-fall is fast, but may vary slightly with each individual and the position he holds. For example, in a normal “delta” position, he will descend at a rate of 200 km per hour (120 MPH), but in a “tracking” position this may well increase to 280 km per hour (175 MPH).



▲ HALO is mainly used for putting agents or Special Forces into a specific area. They fall to a height of around 600 metres which leaves them enough time to manoeuvre the chute into the DZ.

CHAPTER

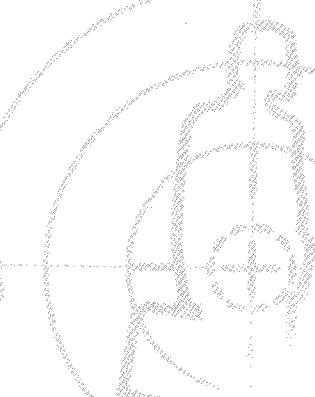
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'Black Ops' are used by governments the world over. They give them the power to stabilize or destabilize a country. They may be used to remove another governing power or to make way for an invasion.

60

80

100





CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS

A clandestine operation is any form of operation undertaken by one government against another foreign power. These operations are normally conducted in enemy-held, enemy-controlled or politically sensitive territory. Operations that are both covert and that entail a final assault mode are known as "black ops". These are normally carried out by military personnel seconded to an intelligence agency, and are approved with the purpose of stabilizing or destabilizing the current ruling power, or to prepare the ground for an invasion.

The means by which this is done may include: supporting an opposition group, assassination, sabotage, deception or psychological warfare. Most of these would be carried out by indigenous forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed to varying degrees by both agents and Special Forces personnel. The overall aims are to weaken the opposing government by seizing material assets, damaging or destroying



▲ A member of the American Special Forces working with the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan.

installations and changing the political environment. This aim is achieved by psychological operations that are backed up by subversion, deception and direct action – including incursion, ambushes, sabotage, assassination and the small-scale raids.

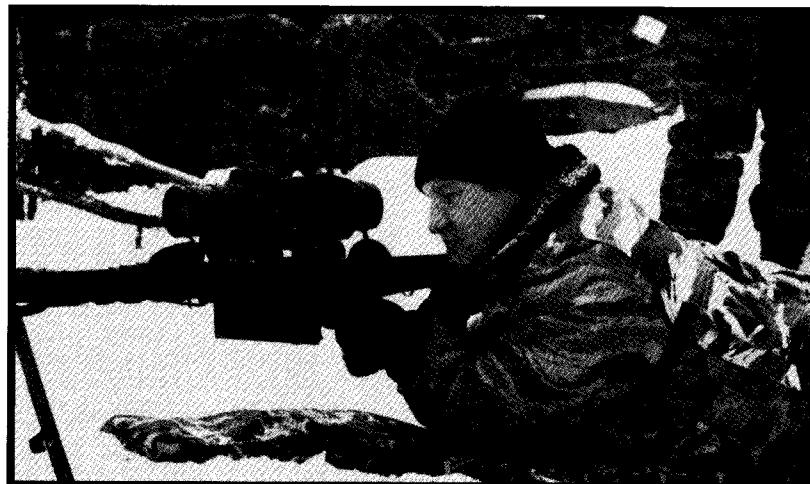
As has been seen many times throughout history, it is sometimes advantageous to openly show support for the overthrow of a particular government. However, this normally leads to full-scale war, which is extremely costly in terms of both material and manpower. For this reason, clandestine operations remain the instrument of choice for the policy makers as it remains the best way to avoid all-out war. The type of operation that is undertaken will be determined by the country involved and that country's current political situation.

On a political level, no government will ever admit to carrying out clandestine operation, and most will adopt the "holier-than-thou" approach. Despite this facade, the intelligence agencies of many countries have murdered, raped, lied, cheated and pillaged in order to achieve their objectives. They have conducted brainwashing experiments, spread disinformation, carried out massive human-rights violations, established brothels, bribed or assassinated political leaders and supported guerrilla groups in order to topple governments. If the threat is seen to be a "clear and present danger", then the appropriate action will be sanctioned.

All of the major intelligence agencies have a department that caters for clandestine operations. In Great Britain, for example, members of the SAS, both present and retired, are employed to carry out the security services' "dirty work", both at home and abroad. In the United States, members of

the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment (DELTA) are used. In 2002, President Bush signed an intelligence order authorizing the CIA and units such as Delta to overthrow, capture or indeed kill the leader of a foreign country. Since the 9/11 attack, assassination is very much back in vogue. As we saw in the Moscow theatre assault of 2002, the Russians use the Alpha teams with great success, while the Israelis have Mossad and other subordinate groups.

RUSSIAN ALPHA



▲ A member of the Russian Alpha team firing a V-94 large-bore anti-material sniper rifle. As seen here, the rifle can be equipped with a new POS-13x60 telescopic sight.

The new Russian Federation also has a number of small units it can use for clandestine operations. One is the Special Assignment Centre of the Counter-Terrorist Department of the Federal Security Service. The Centre includes two special assignment units, Alpha and Vympel, and numbers between 1,500 and 2,000 men. The Foreign Intelligence Service has its own special forces. The unit was formed in 1998 and is called Zaslon. Different reports estimate that its numerical strength is between 300 and 500 servicemen.

Alpha is an elite KGB unit whose main functions are counter-terrorism, VIP protection and Special Forces operations – roles that bear more than a slight resemblance to those of the British SAS and with a structure that is

almost identical. Little was known about Alpha prior to the coup against President Gorbachev in 1991. During the course of the coup, they reversed the direction of it by standing alongside Yeltsin rather than attacking him in the White House of the Russian parliament, as they had been requested to do by the coup directors. As a consequence of their actions, they gained a very high level of access and the unit itself is no longer under the direction of the KGB. A unit known as "Bravo" works under a similar direction, but its exact role has not been identified.

There are many unconfirmed stories about the Alpha unit, almost all of which have a violent ending. One early story relates how they tricked hijackers into believing that they had left the Soviet sphere of influence and that if they landed they would be landing in a neutral country. They had not. As the aircraft came to a halt, it was rushed by members of Alpha. So fearsome was their reputation, most of the hijackers preferred to commit suicide rather than surrender.

This hard-line approach has also been effective in other areas. One example is Beirut. While the American and British were spending their time on elaborate deals – such as the arms-for-hostages debacle – Alpha allegedly used a much more direct line of reasoning. When, in October 1985, three Russian diplomats were taken hostage by Sunni Muslims, Alpha was dispatched to deal with the situation. Before they reached Beirut, one of the men, Arkady Katkov, had been shot dead and his body had been dumped on waste ground. It did not take the local KGB agents long to identify the perpetrators and, once they had done so, they then spent time tracking down the perpetrators' relatives. Alpha proceeded to arrest some of these as counter-hostages and, just to show that they could be just as menacing, they cut off several body parts and sent them to the kidnappers with a stern warning that other bits would follow if the kidnapped Russians were not released immediately. The tactic worked and since that time no other Russian has been taken hostage by any of the warring factions in the Middle East.

Alpha continues to be a highly secret organization with very little information as to its operation forthcoming. One operation involving Alpha took place on the evening of the October 23, 2002, in a Moscow Theatre. Some 50 Chechen guerrillas had seized the theatre and taken more than 600 hostages. The Alpha assault involved the use of a new type of gas, and although the outcome was successful and the terrorists were neutralized, more than 200 hostages died.

More recently, on September 3, 2004, in Beslan, southern Russia, Chechen rebels, aided by Arab sympathizers, struck again. This time they took over a school, taking more than 1,500 children and staff hostage. Days later and after several hours of confusion, an explosion took place in the school gym that caused the roof to collapse. At that point the Alpha units were sent in. After 12 hours of gunfire, during which half-naked children could be seen running from the building, all resistance was ended. The death toll was put at more than 150 staff and children with 646 (227 of them children) hospitalized. Twenty militants were killed, including ten Arabs who had assisted the Chechens.

Officials claimed the high death toll was due to the rebels setting off an explosive device in the gym. A Russian bomb expert said the gym had been rigged with explosives packed in plastic bottles strung up around the room on a cord and stuffed with metal objects. These had been detonated when members of the Alpha team had tried to enter the gym.

AMERICAN DELTA FORCE



▲ Two members of Delta who helped rescue CIA operatives who were trapped in a prison riot during the Afghan war.

American clandestine operations are normally handled by Delta Force. This unit was started by Colonel "Charlie" Beckwith, an American Special Forces officer who had served with the British SAS for several years. Beckwith's idea was to raise a unit capable of deep-penetration raids, such as prisoner-of-war rescues, hostage rescue and intelligence gathering for larger operations. By early 1978 the unit numbered some 70 men, enough, Beckwith thought, to start counter-terrorist training. This included CQB shooting, assault techniques, MOE and medical training and those who were not parachute-qualified were sent to jump school. A special "House of Horrors", equivalent to the British "killing house" was constructed in order to simulate rescue hostage scenarios. A defunct 727 aircraft was made available, allowing Delta to work on anti-hijack procedures.

On 5 November 1979 the American Embassy in Iran was seized and Delta was ordered to respond. Intelligence for the operation was plentiful, with the CIA and the media both producing satellite images and film footage of the embassy in an effort to highlight the problems involved if any rescue were attempted. Delta took full advantage of all this and prepared itself accordingly; eventually they came up with a workable plan. The rescue attempt failed. The fault, however, lay with the American military administration and not with Delta. Direction and authority for Delta missions has since been tightened, as one American general put it: "It's no good having the best sword in the world if the user cannot wield it correctly." Things have since improved and Delta has gone on to show its capabilities in many roles, including both the Gulf and Afghan Wars.

In addition to Delta Force, the Americans also use a unit known as SEAL team 6. Formed in October 1980, the unit totals some 150–170 men, now based in Dam Neck, Virginia. They have been fully integrated with Delta since 1980, but still retain the capability to operate as an individual unit. This unit almost always accompanies Delta on special operations.

INCREMENT – SAS

The Increment are a selected group of SAS and SBS personnel who are loaned to the intelligence agencies (MI5/MI6) to carry out clandestine operations. Most members of the Increment have spent time with the SAS Counter-Revolutionary Warfare Unit (CRW). This unit can trace its origins back to the Keeni Meeni operations against the Mau Mau terrorists in Kenya in 1953 and special activities organized in Aden. The SAS formed its own CRW

Cell, with the special purpose of developing techniques to counter terrorism. From its inception, CRW was a vision in how the modern-day SAS soldier was to develop. The SAS already have some of the best surveillance skills available, and their extensive military skills are fine-tuned by internal courses. These include the use of improvised explosives and sabotage techniques, advanced shooting skills and training to support guerrilla warfare. Highly developed insertion techniques can be accomplished, using anything from high-altitude parachuting from commercial aircraft to being launched from the tube of a submarine. Today, the duties of the SAS CRW units span the world. They infiltrate enemy territory, gather intelligence, carry out ambushes, undertake demolition work and sabotage and act as bodyguards for VIPs. Some of this work is purely military while the rest is tasked through the Increment.



▲ Operatives deep within Iraq. Their clandestine operations helped locate many of Saddam Hussein's henchmen.

OVERSEEING POWERS

It is often difficult to say who actually authorizes a clandestine operation. In theory, the final decision should rest with the country's leader, with the factual support coming from a government body, such as the British Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). The JIC is the main office for intelligence and they direct and provide the tasking for the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) –

which includes MI5, MI6 and GCHQ. These three are responsible for domestic, foreign and signals intelligence respectively. As most clandestine operations take place overseas, they fall under the control of MI6, who, in turn, will task the appropriate agent or the Special Forces (the Increment) to carry out the operation.

The American equivalent is the CIA, which, since the collapse of communism, has carried out some major restructuring. Clandestine operations are normally tasked by the Directorate of Operations (D/C) along with the Counter-Intelligence Centre (CIC) and their human intelligence (HUMINT) requirement tasking centre. The Clandestine Information Technical Office supports these type of operations and analyses the intelligence.

PLANNING A CLANDESTINE OPERATION

Once authority for an operation has been received, the next phase is the planning. While the objective defines the mission, there are other subordinate aspects to take into account. These are command and control, and the security of the unit. A clandestine unit's plan will take the following factors into consideration:

- ▶ All clandestine operations will be based on the best and most up-to-date information available.
- ▶ The best method of infiltration and exfiltration will be chosen to ensure arrival in the operation area is undetected. If there is any doubt deceptive measures will be considered.
- ▶ Agents make use of the smallest unit possible to accomplish the mission – decreasing the possibility of detection.
- ▶ Agents use all forms of stealth technology to remain undetected. They will remember the basics of camouflage, concealment and light and sound discipline.
- ▶ Agents utilise the cover of darkness and night observation devices (see Surveillance Section). They know that the enemy will also have detection devices.
- ▶ Once the intelligence has been analysed and a plan has been developed, rehearsals will be carried out. These are very important, especially when it comes to the on-target phase – the moment when the unit is close to the enemy. Rehearsals also highlight any problems in planning and

clarify points for the team. Contingency plans will also be rehearsed.

- ▶ Agents make sure that all communication devices are working, and they make plans for "lost comms".
- ▶ Agents will hold an inspection and purge all team members of any incriminating evidence. They remove clothing labels and any items that may lead to identification.
- ▶ Agents should isolate photographs and name every member of the team in the event that they are captured. This will be handed over personally to the (S2) or desk intelligence officer.

SAS IN OMAN

A typical example of a good clandestine operation is illustrated by the actions of the British SAS in the Middle Eastern state of Oman. In 1969, the oil-rich state was constantly under threat from internal communist activists who controlled most of the southern mountains. The old Sultan, Sayid bin Taimur, had hung onto power as his feudal country fell into rebellion, and refused the advice and offers of assistance from his British advisors.

Although not a military man, the old Sultan had decided to send his only son Qaboos to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, where he became commissioned into a British Regiment. His return home was not a joyous one. The young Sultan could see the plight of his country and argued for change. His father's answer was to restrict his son's movements and to accuse him of becoming too "westernised".

The situation in Oman deteriorated until 23 July 1970, when the Sultan Qaboos opposed his father, aided by the young Sheikh Baraik Bin Hamood. During the coup, the old Sultan shot himself in the foot and was hastily bundled into an aircraft and flown to England. Qaboos took control, but the situation was far from stable. To ensure Qaboos' safety, four SAS soldiers, trained by CRW wing, were dispatched to protect him. Within weeks, part of the British Army Training Team (BATT) were operating in the country, tasked with raising a local army and defeating the communist-backed guerrillas.

On the recommendations of Lieutenant-Colonel Johnny Watts, commanding officer of 22 SAS, a five-point strategy was put into operation.

- ▶ To establish an intelligence operation.
- ▶ To set up an information network (Phy Ops).
- ▶ To provide medical aid.

- ▶ To provide economic aid.
- ▶ To raise an army from the local people who would fight for the new Sultan.

The latter of these was considered to be the most important as it involved committing some 60 SAS soldiers. Unbeknown to the British public, the SAS remained in Oman for five years, fighting a bloody, covert war, which cost the lives of many – including 15 SAS soldiers.

EXECUTIVE ACTION (ASSASSINATION)

Author's Note: It is difficult to write about assassination, mainly due to people's perception of the subject. Many people and organizations claim that all life is sacred and, in an ideal world, it would be. We do not live in an ideal world, though. We live in a world where terrorists kill and mutilate without thought, where thousands die as a result of drugs and where children starve or are forced into prostitution – this is not an ideal world, this is reality. What if the American government had an opportunity to assassinate the terrorists who piloted the aircraft on 9/11 two days before it happened? Would their deaths have been justified? The second problem lies in the definition of assassination. Is the clandestine sniper team, whose task it is to assassinate the head of a terrorist organization, so different from the pilot of a bomber who kills hundreds of people? The first will return home under a cloak of secrecy; the second, on the other hand, will return home to a hero's welcome.

Whatever your individual standpoint, assassinations will continue to occur, just as they have in the past. Therefore, in writing this section, my goal is to illustrate the many factors of assassination and not to answer any moral questions.

ORIGINS

In seventh-century India, many passers-by would be grabbed and strangled by the Thuggee (hence the word "Thug") in full view of the public. Centuries before that, many a Roman citizen would find themselves a prisoner of the Jewish zealots, who had a terrible habit of cutting the throats of their victims, again in public. During the 11th century the "assassins", a drug-crazed Shi'ite sect, would hide along the routes frequently used by their enemy and ambush and murder them. Similar acts can be traced to all

CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS

continents throughout history, most of which were carried out to instil a sense of fear within the local community.

Modern-day assassination can be described as the planned killing of a person whose death would provide positive benefits for society as a whole – this is termed an “executive action”. Assassination may or may not be morally justifiable, as it depends on the self-preservation of one element of society over another. In general, assassination has done little to change the course of history. Even where it has, the change is usually for the worse. The British SOE trained an assassination team that parachuted into Prague and killed the acting German Governor of Bohemia and Moravia, Reinhard Heydrich. Heydrich was a remarkable linguist, a wonderful musician and a superb bureaucrat; he was also a staunch Nazi. Nevertheless, his assassination in the spring of 1942 resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent Czechs. Likewise, the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand is reputed to have started the First World War.

If we are to believe what we read in the newspapers, President Bush signed an intelligence order in 2002, authorizing the CIA and related Special Forces to overthrow, capture or kill President Saddam Hussein. If the Americans can carry out an assassination, why can't anyone else? It is a subject that provokes all manner of debate, a debate that is hampered by society, laws and the will of its people. Some would claim that we should not stoop to the level of terrorists, while others argue that taking a life by assassination smacks of a “big brother” government. Terrorist organizations rely on this irresolution among the general populace to tie the hands of governments and restrict their ability to counter the terrorist problem. There is also the argument that, while assassination removes certain individuals within an organization, it does not guarantee the removal of the organization itself. Finally, assassination has the ability to bite back, i.e. you kill our leaders and we will kill yours. One nation that has continued to refine the skills of the assassin is Israel. They systematically hunted down all of those responsible for the Munich Olympic massacre in 1972 and assassinated them. Israeli policy on assassination continues to this day and many countries, including the United States and Britain, are requesting copies of the Israeli handbook on the subject.

For the most part, the general public as a whole is unaware that an assassination has taken place, being led to believe that the victim has died in an accident or of natural causes. In addition, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between assassination and suicide. If the government version

says suicide and there is no proof to say otherwise, then suicide it is. All the same, circumstances can be interpreted in several different ways.

CLANDESTINE BOMBING OF RAINBOW WARRIOR



▲ It was 11.38 when the peace of the night was shattered as two limpet mines planted by the French divers went off, sending *Rainbow Warrior* to the deep.

In order to cite an immoral clandestine operation, I quote the bombing of the ship *Rainbow Warrior*, the pride of the Greenpeace organization, an international body concerned with conservation and environmental issues. *Rainbow Warrior* arrived in Auckland and was tied up at Marsden Wharf. On the night of 10 July 1985 shortly before midnight, two high-explosive devices attached to the hull of the *Rainbow Warrior* detonated within the space of a few minutes. The force of the explosions was such that a hole 2.5 metres in size was opened below the waterline near to the engine room. The vessel sank within minutes.

Fernando Pereira, a crew member and the official photographer, was drowned while attempting to retrieve photographic equipment from his cabin. The later discovery of an abandoned rubber Zodiac dinghy and an outboard motor, and the sighting of a blue-and-white camper van, led to an interview with a French-speaking couple two days later by the New Zealand Police and their subsequent arrest on 15 July. Although they were initially identified as Alain Jacques Turenge and his wife Sophie Frédérique Clare Turenge, inquiries revealed their true identities to be Major Alain

Mafart, aged 35, and Captain Dominique Prieur, aged 36. Serving as commissioned officers in the French Special Forces, they had been detailed to assist members of the DGSE (SDECE) Intelligence Service to ensure that the much-publicized voyage of the *Rainbow Warrior* to French territorial waters to disrupt the French nuclear test program simply did not happen. The vessel had to be damaged to such an extent that repairs could not be completed in time for the voyage to begin.

Though the French operation succeeded in part, it turned out to be a publicity disaster, as the intelligence service had failed to extract Mafart and Prieur directly after the attack, although the French intelligence officers had apparently flown out the day before the operation. When their arrest was linked with information obtained by New Zealand detectives in New Caledonia, Norfolk Island, Australia, Switzerland, France and the UK, it proved without any doubt the major role played by the French Intelligence Service and Special Forces in the bombing and the subsequent death of Fernando Pereira. The positioning and successful detonation of the explosives indicated that those responsible were trained and expert in underwater warfare and it is believed that both French officers were serving members of the Commando Hubert Underwater Warfare unit.

MECHANICS OF ASSASSINATION

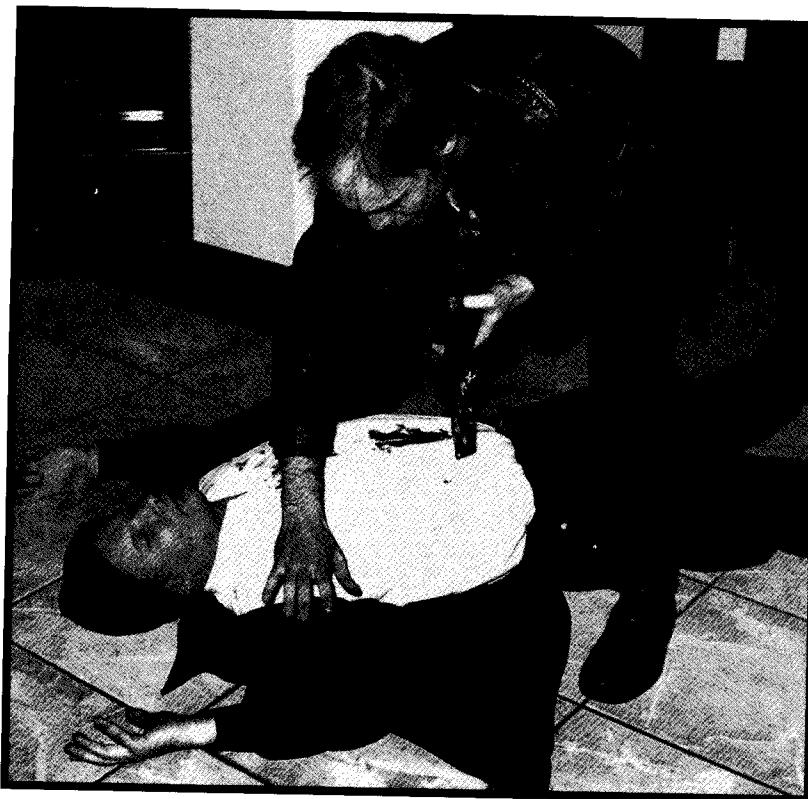
The mechanics of assassination are fairly simple. Intelligence agency executives see a clear case for disposing of a certain person or persons. Once the decision has been taken, the project is then handed over to the appropriate organization for action. Those responsible for carrying out the assassination will plan, organize and execute their orders.

The Assassin

The image of an assassin has changed dramatically over the past century. While many intelligence agencies employ a small section for dirty tricks – including certain types of assassination – these generally only carry out operations against other spies or agents. The death of a terrorist leader or a known activist is carried out by Special Forces personnel seconded by the agency.

Internal units within an intelligence agency will mainly consist of specialists who have a good working knowledge of specific assassination techniques, such as how to blow up a house and make it look like a gas leak, for example. These people are your ordinary nine-to-five civil servants

who have shown an aptitude for such work and who treat it very much as a mundane job. However, when it comes to assassinating foreign agents, most of the clandestine work is carried out by Special Forces. They have the advantage of being highly trained in infiltration, camouflage and concealment and sabotage. For the most part, they are resolute, courageous, intelligent, resourceful and physically fit – attributes that make them ideal assassins. However, these people see themselves as professional soldiers and not assassins.



▲ The assassin.

Assassination Planning

Having taken the decision to assassinate a person, the powers that be will either authorize an individual or a team to carry out the task. At this stage, the issuing authority will include the method of assassination – covert or overt. In certain circumstances, these orders are given verbally. This ensures that the assassination can be denied if things go wrong. The team will then

plan their operation and decide on the best course of action, based on the target location and profile.

A target may require the team to infiltrate a foreign country and the method must be established (see chapter on Infiltration). By far the most important aspect of any assassination is the target profile; this will establish his whereabouts, his movements and any projection or weaknesses. Much of this information should be readily available from the intelligence agency: photographs of the target, maps of the surrounding areas and aerial photographs of any building occupied by the target or his organization to name but a few.

The means by which the target is assassinated will also be taken into consideration, as this may require the team to carry specialist equipment. If the target is to be shot by a sniper, then this will require both a sniper team and their equipment. If the target is to be killed in a road accident, then radio-controlled triggering devices will need to be fitted to the target's car.

Assassination is all about getting the target into a position where the assassination can take place. Here is an example in its simplest form: girls in Northern Ireland urged British soldiers to a room under the promise of sex – an IRA assassin was waiting. Not all targets are that accessible and many have bodyguards, but these problems can be overcome by using either the sniper option or by setting up a booby trap. Imagination is the key.

One of the most creative methods of assassination of recent times was seen when a perceived terrorist leader was murdered with a poisoned whip. The man, who was well known for his sexual appetite for young women and bondage, enjoyed being whipped before having sex. He ordered his men to find street prostitutes that specialized in his needs on a regular basis. The assassination team discovered this useful fact put it to good use, promptly visiting the cafe where most of the girls were recruited and placing their own female agent. Within a week, the girl was asked to cater for the target's sexual needs and promptly agreed. She was taken to the target's home and was searched for weapons before entering. An hour later, she left the property and made her way back to the cafe from where she was exfiltrated. The target died later that night as a result of a poison-soaked whip. The girl had made sure that the lashes of the whip had broken the skin, allowing the poison to enter the target's bloodstream.

Covert or Overt

In order to kill someone covertly, a spy's assassination plan will ensure that the result looks like an accident or a death by natural causes. When successfully executed, the death will cause little excitement and will only be casually investigated. In all cases of simulated accidents, the team will ensure that no wound or condition is attributed to anything other than death by natural causes. The most effective assassinations are those that have been carefully planned and that are simple to put into practice. If the target is to be shot, a spy will employ a very good marksman. If an accident is planned, an agent will make sure that it is organized correctly, leaving little or no evidence of foul play. The aim of the operation will be to kill the target. Briefly outlined below are some common methods of assassination that are used by agents in the field.

By Hand

It is difficult for a spy to kill someone with their bare hands; it is also very inefficient, especially when so many other objects could be used, such as a rock, a hammer or a kitchen knife. In all cases where a hand-weapon other than a firearm is used, the assassin must be in close proximity to the target. One of the failings of hand-held weapons is their instant-kill unreliability, as a stab to the heart or a blow to the head carries no guarantee of instantaneous death.

Strangulation is an effective method of assassinating a person with bare hands and it has been employed by many agents.

By Weapon

Providing an agent can get close to his target or if he has a clear line of sight, firearms offer the best solution for any overt assassination. Close up, the best type of weapon is a pistol. This is usually small, however, such as a .22 calibre weapon with a silencer fitted. Although this weapon is underpowered, the silencer makes it almost undetectable and several shots to the head or heart will guarantee a kill. If the target is well protected, then line-of-sight weapons, such as a sniper rifle, offer a good means of assassination. However, a spy will have to bear in mind that the greater the distance, the greater the chance of missing. Many of the "assassination manuals" available today claim that smaller calibre weapons are not suitable for assassination, but they have been the weapons of choice for many teams.

CASE HISTORY

In July 1973, it was believed that Ali Hassan, a Black September leader and the organizer of the Munich Olympics massacre, had been tracked down to the small town of Lillehammer in Norway. The Israelis immediately assembled and dispatched a hit team to Norway. Using an old photograph, they were convinced that they had located Ali Hassan, also known as the "Red Prince". Two days later on a Saturday evening, they shadowed their victim as he left the local cinema, together with a blonde Norwegian girl. The couple then caught a local bus that would take them to their flat on the outskirts of Lillehammer.

Author's Note: I interviewed Torill Bouchiki about the assassination of her husband Ahmed – this is her story. (She was seven months pregnant at the time of the husband's assassination.)

We left the cinema and walked down to the bus stop. At this stage the only thing I can recall is that Ahmed spoke of his brief conversation with another Arab he had met in the town; neither of us thought any more about it. The bus drove out of town to the wooded outskirts, where we got off at the stop opposite our block of flats. As the bus continued up the hill we crossed the road, heading for the small gravel drive that led to the ground-floor doors. We had gone no more than 20 metres, when, from behind us, there was a loud bang. We both stopped, turning to see what had caused the noise. We had not noticed the car that had rolled down the hill towards us, braking almost parallel; but the slamming of the door made us look. A man climbed out of the nearside, while at the same time, a woman got out of the other side. I thought, maybe that they were looking for directions, but then Ahmed stepped away from me, crying out, "No. No."

Disposal Team Operations

Many assassination teams are supported in their operation by a cleaning team, i.e. once the hit has been carried out then a "clean-up" team sterilizes the body and the surrounding area. A clean-up team may also respond when one of their own agents has been killed and the agency wishes to remove their body without any trace of the fact. Likewise, foreign agents who have been compromised are often set up for assassination and total removal. Spies who have died as a result of torture are often disposed of in

such a manner. Such clean-up operations are normally left to a specialist unit. Their job is purely one of removing the body and removing any trace of the deceased, to make it look as if they had never existed. The two main aspects of a clean-up operation are disfigurement and disposal.

Disfigurement

One of the tasks of a clean-up team is to ensure that the body cannot be identified. This entails removing or disfiguring all body parts that may be

on record, such as fingerprints, iris and retina scans, teeth or any other distinguishing body marks, such as tattoos, and full-facial scans. Any trace of one or more of these methods will allow the public authorities to identify the dead body. Total disfigurement is the only way to overcome these identity biometrics. The most common method is to use acid. If a strong solution of sulphuric acid is poured over the hands and face of the body, it will totally eradicate the facial structure, including the eyes, burning off the finger tips and eroding the enamel from the teeth. An alternative to acid is burning; before this is done, however, the teeth have to be removed with a hammer.

Disposal

In addition to disfigurement, the long-term disposal of a body is also desirable. This will be achieved in any number of ways, with the following methods top of the list.

- ▶ A shallow grave in an isolated area, preferably in a thickly forested area.
- ▶ In a *bona fide* graveyard, hidden in a legitimate, freshly dug grave together with another corpse.
- ▶ Weighted and dropped overboard, out at sea.
- ▶ Weighted and thrown into a large lake.
- ▶ Placed in the foundations of a new building or a motorway.
- ▶ Cremated down to ashes.

Explosives

Using a booby trap for assassination requires a lot of skill and a detailed itinerary of the target. Depending on the amount of explosive used, a well-thought-out booby trap stands a good chance of success. While letter bombs have been used by assassins for many years, they are not particularly accurate, i.e. there is no guarantee that the target will actually open the letter. If someone else is killed, all the assassin has done is tip off the target.

Home

Assassinations in the home will try to be passed off as accidents. These can be caused by gas leaks, fire, electricity or fatal falls. In most cases, assassinations in the home take place in large towns or cities. The target

may be befriended by the team or team member using sexual favours. Once a team member has gained access to the target's home then any number of assassination ploys are possible. If, for example, the target is lured away from his home and plied with drink, a team member enters the



▲ Explosives can be an effective tool for assassination, as seen here when the IRA tried to kill members of the British Conservative party in a Brighton hotel.

premises and switches on all the gas appliances while he is out. Before leaving, the team member turns off the gas at the outside main incoming supply. The target returns home drunk and then goes to bed. Once the target is asleep, the team reconnect the incoming gas supply. At six in the morning, hungover and drowsy, the target wakes up and switches on his bedroom light – boom.

Getting someone very drunk is also a common spy ploy. After several hours, the target will become unconscious, leaving the assassination team to create a natural fire that gets out of hand and consumes both the room and the target. Alternatively, if the target lives in a block of flats, they could fall down the stairs or, better still, off the balcony. A fall is an efficient accident; agents will throw their victims onto a hard surface, but they will be wary of throwing people off bridges, as the victim may fall into water.

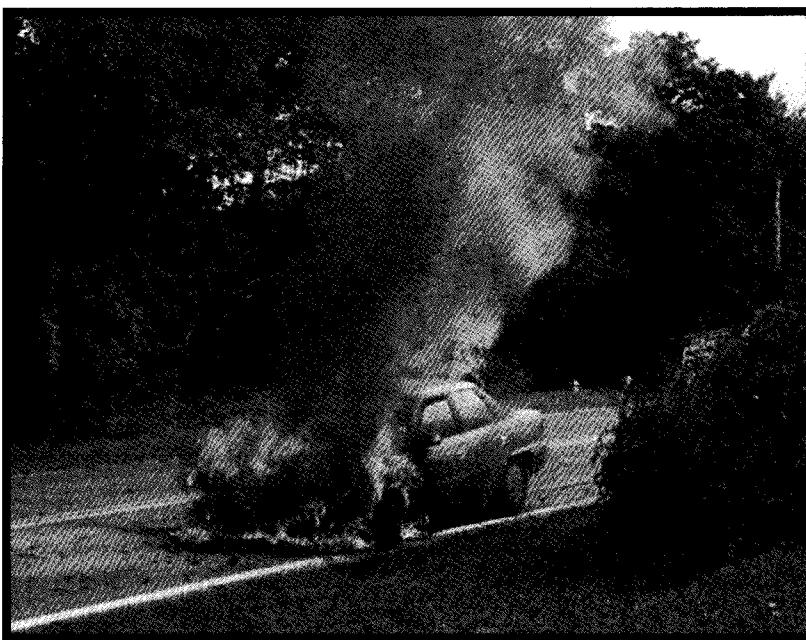


▲ Many victims of assassination have been found dead in their own swimming pools.

Vehicle

Killing someone in a hit-and-run accident is not a much-used assassination technique; it often fails to kill the target and, in many cases, the incident

can be witnessed by others. Many other methods of killing the target in his vehicle have been tried over the years – from plying him with alcohol or drugs to wrapping him in cling film. A very effective method that has been used by spies is when they choose a spot along a route driven regularly by their target, like a sharp corner, a river bridge or a motorway. The spy gains covert access to the target's car and fixes a device that will blow off a wheel, lock the doors and increase the vehicle's speed. The spy will simply follow the target's car to the point of attack and then press a button. They will organize for a tow truck to be passing the scene several minutes after the accident and thus will be able to retrieve the car and remove any telltale signs of their device from under the nose of any police investigation.



▲ An assassination using a vehicle can be made to look like an accident.

Medical Accidents

Medical accidents, such as an overdose of medicine, can be used by agents to fake a suicide.

Likewise, an alcohol-induced coma offers the team time to suffocate a target and there will be little evidence of foul play.

Drugs have sometimes been used as a very effective method of

assassination by spies in the past, but generally they are selected and administered by a medical professional. If the target is a heavy drinker, an overdose of certain drugs can be administered; the cause of death will be put down to acute alcoholism. Other drugs, such as LSD, have been used in the past to cause the target to commit suicide either of their own accord or with a little help.



▲ Spies have used a variety of drug-related methods to kill their targets in the hope that the medical evidence will show no foul play.

CASE HISTORY

Some time after the Korean War, the CIA became obsessed with the idea that the Soviets or the Chinese might employ methods of brainwashing to recruit double agents or that they would find a way to manipulate an entire population. To counter this, the CIA initiated a series of programmes, one of which was Operation Artichoke. Artichoke involved the use of torture and drugs to interrogate people. The effects of substances such as LSD, heroin and marijuana were studied by using unsuspecting individuals as human guinea pigs. Artichoke also included the development of poisons that take immediate effect. These substances were later used in attempts on the lives of a number of foreign leaders, such as Abdul Karim Kassem (Iraq), Patrice Lumumba (Congo) and Fidel Castro (Cuba).

One of the leading scientists who was carrying out research in the field of biological weapons and who had been working for ten years in the biological warfare facilities at Maryland Camp Detrick (today Fort Detrick) near Washington DC, was Dr Frank Olson. Olson was a biochemist and occupied a leading position in Operation Artichoke. However, on 28 November 1953, Olsen threw himself out of the 13th floor of the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City.

Before Frank Olson plunged to his death, others in the room say he exhibited symptoms of behavioural disturbance. His death was officially described as suicide due to depression. Only in the mid-1970s, when the CIA secret activities were scrutinized in the wake of the Watergate scandal, did the government admit to a certain degree of responsibility. Ten days before his death, the CIA had administered LSD to Olson without his knowledge. President Gerald Ford subsequently apologized to his family and the CIA paid compensation to his widow.

Outdoors

If an agent's target lives or goes on the water, be it a river or in the open sea, then various opportunities arise. Swimming accidents are common, although it can take a great deal of effort from the agent to make the death look natural. Likewise, boating accidents have been linked to assassination for many years as they offer a very good opportunity for assassination. A boat at sea can be sunk without trace by a spy and there is no limit to the possibilities and there are never any witnesses. If an agent's target has any hobbies, a spy will

Investigate them carefully to see if they present an opportunity for something that can be made to resemble death by natural causes.



▲ Deaths at sea rarely show evidence of foul play.

WEAPONS OF THE ASSASSIN

In 1978 the KGB designed an umbrella with a poison-pellet secreted in the point. It was used to assassinate the Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov in London. He was jabbed with the umbrella at a bus stop, an action that was easily dismissed as an insignificant accident. The jab delivered a metal pellet into which a small amount of ricin – a poison derived from castor-oil seeds – had been placed. The metal pellet was discovered after Markov was dead. The KGB had designed it to dissolve, but this had failed. Encouraged by Markov's death, the KGB went on to produce several versions, including pens that would fire gas and miniature .22 pistols.

Welrod Silenced Pistol

Built during the Second World War for the British SOE and for Special Forces covert action, the Welrod was designed as a single-shot, silent-killing/assassination weapon. With a 9 mm chamber, it is very easy to conceal, reliable and accurate up to 50 m (55 yards) in daylight or perhaps

20 m (22 yards) on a starlit night. Other variations developed during the Second World War at the Welwyn Experimental Laboratories were the Wel-Wand, a .25 calibre "Sleeve-Gun", a silenced single-shot device hidden in the sleeve of the assassin's overcoat; the Welfag, a .22 calibre firing device concealed in a cigarette; the Welpen, a firing device concealed in a fountain pen and the Welpipe, a .22 calibre firing device concealed in a smoking pipe. An updated Welrod is still available today.



▲ A silenced pistol is favoured by many assassins as it avoids body contact, almost guarantees a kill, and is silent.

Mobile Phone Gun

In its outward appearance, the modern device looks like a mobile phone. It separates in the middle to reveal four .22 calibre cartridges. Once loaded, the two halves simply click together and the gun is then armed by triggering a lever positioned at the base of the phone. Depressing any of the four top buttons on the phone fires a single shot. The gun is designed for close-quarter (three to five metres maximum) assassination, but its accuracy leaves a lot to be desired. These guns are thought to be manufactured in Eastern Europe and several have been seized by British, German and Dutch police forces.

Concealed Weapons



◀ There is often a need for the assassin to conceal his weapons.

Agents operating in foreign countries are sometimes required to carry a weapon, which, for the most part, would be concealed. These types of weapon fall into two main categories: knives and pistols. The amount of concealed weapons available would fill several volumes. Knives can be disguised as combs, keys and belt buckles, while pistols take the form of rings, phones and pens. A complete range of concealed weapons can be found in the *Manual of Prohibited and Concealed Weapons* published by Paradigm Partners Limited in Britain, or by visiting the FBI Guide to Concealed Weapons at the following website:

<http://datacenter.ap.org/wdc/fbiweapons.pdf>

Explosives

Explosives are also major assets for any assassin as they provide numerous ways of killing people (see section on Sabotage).

Operational Executive Action

Lawful killings can be carried out in several situations. For the most part, the actual incident can be predetermined, giving the operational team the time to plan ahead. For example, if a known terrorist leader is discovered at a certain place, such as a military check point, he could be shot while

resisting arrest. If the terrorist is armed, all the better, if not, those that actually do the shooting simply state that they thought he was armed. The legal or illegal shooting of a suspect in a war zone generally causes little or no political problems for the intelligence agencies.

CASE HISTORY

In March 1988, information filtered through the security screen that the IRA was planning to detonate a bomb in Gibraltar. The IRA team consisted of three people, Sean Savage, Daniel McCann and a woman, Mairead Farrell, each of whom had a history of terrorist activity. The three, later acknowledged by the IRA as an active cell, had been spotted by British intelligence agencies, who had trailed them for months, recording many of their conversations. Surveillance paid off when the target identity was discovered – Gibraltar's British garrison. The method of attack was to be a car bomb. As events unfolded, the target was a ceremony with military bands parading. It was also known that the IRA had developed a device that could remotely detonate a car bomb.

In late 1987, a well-known IRA bomb-maker, Sean Savage, had been located in Spain. Another IRA suspect, Daniel McCann, was with him. MI5 spent six months watching the two, gathering information that they were certain was leading to a bombing. When, on 4 March 1988, Mairead Farrell arrived in Malaga airport and was met by the two men, it seemed likely that it was on. At this stage, the SAS were invited to send in an Increment team. The Gibraltar police were informed and were instructed that the IRA active service unit was to be apprehended. For a while, contact with the IRA cell was lost, but, by this time, the target had been defined. It was suspected that one car would be delivered onto the Rock and parked in a position along the route taken by the parade. This car would be clean – a dummy to guarantee a parking space for the real car bomb. The plaza where the troops and public would assemble was considered as the best spot to cause the most damage. This proved to be correct. At 2 pm on the afternoon of 5 March, a report was received that Savage had been spotted in a parked white Renault 5. There was a suspicion that he was setting up the bomb-triggering device. Not long after, another report was received to the effect that Farrell and McCann had crossed the border and were making their way into town. (CONT...)

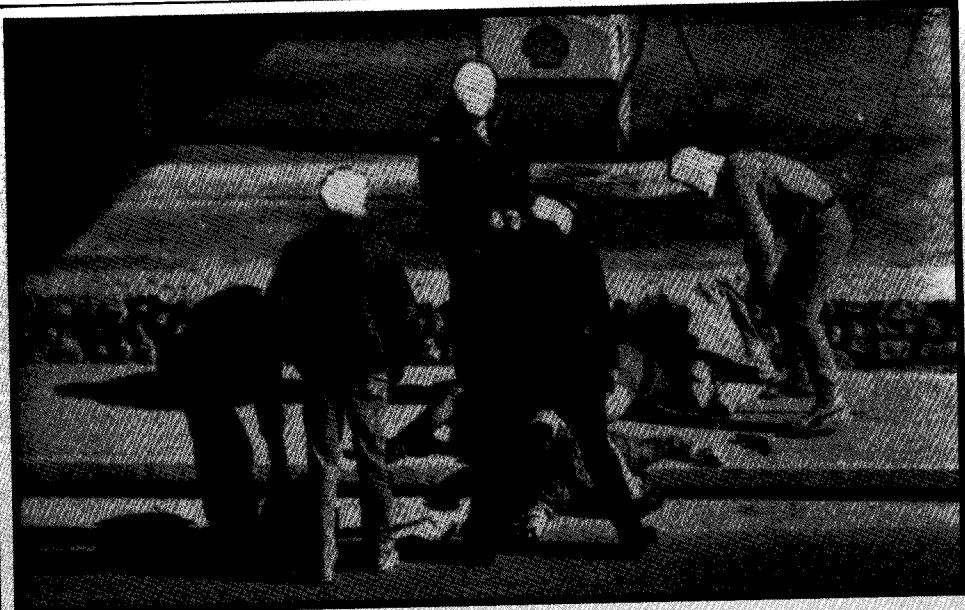
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▲ The bodies of Daniel McCann and Mairead Farrell, shot by the SAS in Gibraltar.

The Increment were immediately deployed and, once Savage was out of the way, an explosives expert did a walk past of the Renault. No visual telltale signs were observed – such as the rear suspension being depressed – that would indicate the presence of a bomb. However, if they were using Semtex, 15 kilos or more could easily be concealed from the naked eye. After consultation, it was considered probable that the car did contain a bomb. At this stage, the local police chief, Joseph Canepa, signed an order passing control to the SAS. Operation Favius, as it was known, was about to be concluded. The orders given to the SAS men were to capture the three bombers if possible, but, as in all such situations, if there is a direct threat to life, be it to the SAS or anyone else, they hold the right to shoot. It was stressed that the bomb would more than likely be fired via a push-button detonator.

The SAS men, dressed in casual clothes, were kept in contact through small radios hidden about their persons. Each soldier was also armed with a 9 mm Browning Hi-Power. Savage met up with McCann and Farrell and, after a short discussion, all three made their way back towards the Spanish border. Four of the SAS team shadowed the trio. Suddenly, for some unexplained reason, Savage turned around and started to make his

way back into the town – the SAS team split accordingly; two with Savage and two staying on McCann and Farrell.

A few moments later, fate took a hand. A local policeman, driving in heavy traffic, was recalled to the station. It was said later that his car was required; to expedite his orders he activated his siren. This action happened close to McCann and Farrell, making the pair turn nervously. McCann made eye contact with one of the SAS soldiers, who was no more than ten metres away. In response to this, the soldier, who was about to issue a challenge, later said in evidence, that McCann's arm moved distinctly across his body. Fearing that he might detonate the bomb, the soldier fired. McCann was hit in the back and went down. Farrell, it is said, made a movement for her bag, she was shot with a single round. By this time, the second soldier had drawn his pistol and opened fire, hitting both terrorists. On hearing the shots, Savage turned to be confronted by the other two SAS men. A warning was shouted this time, but Savage continued to

reach into his pocket – both SAS men fired and Savage was killed.

As the first news of the event hit the media it looked like a professional job, but the euphoria was short lived. No bomb was found in the car, and all three terrorists were found to be unarmed. Although a bomb was later discovered in Malaga, the press and the IRA had a field day. Allegations were made and witnesses were found who claimed to have seen the whole thing. The trio had surrendered; their arms had been in the air; they had been shot at point-blank range while they lay on the ground and so on. Once again, the SAS were held up as state-authorized killers. No matter that they had probably saved the lives of many people and dispatched three well-known IRA terrorists – they would stand trial.

In September 1988, after a two-week inquest and by a majority of nine to two, a verdict was passed of lawful killing. Although this satisfied most people, the story did not end there. The SAS soldiers that took part in the shooting in Gibraltar were taken to court by relatives of the three IRA members killed. The European Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg decided, 11 votes to six, that the SAS did not use unnecessary force. They said that the soldiers were justified in opening fire, as they thought the IRA members were about to detonate a bomb.