

Secret Pentagon unit was involved in 1986 raid against LaRouche

by Edward Spannaus

Investigators are currently probing the role of the U.S. Defense Department's (DOD) "Special Operations" command, which specializes in covert operations and counter-terrorism, in the 1986 government raid against facilities in Leesburg, Virginia associated with Lyndon LaRouche. The Special Operations unit has also been linked to the Iran-Contra operation run by Oliver North and Richard Secord.

The disclosure of military involvement in a domestic criminal case further shows the flagrant illegality of the government's conduct in the LaRouche case. By law, the military units involved cannot be engaged in domestic law enforcement or domestic covert operations.

The Pentagon's involvement in the Oct. 6-7, 1986 raid was disclosed in a partially declassified set of documents recently obtained from the FBI under the Freedom of Information Act. The correspondence between the FBI and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) concerned an FBI request for declassification of information pertaining to the initial storage of records seized in the 1986 raid.

Two truckloads of documents were seized during the Leesburg raid, in which well over 400 federal agents, state police officers, and others took part. At the same time as the search warrants were executed, indictments were issued in Boston against 12 individuals and five organizations, including LaRouche's 1984 presidential campaign committee.

The defendants in the ensuing criminal proceedings were initially told that the documents had been taken to Quantico, Virginia, where the FBI has a training academy alongside a U.S. Marine Corps base. However, in the spring of 1988, during the trial in Boston, prosecutors disclosed that the seized records had actually been stored in Henderson Hall, a Marine Corps building adjacent to Fort Meyer in Arlington, Virginia. The newly disclosed documents show part of the process in the declassification of information regarding Henderson Hall.

First is an FBI message dated March 31, 1988. The message cites a telephone call "to LTC. [deleted], JSOC," and enclosed a letter with instructions to "Hand carry to JSOC for their formal declassification."

("JSOC" is the Joint Special Operations Command, the military's unified command for counterterrorism and covert operations. JSOC was created in December 1980 to coordinate the counterterrorist activities of the various services,

particularly the Army's Delta Force and the Navy commando unit Seal Team 6. JSOC was based at Fort Bragg, North Carolina until late 1987.)

JSOC is in a domestic investigation

The reader might wonder at this point: What does something like JSOC have to do with an allegedly domestic law enforcement investigation? Read on.

The referenced FBI letter, stamped "Secret," was addressed to Col. David K. Sims, Chief, Support Activities Branch, J-3 Special Operations Division, Office of JCS, Room 2C840 Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

The FBI letter begins by stating: "A request for DOD assistance was made by the FBI in support of a criminal investigation [deleted 'sensitive information']."

The deleted portion is officially withheld as information "concerning military plans, weapons, or operations . . . and intelligence activities, (including special activities) or intelligence sources or methods, the release of which would damage national security."

The FBI letter requests declassification of the "request of DOD for a secure location" and that the location was "Henderson Hall." The letter continues:

"Initial contact with LTC. [deleted] indicated no problem was foreseen on the declassification of those two items as long as [deleted 'sensitive information'] and points of contact are not divulged."

What these two "sensitive information" deletions show is that there is something more, beyond the Henderson Hall information, which pertains to the LaRouche investigation, and which is still classified on "national security" grounds. This letter is stamped *Classified by DJSOA. Sensitive Information. Special Access Required.* "DJSOA" stands for "Director, Joint Special Operations Agency." JSOA was created in 1984 to coordinate counterterrorism and special operations within the JCS Joint Staff.

During 1984-87, JSOA incorporated the Special Operations Division (SOD) and related branches. The branches included in JSOA-SOD were Unconventional Warfare, Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs, Contingency Operations, Support Activities, etc. (In late 1987, with the creation of the unified Special Operations Command, the SOD was returned to the J-3 Operations Directorate.)

'Focal point' system

As the listing of functions implies, the Pentagon's SOD is a continuation of the old office of the Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Affairs (SACSA), created in the 1950s as the CIA point of contact, or "focal point," within the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Under Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, it was moved into the Joint Staff. Col. L. Fletcher Prouty (ret.), in his book *The Secret Team*, describes SACSA as "almost entirely CIA-oriented," with very few military responsibilities. The "focal point" system, according to Prouty, allowed the CIA to use military communications channels to send messages back and forth with only "cleared" personnel having access to these communications.

The military's Special Operations Forces were downgraded during the 1970s, but were built back up during the early years of the Reagan administration. The Army SOD has been described as "the Pentagon's CIA," and it provided a largely hidden covert operations capability outside of the CIA. With the amount of intelligence oversight being demanded by Congress, it was convenient to build up a covert capability which was both outside the official CIA, and which was under "operations" rather than "intelligence." This was true for both the Army SOD (which was located under the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations), and the JCS-SOD (under the J-3 Operations Directorate). Thus, for example, during the Boston LaRouche trial, when the judge ordered an "all-agency search" for exculpatory documents, the government only searched the "intelligence" branches of the military, thereby excluding the Special Operations units which were operating against LaRouche and his associates.

A military-intelligence expert observed the following concerning Executive Order 12333, the 1981 directive which permitted covert intelligence operations within the United States. E.O. 12333, he pointed out, only pertains to the *intelligence* components of the military. Strictly speaking, even E.O. 12333 would not legalize domestic activity on the part of *operational* components of the military—which are what was involved here.

One further point about the FBI-JSC letter bears comment. The letter was sent to the chief of the SOD's Support Activities Branch. The functions of this unit are officially listed as providing the DOD point of contact with other government agencies for "sensitive support" and "sensitive operations," and as providing the "focal point for a special communications channel within the worldwide communications system." Historically, the "focal point" system meant that when the CIA or perhaps another intelligence agency needed logistical support or coordination from the DOD for a clandestine operation, this request was to go through the "focal point" office.

The Contra connection

It is not surprising that when the late CIA director William Casey told Oliver North to set up a covert mechanism for sup-

plying the Contras in Central America, that North turned to personnel from the Special Operations Division.

In mid-1984, knowing that the Boland Amendment (barring U.S. aid to the Contras) was coming, Casey suggested to North that he use Special Operations veteran Richard Secord to set up a supply operation outside of official CIA channels.

Secord had been forced to retire from the Pentagon in 1983. His boss was Noel Koch, the deputy assistant secretary of defense who had responsibility for special operations from 1981 through mid-1986. When Secord retired, Koch hired him back as a "consultant" and, in 1984, placed him on the Special Operations Policy Advisory Board, a group of mostly retired officers who were to advise the secretary of defense on special operations. Koch has long been accused of suspect loyalties to Israel, and had been a lobbyist for the Zionist Organization of America before coming to the Pentagon. Within the Pentagon, Koch was the major proponent of the Israeli line that the PLO and Libya were behind all terrorism. Koch was also a principal advocate of the Israeli model of giving Special Forces a preeminent position within the military establishment.

To help set up the Contra supply operation, Secord tapped Richard Gadd, another special operations veteran who had been the Air Force liaison to JSOC. After Gadd "retired" in 1982, he created a network of "private" corporations which contracted with the Pentagon to provide air lift and logistical support for covert operations. Joining Gadd were still other special operations veterans, including Col. Larry Stearns, who was the chief of the JCS-SOD from 1978 to 1983. (Gadd and Stearns, incidentally, worked together in Room 2C840 of the Pentagon, the same SOD office to which the FBI addressed its letter to the JCS in March 1988.)

In early 1985, Secord designated Gadd to organize charter flights to bring munitions from Portugal to Guatemala for the Contras and, in the fall of 1985, Secord put Gadd in charge of the operation to parachute supplies to the Contras in the field in Nicaragua.

In December 1985, another Delta Force veteran who was working in the SOD in Room 2C840, "retired." This was Master Sergeant John H. Cupp, who went to work for Gadd as his assistant in the Contra resupply operation.

On May 5, 1986, Secord sent a secret message to Oliver North, which included the phrase: "Our man here claims Lewis has collected info against LaRouche." After this document was obtained by a co-defendant of LaRouche in 1988, "our man here" was identified as Gadd's assistant John Cupp by both government prosecutors and by Secord himself. "Lewis" was Fred Lewis, a retired Delta Force buddy of Cupp's from Fort Bragg.

Thus, a mere five months before the Leesburg raid, North and Secord were using SOD veterans to collect "info" on LaRouche. The instant turning over of the seized LaRouche documents to the SOD on Oct. 6-7, 1986, is obviously only part of the story, which is still to be uncovered.