

*Special Report*

**Hayden's Heroes: A tale of incompetence and politicization at America's super-secret intelligence agency**

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May 10, 2005—General Michael Hayden, the man George W. Bush selected to be the deputy to new National Intelligence Director John Negroponte, has presided over the systematic dismantling and demoralization of America's premier technical intelligence collecting outfit—the National Security Agency (NSA).

According to NSA insiders, Hayden's seven-year tenure at the agency, the longest for any NSA director, has witnessed the cashiering of experienced analysts, linguists, and field personnel and the crippling of America's ability to protect itself.

In the 1960s TV sitcom *Hogan's Heroes*, a motley crew of Allied prisoners of war at a German POW camp outwardly demonstrated to their captors that they were incompetent fools. In reality, this was a ruse. The prisoners established within Stalag 13 a behind-the-lines sabotage and espionage network, coming and going as they pleased through underground tunnels.

A sitcom about NSA could be called "Hayden's Heroes." The twist, however, is that Hayden, through a clever and unprecedented public relations campaign aimed at the major media and Congress, and a subservient staff of sycophants and apple polishers, has convinced the public that NSA is an ace intelligence agency successfully grappling with new communications technologies to maintain America's ability to have a keen "ear" on global intelligence indications and warnings. NSA professionals report a much different story. They point to an agency wracked by poor morale, questionable outsourcing contracts, and ineffective and corrupt management. After a number of interviews with NSA personnel, it is apparent that the agency even has its own Sergeant Schultz, the relatively unconcerned Deputy Director Bill Black, who was hauled out of retirement by Hayden and who, like the character in *Hogan's Heroes*, "Knows nothing! Nothing!" and "Sees Nothing! Nothing!"

For example, at a time when Negroponte and Hayden are charged with coordinating the activities of some 15 intelligence agencies within the U.S. government, Hayden ordered the transfer of NSA's Counter Terrorism branch ("CT"), operated as part of NSA's massive Signals Intelligence Directorate (SID), to the Georgia Regional Signals Intelligence Center at Fort Gordon, Georgia.

NSA is also farming out critical functions to other facilities around the country. For example, 350 electronic intelligence (ELINT) jobs have been transferred to the Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora, Colorado. However, most of the ELINT personnel have remained in Maryland resulting in a lack of experienced personnel in Colorado.

The Buckley ELINT facility, which operates in a super secret facility known as the Aerospace Data Facility, does not even recognize NSA security badges and operates as an entity outside the control of the intelligence community and subservient to the Pentagon. The move of ELINT functions has disrupted various next generation collection programs with strange code names like Beikao, Boomvang, Eagle Reach, Hokusai, Irish Den, Roman Alliance, Starquake, and Sunbeaver.

In addition, 1,500 NSA jobs were transferred by Hayden to the Medina Regional SIGINT Operations Center (RSOC) at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. NSA insiders report that Hayden's decision to move nearly 2,000 jobs from NSA's headquarters at Fort Meade, Maryland, was in revenge for Maryland Democratic Senator Barbara Mikulski complaining about the loss of government jobs at Fort Meade resulting from two controversial NSA outsourcing contracts—Groundbreaker and Trailblazer.

While critical NSA operational functions are being lost by Fort Meade to facilities in other states, Hayden has permitted his associate director for Security and Counterintelligence, Kemp Ensor III, to build up a security force whose sole mission is to unduly harass and intimidate NSA employees, some with over 15 to 25 years working for the agency in a variety of super-sensitive positions that would amaze the most ardent Tom Clancy fan. For example, in order that they can navigate the rugged wilderness of suburban Maryland, Ensor has purchased for his Praetorian force a fleet of menacing black Humvees outfitted with state-of-the-art electronics, including DVD players. Ensor relies on a network of East German Stasi-like snitches and security officers embedded throughout the agency—in SID, IAD (Information Assurance Directorate), the Logistics Directorate, and other agencies, including the Special Collection Service (SCS) or "F6," located in an office building complex between Beltsville and Laurel, Maryland.

Working hand-in-glove with Ensor is NSA's chief psychologist, Dr. John Schmidt. After a "problem" employee is identified and sent to Ensor's interrogators to be softened up, he or she is then sent to Schmidt who proceeds to identify the individual's mental problems to justify yanking their security clearance. NSA employees who have had the displeasure of being hauled to security on trumped up charges report a scene right out of *The Matrix* interrogation scene with Neo and Agent Smith. The accused is taken into a conference room with a table and a few chairs. An Agent Smith-type security officer produces a thick file bound by a rubber band and smacks it down on the table. During the initial interview, the security officer will periodically hold up a sheaf of paper close to his face, not allowing the subject to see what is written on the paper. However, employees who have never had a prior security incident and are hauled in for the intimidation "procedure," reason that the file is a stage prop and contains a meaningless ream of paper.

NSA insiders report that the NSA security division, still known by its old moniker "M5," maintains a database of problem employees. Of course, true to form for any Gestapo- or Stasi-like outfit, M5 does not include members of its own ranks in the database.

### **Spying on Unfriendly Journalists**

The inquisition side of NSA is the one that Hayden and his advisers do not want the public to see. In fact, NSA maintains a database that tracks unofficial and negative articles written about the agency. Code named "FIRST FRUITS," the database is operated by the Denial and Deception (D&D) unit within SID. High priority is given to articles written as a result of possible leaks from cleared personnel.

According to those familiar with FIRST FRUITS, Bill Gertz of *The Washington Times* features prominently in the database. Before Hayden's reign and during the Clinton administration, Gertz was often leaked classified documents by anti-Clinton intelligence officials in an attempt to demonstrate that collusion between the administration and China was hurting U.S. national security. NSA, perhaps legitimately, was concerned that China could actually benefit from such disclosures.

In order that the database did not violate United States Signals Intelligence Directive (USSID) 18, which specifies that the names of "U.S. persons" are to be deleted through a process known as minimization, the names of subject journalists were blanked out. However, in a violation of USSID 18, certain high level users could unlock the database field through a super-user status and view the "phantom names" of the journalists in question. Some of the "source" information in FIRST FRUITS was classified—an indication that some of the articles in database were not obtained through open source means. In fact, NSA insiders report that the communications monitoring tasking system known as ECHELON is being used more frequently for purely political eavesdropping having nothing to do with national security or counter terrorism.

In addition, outside agencies and a “second party,” Great Britain’s Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), are permitted to access the journalist database. FIRST FRUITS was originally developed by the CIA but given to NSA to operate with CIA funding. The database soon grew to capacity, was converted from a Lotus Notes to an Oracle system, and NSA took over complete ownership of the system from the CIA.

Tens of thousands of articles are found in FIRST FRUITS and part of the upkeep of the system has been outsourced to outside contractors such as Booz Allen, which periodically hosts inter-agency Foreign Denial and Deception meetings within its Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility or “SCIF” in Tyson’s Corner, Virginia. Currently, in addition to NSA and GCHQ, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) routinely access the database, which is in essence a classified and more powerful version of the commercial NEXIS news search database.

In addition to Gertz, other journalists who feature prominently in the database include Seymour Hersh of *The New Yorker*, author and journalist James Bamford, James Risen of *The New York Times*, Vernon Loeb of *The Washington Post*, John C. K. Daly of UPI, and this journalist.

NSA abhors negative publicity. Anytime the agency is the subject of unwanted media attention, Hayden sends out an email known as an “All Agency.” The memo reiterates NSA’s long standing “neither confirm nor deny” policy regarding certain news reports:

NSA personnel must refrain from either confirming or denying any information concerning the agency or its activities which may appear in the public media. If you are asked about the activities of NSA, the best response is “no comment.” You should the notify Q43 {Public Affairs} of the attempted inquiry. For the most part, public references to NSA are based upon educated guesses. The agency does not normally make a practice of issuing public statements about its activities.

### **The Calipari Slaying and the Cell Phone Diversion**

One example of how poor management at NSA has affected the ability of U.S. intelligence to protect American and Allied personnel in combat zones is the slaying in Baghdad by U.S. troops of the number two man in the Italian military intelligence service—SISMI—Major General Nicola Calipari.

Accompanying freed Italian journalist hostage Giuliana Sgrena by car to Baghdad Airport after her liberation from Iraqi captors, Calipari was shot to death by troops of the 69th Infantry Regiment of the New York National Guard while talking to his superiors on his cell phone. The report issued by the United States that cleared the American troops of any responsibility for the killing of Calipari and wounding of Sgrena states that “Route Irish [the main access road to the airport] [is] a lucrative target area for insurgents to employ improvised explosive devices (IEDs) of varying types and to achieve effects in terms of casualties.” A Secret/NOFORN [Not for Release to Foreign Nationals] sentence in the report states, “The use of radios or cell phones should be limited to essential communications and/or entirely prohibited as their transmissions may detonate any IEDs present.”

Calipari’s cell phone signal was likely picked up by tactical signals intelligence units in the area and may have been the reason the U.S. side opened fire on the Italian vehicle. However, according to NSA insiders, cell phones are not used to detonate either Remote Control IEDs (RCIEDs) or Vehicle Borne IEDs (VBEIDs). In fact, insurgents use cheap, Asian-made long-range cordless phones bought in the street markets of Baghdad to detonate IEDs. By using cordless phones bought from carpets strewn on streets in Baghdad, the insurgents know there is no way to identify the purchaser or track the use of the phones. The three cordless phones of choice for the insurgents are Senao and Voyager, which are made in Taiwan, and Anytone and Soontone, both made in China. Therefore, Calipari’s cell phone frequency was a non-threat signal.

The U.S. report on the shooting death also refers in another Secret/NOFORN sentence to the use by the American Tactical Operations Center (TOC) of Voice Over IP (VOIP) phones and FM radio as the two

primary means of communications. NSA insiders scoff at the reference to VOIP—claiming that such phones are not routinely used because of their inherent unreliability. Even the Secret/NOFORN sentence alludes to problems in VOIP communications between the 69th Infantry unit and a field artillery unit: “The 1—76 FA [Field Artillery] Battle Captain was using only VOIP to communicate with 1—69 IN, but experienced problems with VOIP, therefore losing its only communication link with 1—69 IN.”

According to NSA officers, the failure of the agency to upgrade or change its ELINT parameter data, contained in two databases known as the Emitter Parameter List (EPL) and KILTING, has led to a number of friendly fire incidents in Iraq, including the killing of Calipari, an attack on a Kurdish convoy in the north of Iraq, and the shooting down of a British RAF Tornado jet fighter near the Kuwaiti border. Hayden’s response has been to move SIGINT and ELINT functions to Texas and Colorado, respectively.

### **President Goofy’s Talk with Putin About “Magic Mountain”**

NSA’s overriding interest in a Soviet-era underground mountain complex apparently caught the interest of George W. Bush. In a closed zone near the city of Mezhgorye in the Russian Republic of Bashkortostan, north of the Kazakhstan border, is a huge underground facility embedded deep within Yamantau Mountain in the Urals Range. Yamantau is Bashkir for “Evil Mountain.” What amazes NSA is the absence of noticeable telecommunications support facilities for the complex, believed to be an alternate “doomsday” command center for the Russian government and military in the event of a nuclear, biological, or chemical attack. Costing over \$7 billion, the complex is supported by 60,000 workers who live in the nearby towns of Beloretsk and Tirlyanskiy.

The Yamantau Mountain Complex covers an area of some 400 square miles. Construction of the mammoth facility began during the 1970s and the Leonid Brezhnev administration. To maintain operational security and prevent future leaks, the Soviets hired workers from different parts of the USSR to perform individual tasks.

The neoconservatives in the Bush administration and Congress, particularly Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, UN ambassador nominee John Bolton, and Representatives Curt Weldon (R-PA) and Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD), have been pressuring the NSA and other intelligence agencies to come up with the goods on Yamantau. Wasting precious resources that could be used to combat terrorism, the intelligence agencies have been ordered to make Yamantau a top priority. The secrecy of the complex’s telecommunications methods has resulted in NSA coming up empty-handed.

For reasons of communications security, NSA routinely listens in on the communications of executive branch officials, including, at times, the president and the vice president. In a conversation between Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin, NSA operators overheard Bush asking in a rather inane manner, “You have a Yamantau, too?” Bush added, “It’s like our ‘Rock’?”

The “Rock” is a reference to the Joint Alternate Communications Center, or “Site R,” bored into Raven Rock Mountain just across the Maryland border in Pennsylvania, near the town of Waynesboro. It is an underground alternate national command center constructed during the Cold War and the famous “secret undisclosed location” where Vice President Cheney is often transported during states of alert. Unlike Yamantau, Raven Rock is surrounded by a number of tell tale signs that it is a military-critical facility—satellite parabolic dishes, microwave towers, and various antennas sprout from the side of the mountain.

Apparently, Bush got nothing about Yamantau in his phone conversation with Putin, who is a former KGB officer.

### **Anyone “Butt” Him**

Another prime NSA target is the Moscow-based Russian arms trafficker and human rights pariah Viktor Bout. Bout, pronounced “butt,” has a long record of flying arms and various terrorist and mercenary ne’er-do-wells from one killing zone to another.

Bout, who has mysterious air cargo companies based in places as far a field as Burkina Faso, Sharjah, Ajman, and Ras al Khaima in the United Arab Emirates, Miami, Dallas, Swaziland, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gibraltar, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Uganda, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Central African Republic, Belgium, Gambia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, and, under contract to U.S. forces, Iraq, has long been sought by the international community for being involved in busting United Nations arms sanctions in places like Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Congo, and Afghanistan.

Bout's clients have included Liberian dictator Charles Taylor, al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, the Philippine Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf Group, the Taliban government of Afghanistan, the Afghan Northern Alliance, Sierra Leone's brutal Revolutionary United Front guerrillas (who chopped off the hands and legs of children and other innocent civilians), and Zaire's dictator Mobutu Sese Seko.

During the last year of the Clinton administration, Viktor Bout was a number one SIGINT target for NSA. However, after Condoleezza Rice took over as National Security Adviser under Bush, she issued a change in orders on Bout. "Look and listen but don't touch" was the new policy. Ever since, Bout has flouted INTERPOL and Belgian and French arrest warrants.

Although the U.S. Treasury Department imposed sanctions on Bout's companies on April 26, 2005, and froze his corporate assets, one of Bout's airlines, Irbis, continued to operate from a U.S.-controlled airbase in northern Iraq.

Other Bout companies, which use a fleet of aging Soviet-era military cargo planes, are contracted to a network of seedy multinational private military contractors operating in Iraq. Bout's global enterprises closely intersect with the diamond, white slave trade, arms, and other illicit activities of Israel's Russian Mafia, made up of some 80 Russian and Ukrainian Jewish billionaires and millionaires who have escaped to Israel to avoid prosecution in and extradition to Russia and other countries. Considering the close association between leading neoconservatives like Vice President Cheney's Chief of Staff I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby to fugitive Marc Rich, who is linked to the crime syndicates in Israel, a reason for Rice's diktat, "Look and listen but don't touch," with regard to Bout, becomes abundantly clear.

### **Suicide is Painless and Common**

The U.S. intelligence community has suffered a spate of mysterious and surprising suicides since the onset of the Iraq war. State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research Iraq analyst John J. Kokal, former CIA officer Dr. Gus Weiss, and Washington's politically and diplomatically connected lobbyist Edward von Kloberg, who once counted Saddam Hussein among his clients, all jumped from the tops of buildings or out of window between November 2003 and May 2005. In addition, CIA officer Ben Miller was told to jump out of an open window at the National Security Council by Iran-contras felon Elliot Abrams, who is now an assistant national security advisor. In 2001, prior to the September 11 attacks, the DIA suffered a suicide in its Asia Area of Responsibility (AOR) unit.

NSA has apparently been no exception to the suicide epidemic. Before his departure from NSA to serve as Negroponte's deputy, Hayden sent a letter to all NSA employees in which he urged everyone to recognize "stress factors" at work. The letter also described the grief of losing a member of the NSA family from stress. NSA employees took the letter as an indication that there had been a recent suicide among the NSA ranks but no mention was made of the individual's identity. In fact, NSA insiders confirmed that an experienced NSA employee did commit suicide but the identity of the person remains a secret. In another mysterious case, a U.S. Air Force officer working clandestine SIGINT operations for NSA turned up missing with only a suicide note found.

NSAers are uniform in the way they describe Hayden and his team's tenure. The NSA is much worse now than it was seven years ago. Critical functions are being dispersed to incompetent contractors and distant military bases. Morale has plummeted to an all time low. Retired NSA veterans are hopping mad about what has become of their agency. What the neoconservatives and their ilk are doing to America's intelligence, military, economic, and foreign policy infrastructures is nothing more than treasonous. And in what will amount to the greatest demonstration of the law of unintended consequences, the damage done

to NSA by Hayden and his neoconservative superiors will result in more and greater intelligence disclosures that will shine a bright light on the behind-the-scenes machinations of the Bush administration and may, hopefully, drive a final nail in the coffin of neoconservative politics.

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