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01/26/05 09:19 PM **CIA VS DIA** [Post [293313816](#)]**Category:** News & Opinion (General) **Topic:** News & Current Events**Synopsis:****Source:** [South Asia Analysis Group](#)**Published:** January 25, 2005 **Author:** B. Raman**For Education and Discussion Only. Not for Commercial Use.**

I have been in receipt of some mail from my readers asking for my comments on the reports carried by the "Washington Post" and the CNN TV channel of the US during the week-end regarding the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) of the USA setting up a new intelligence collection unit called the Strategic Support Branch (SSB), which has been operating in Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries since 2002.

2. Quoting an unnamed official of the US Defence Department, Barbarra Starr of the CNN reported as follows on January 23, 2005: "The Pentagon's Defense Intelligence Agency since 2002 has run an intelligence-gathering and support unit that has authority to operate clandestinely anywhere in the world where it is ordered to go in support of anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism missions. The role of the Strategic Support Branch -- described first in Sunday's Washington Post -- is to provide an intelligence capability for field operation units including the U.S. military's secretive special forces unit. The Strategic Support Branch (SSB) got its name in 2004 after operating under a different, undisclosed name before then. The SSB, as part of the the Defense Intelligence Agency's human intelligence operations, sends DIA personnel into the field and recruits agents to provide intelligence. The unit's role is to provide a human intelligence capability for field operating units that, in many cases, will be composed of special forces also operating clandestinely in such countries as Iraq and Afghanistan. The SSB reports to Vice Admiral Lowell Jacoby, director of the DIA, but policies are set by Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Stephen Cambone, one of Rumsfeld's most senior aides. Because of Rumsfeld's direct involvement in forming SSB, it is an area he continues to watch closely. Congress had been notified about the formation of "this kind of activity," but might have been told of the program several months ago when it had a different name. "

3. In a statement issued on January 23, 2005, in response to the "Washington Post" article on the same subject, Pentagon spokesman Lawrence DiRita stated as follows: "There is no unit that is directly reportable to the Secretary of Defense for clandestine operations as is described in the Washington Post article. ... Further, the department is not attempting to 'bend' statutes to fit desired activities, as is suggested in this article. It is accurate and should not be surprising that the Department of Defense is attempting to improve its long-standing human intelligence capability. A principal conclusion of the 9/11 commission report is that the U.S. human intelligence capability must be improved across the board. The Department of Defense has a longstanding human intelligence capacity in the Defense Human Intelligence Service, a component of the Defense Intelligence Agency. Prior to the 9/11 commission issuing their conclusion that the nation's human intelligence capability must be improved, the Defense Human Intelligence Service has been taking steps to be more focused and task-oriented for the global war on terror. One

of the objectives of this effort is to make better human intelligence capability available to assist combatant commanders for specific missions involving regular or special operations forces. The demands of the global war on terror necessitate a framework by which military forces and traditional human intelligence work more closely together and in greater numbers than they have in the past. These actions are being taken within existing statutory authorities to support traditional military operations and any assertion to the contrary is wrong. The department remains in regular consultation with the relevant committees in Congress and with other agencies within the intelligence community, including the CIA."

4. In 1960, the then US President Dwight Eisenhower, who was dissatisfied with the functioning of the intelligence agencies of the Armed Forces, set up a Joint Study Group "to determine better ways of effectively organising the nation's military intelligence activities". It recommended the setting-up of a separate agency to act as the manager and co-ordinator of all intelligence expenditure, production, analysis, assessment and dissemination capabilities in the Department of Defence (DOD) and to meet the military intelligence requirements of the Defence Secretary, other policy makers, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the military formations in the field.

5. Eisenhower's tenure as the President came to an end before this report could be implemented. Robert McNamara, the Defence Secretary under President John Kennedy, accepted the Group's recommendation and set up the agency. McNamara, who was very cost-conscious, wanted to merge the intelligence directorates of the different wings of the Armed Forces with the DIA to avoid a multiplicity of intelligence agencies in the Pentagon. There was strong resistance to it from the armed forces and he had to agree to the continued existence of the intelligence directorates of the armed forces. He also wanted that the Director of the DIA should directly report to him. There was resistance to this also and it was ultimately decided that he would report to him through the Chairman, JCS. In fiscal 1998, the intelligence services of the Pentagon had the following staff and budgets:

TOTAL STAFF TOTAL BUDGET

Air Force Intelligence 15,000 \$ 1.5 billion

Naval Intelligence 16,000 \$ 1.2 billion

Army Intelligence 13,000 \$ 1.0 billion

The DIA 8,500 \$ 0.85 billion

6. The figures for subsequent years are not available. However, the total budget of the US intelligence community as a whole has increased four-fold since the 1990s from \$ 10 billion to \$ 40 billion (latest estimate from reliable sources), thanks to Osama bin Laden, Mulla Mohammad Omar, the Amir of the Taliban, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, Saddam Hussein, A.Q.Khan, the Pakistani nuclear scientist, and a host of other non-State actors. It would be reasonable estimate that the budgets of the military intelligence agencies, including the DIA, would have also increased correspondingly.

7. Since the DIA's creation on October 1, 1961, there has been a running debate in the US as to whether it should remain a purely analytical agency, analysing and assessing open source military intelligence and the secret intelligence collected by other agencies of the intelligence community or whether it should also have its own capability for the collection of secret intelligence. The DIA, like its counterparts in other countries including India, had been pressing for an independent collection capability.

8. In 1995, the human intelligence (HUMINT) collection capabilities of the intelligence directorates of the armed forces were merged to form a Defence HUMINT Service (DHS), which was placed under the control of the DIA. It was estimated that 80 percent of the intelligence collected by the DHS came from open sources and the remaining from secret human sources. Even though the DHS was supposed to function in close co-ordination with the CIA, which, under US laws, is the principal

manager of HUMINT operations, there were often conflicts of interests and turf battles between the two.

9. The working of the DHS was examined in detail by a blue ribbon Commission (the Brown Commission) appointed by President Clinton to examine the working of the US intelligence community. In its report of February 1996, it stated as follows: " A number of those interviewed by the Commission , including some military officers, urged that the clandestine HUMINT operations of the military services (and now the Defence HUMINT Service) be discontinued and left entirely to the CIA. They contended that over the years such activities have produced little of value and are difficult for the military to conduct. They argue that the cost of maintaining a separate infrastructure to conduct clandestine HUMINT operations is simply not justified by the limited results."

10. The Commission, therefore, recommended as follows: Retain the open source collection capabilities of the DHS and transfer its clandestine capabilities to the CIA. At the same time, it added the following caveat: "This recommendation is not intended to affect clandestine HUMINT activities undertaken by DOD elements in advance of , or as part of, a military operation."

11. It was by making use of this caveat that Donald Rumsfeld, the Defence Secretary, has sought to give the DIA and the military intelligence directorates strong and independent secret intelligence collection capabilities in Afghanistan , Pakistan. Iraq and Iran. Ever since 9/11, on many occasions, he had made no secret of his disappointment over the poor quality of the HUMINT supplied by the CIA and stressed the importance of an independent capability in the DOD to meet this deficiency.

12. While legally Rumsfeld's actions cannot be questioned, operationally the manner of the DIA's functioning without any co-ordination by the Director, Central Intelligence, is one of the main factors responsible for the continuing mess in Iraq and for the failure to nab Osama bin Laden, Ayman-al-Zawahiri, his no.2, and others in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

13. This lack of co-ordination was highlighted by embarrassing examples such as: the CIA discarding Ahmed Chalabi of Iraq after having found him unreliable and the DIA immediately taking him on its rolls as a privileged source; the DIA recruiting Moqtada Al-Sadr, the Shia leader of Baghdad, as a source and dropping him like a hot brick after he proved to be a thorn in the US flesh, the CIA lionising the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf as a stalwart ally in the so-called war against terrorism and the DIA quietly declassifying its reports on the links of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) with the Taliban and Al Qaeda prematurely long before they became due for declassification etc.

14. The Strategic Support Branch (SSB) personnel referred to by the "Washington Post" and the CNN started operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan immediately after the fiasco of the battle of Tora Bora during which Osama bin Laden managed to escape from Tora Bora in Afghanistan to Parachinar in Pakistan and subsequently disappeared from there. They later started operating in Iraq and in the areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan bordering Iran.

15. The SSB groups differ from the secret HUMINT groups of the CIA and the technical intelligence (TECHINT) groups of the National Security Agency (NSA) in that they have collection and follow-up action capabilities. That means, they not only collect HUMINT, but also act on them, whereas the CIA teams have no capability for follow-up action except in respect of the Predator aircraft. But for directing the aircraft on to a suspected target, the field collection teams have to report the intelligence to their headquarters for action.

16. In Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK), the Northern Areas (NA), the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Peshawar, the capital of the North-West Frontier Province, Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, and Karachi, the capital of Sindh, the ISI has set up a chain of communication monitoring stations with American money, equipment and technology. Experts from the CIA and the NSA and a small number of SSB personnel of the DIA are attached to these monitoring stations for studying and

analysing their intercepts. Their focus is mainly on bin Laden and al-Zawahiri. If they notice any intelligence on their likely location, the SSB groups are authorised to immediately nab them and fly them out to the US naval base in Diego Garcia. To enable them to do so, helicopters supplied by the US to Pakistan have been kept at key places such as Gilgit, Skardu in Baltistan, Peshawar etc. They are ostensibly under the control of the Pakistan Army, but meant for use by the SSB personnel.


17. According to reliable sources in the community of retired Pakistani officers, the DIA has also deployed special SSB teams in Karachi and Lahore whose main task will be to ensure that Pakistan's nuclear weapons do not fall into the hands of the jihadi terrorists should anything untoward happen to Musharraf. It was to this that Ms. Condoleeza Rice, the new US Secretary of State, was obliquely referring during her confirmation testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in response to probing questions from Senator John Kerry.

18. Since 2002, I have written a number of articles on the increasing intelligence collection role of the DIA. These are available at www.saag.org either in the section on "Intelligence" or in the section on "Iraq".

19. The 9/11 Commission had recommended that the para-military covert action capability of the CIA should be transferred to the Armed Forces. The SSB groups combine in themselves the collection and covert action capabilities. But this decision seems to have been taken by Rumsfeld before the Commission submitted its report.

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Pluton writes: "See also http://www.libertyforum.org/showflat.php?Cat=&Board=news_news&Number=293311250 and <http://kurtnimmo.com/blog/index.php?p=511>"

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I guess the neocons cant trust their lackeys at the CIA, so they had to go off and create their own intel-agency.
pk

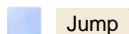
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