

Behind Enemy Lines

Espionage and Covert Operations

Need for Intelligence Agencies

Armies are useful for full-scale conquest or liberations and defence but not much else

Mobilization requires lots of preparation – can't really slip under the radar

Pesky details involving war

- Citizens may object. Problematic in democracies
- UN may throw a hissy fit
- Expensive

Difficult to determine good targets to attack

- School/orphanage vs. cyclotrons

So, What do they do?



Role of Intelligence Agencies

Intelligence

- Gathering information about enemy targets, preparation levels, troop movements, types of weapons, weapon technology

Counterintelligence

- Prevent other people from gathering too much intelligence about you

Operations

- Perform covert operations, usually on foreign soil, requiring stealth and secrecy

Roles split between different agencies - MI5/MI6 or the FBI and the CIA

Covert Ops

Stealth and secrecy are of utmost importance

Carried out by a single person or a small number of people, behind enemy lines

Often no backup or traceable affiliation with the home country

Plausible deniability – operation might be illegal or cause outcry in the home country if it becomes known

Examples:

- Extrajudicial renditions or assassinations (Adolf Eichmann, Fidel Castro)
- Destabilize Governments (Bay of Pigs)

Quick Look at Operations

Be discreet and secretive, don't attract any attention

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsBd9tPK4uE&feature=related>

Types of Field Agents

Intelligence Operatives

- Non-secret operatives
- Moles/Sleepers
- Double Agents

Military Operatives

- Secret Agents

Non-secret Operatives

Have a valid reason to be present in a foreign country

- Military attaches attached with embassies

Primarily for intelligence gathering

Do not perform any overtly illegal operations

Contact point for secret operatives

Diplomatic Immunity

- Diplomats cannot be arrested for their role in spying
- Expelled and blacklisted to prevent reentry

Secret Operatives

Moles and Sleepers

- Originally from country A, they are sent to country B to infiltrate agencies or establish a supply chain for later operations. E.g. - Eli Cohen
- Chosen for their ability to blend into the country without arousing suspicion.

Double Agents

- Betray their own country, perhaps for ideological reasons or plain greed. E.g. - Cambridge Five, Oleg Penkhovskiy

Secret Agents

- Field operatives, sent in for carrying out a certain mission
- Either develop some cover story such as visitors or business travellers, or need to blend in

Trials of Secret Operatives

No diplomatic immunity

Geneva convention does not apply

Trial by military court

Lucky ones are just imprisoned and exchanged

- Cold War – Glienicke Bridge, Germany

Often tortured for information or as an example to dissuade others, before reaching a sticky end

- Burnt alive, without even the consolation of being St. Lawrence

In short, not fun if you're caught

The Upside?

Given that, why would you want to become a secret agent?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JL_1RBxOYNA

Becoming a Secret Agent

Read their website

Fill in the application form and pay fees before the date
(usually around December to start the next Fall)

Well written statement of interest detailing why the job interests
you (tip - don't use the previous slide as a motivating example)

Good references - "It's Not What You Know, But Who You
Know" has never been more true

No, but seriously....

Majority of the staff of intelligence agencies are not operatives, but work on analysis of the data

Not equal opportunity employers – ethnicity may play a role in hiring trends

Field operatives are usually either directly recruited from the military, or ex-military veterans

Being able to pass off as a native of a currently unfriendly nation is a plus

Recruiting Double Agents

Becoming a double agent is easier, provided you have access to confidential data

Downside: No champagne in yachts off the Riviera

Ideological double agents usually make the overture themselves

Other cases

- Identify corruptible people
- People in need of money
- Blackmail

Measures for Anonymity

Dead Drops

- Allow the agent and handler to communicate without having to meet
- Predecided secret spot – could be a mailbox, a cavity in a wall, hollow of a tree, dug underground, etc
- Marker to signify that the drop has been made – chalk marks, books or newspapers left somewhere, etc
- Watergate exposure – Deep Throat (Mark Felt) used a similar method to communicate with Woodward – a flowerpot in the balcony with a red flag to signify a drop, and the time being marked out on a newspaper

Measures for Anonymity

Safe Houses

- Houses of refuge maintained in foreign countries
- No legal protection, except the assumption that they are not known to enemy agents
- Security by obscurity :)
- May provide temporary respite to field operatives who require a place to lay low for a short amount of time
- Need to be changed once used a few times for fear of being compromised

Data Communication

Encryption

- Modify contents of the message to make it indecipherable to someone not possessing the key
- Early instances recorded more than 2000 years back
- Caesar cipher – simple monoalphabetic, substitution cipher is an example
- Completely useless today – frequency analysis as early as the 9th century found weaknesses in it

Caesar Cipher (Part Deux)

With computing power, most traditional ciphers are useless (except one time pads)

Use specialised ciphers developed for digital data communication like RSA

March 2011, Rajib Karim, accused of plotting to blow up a British Airways flight^[1]

Secret communications used a homegrown encryption algorithm – a Caesar cipher developed in Excel

Rejected using "Mujhaddin Secrets", which implements all the AES candidate cyphers, "because 'kaffirs', or non-believers, know about it so it must be less secure

[1]http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2011/03/how_peer_review.html

Data Communication (Contd)

Steganography

- Encryption is not good enough when even the presence of potentially suspicious data being transmitted is enough to incriminate you
- Steganography hides the secret message in plain view, so even if the entire message is exposed, the secret message is hidden inside
- Used by UDLS Czars to conceal April Fool's jokes

Types of Steganography

Invisible Ink

- Visible in the presence of heat (Lime juice)
- Visible in the presence of UV light
- MI6 used semen as invisible ink – one agent had to be told to use fresh ink every time because of the unusual smell [2]

Tricks like using the first character of every word, the first word after every punctuation mark, etc

Microfilm steganography

Modern digital techniques

- Hide data in lossy images or audio files
- Network protocol steganography

[2] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/8015180/MI6-used-bodily-fluids-as-invisible-ink.html>

Some Famous Spies

Mata Hari

- Dutch, executed by the French for being a German agent
- Double agent or scapegoat?

Eli Cohen

- Israeli spy in Syria – chief adviser to the defence minister
- Suggested planting eucalyptus trees

Oleg Penkhovskiy

- Soviet double agent or Soviet plant?
- Plans and descriptions of nuclear missile sites during the Cuban missile crisis

Cambridge Five

- Burgess, Philby, Blunt, Maclean and perhaps Caincross
- Recruited during student days in Cambridge

Spies Today



Anna Chapman – British-Russian citizen, expelled from the US in 2010

Became a media celebrity, now back in Russia

“Plamegate”

Valerie Plame – CIA undercover operative

Wife of former ambassador, Joseph C Wilson

Identity leaked, supposedly by white-house officials as revenge for critical comments made by Mr. Wilson against the administration

Lewis Libby, adviser to Dick Cheney, was indicted and convicted, but the sentence was commuted by the President

Conclusions

Be patriotic – consider a career in the secret service!

Pay won't match Goldman Sachs, but plenty of ancillary benefits

Travel around the world with caviar and champagne on someone else's purse

Post retirement career options – join personalised body guard and security agencies....

... Or become a raconteur, and share stories with friends along with a pint of beer :)