



SECRET

IRAN

11 February 1981

THE JOINT STAFF

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER USA INSCOM

Through: USA/ACSI

Subject: Grill Flame Evaluation (U)

1. (SNFD) During the period 23 November 1979 through 13 January 1981, USAINSCOM/ADCSOPS-HUMINT/Special Action Office provided 202 Grill Flame Reports to OJCS/J3/SOD in support of the Iranian Hostage situation. Of this total 118 reports were provided prior to 24 April 1980 and 84 subsequent to that date.

2. (SNFD) Source targeting was divided between personalities and physical locations as follows:

Phase I - Personalities 68

Locations 50

Phase II - Personalities 52

Locations 32

3. (SNFD) Comparison of these reports with returnee debriefings revealed a very low correlation between actual hostage locations/conditions and inferences drawn from Grill Reporting. Only seven reports could be positively correlated with actual location or condition. Approximately 59 reports revealed a possible or partial correlation. However, these same reports often included erroneous data. Sixteen reports contained inconclusive data making correlation highly subjective. Eight reports were noted as being poor from an administrative/procedural standpoint and therefore being of no value. One hundred and twelve reports were found to be entirely incorrect.

ARMY and JCS review(s) completed.

CLASSIFIED BY: Chief, SOD
DATE FOR () DECLASSIFICATION
OR (X) REVIEW
IS: 11 Feb 2001
EXTENDED BY: Chief, SOD
REASON: 5200.1R, Para 2-301c5&6

SECRET

SECRET

4. (SNFD) Although the above comparison would appear to degrade the value of the Grill Flame program, several factors must be considered before drawing any final judgements. Some of these factors are:

a. Contamination of Grill Flame reporters could not be avoided because of the extensive media and intelligence treatment accorded the incident.

b. Effective employment of Grill Flame concepts may be, at least partially, dependent upon the cooperation of the HUMAN subject and reliable recognition features of the physical/structural targets.

c. The lack of reliable and objective analysis techniques is also a major limiting factor in evaluating Grill Flame Reporting. As an example, midway through the reporting period this office requested the Project Manager to conduct several sessions on a special subject. Two sessions were run on a controlled basis, i.e., the actual location and activities of subject were known to this office but not to the Project Manager. Evaluation of the reports and follow-on questioning of the subject revealed that reports could not be accurately interpreted until the actual physical and mental activities of the subject were known. Once these became known, a greater degree of correlation occurred.

5. (SNFD) In summary Grill Flame Reporting, as evidenced by the above results, is not yet proven to be reliable enough to use in a tactical/operational environment. The Grill Flame concept may hold future potential if positive controls and effective analytical techniques are developed. Recommend any future Grill Flame efforts be conducted under extremely controlled conditions and care be taken by evaluators and customers to avoid becoming enamoured of the source.


R. J. LENAHAN
LTCOL, USAF

SECRET