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# The secret deadly war

Last Monday I outlined the story of how former CIA agent Edwin Wilson had been jailed for gun-running to Libya. In spite of his claims that he was under "deep cover" for the CIA, Wilson received a term of 32 years, later reduced on appeal to 15 years.

But Wilson's story did not end there. In 1980, the chairman of Australia's Nugan Hand bank was found shot to death, an event that triggered a major scandal. An extensive Australian government inquiry revealed that the bank had been used for years to launder CIA funds and to organize, finance and direct covert operations in such places as Haiti, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Edwin Wilson figured prominently in a number of Nugan Hand operations, including the secret Task Force 157 project to supply covert arms to rebels in Angola, Mozambique and to white Rhodesia. It appears that Nugan Hand also had links to Libya.

Worse yet, a dazzling number of senior active and retired CIA and military officials were deeply involved with Nugan Hand. These included William Colby, former CIA Director; Ted Shackley and Thomas Clines, former covert operations directors; national security officials Rear Admiral Yates and Gen. Richard Secord, and a host of other top government figures.

Some reports have suggested that Nugan Hand financed the \$20 million in arms that Wilson is alleged to have supplied Libya. There now appears little doubt that the CIA was using Wilson and Nugan Hand to do the necessary but unappetizing work that the U.S. government would not officially do itself. When this scandal broke, everyone involved ran for cover, leaving Wilson and another former CIA agent, Frank Terpil, holding the bag.

## Passing classified information

Then, in April, 1983, Waldo Dubberstein, a retired senior analyst for the military's defence intelligence agency, was charged with passing classified U.S. information to Libya, via the ubiquitous Edwin Wilson. Shortly afterwards, Dubberstein was found dead, supposedly of a self-inflicted shotgun wound. He left a note protesting his complete innocence. This curious story, like the Nugan Hand scandal, was largely hushed up.

At the same time, a number of potential witnesses in the Wilson trials were found dead under rather mysterious circumstances. Soon after, Wilson was charged with conspiracy to murder governmental prosecutors and witnesses and received another 25-year sentence on top of his original 15 for smuggling. How these witnesses died remains an enigma.

To make matters worse, two British investigative reporters who specialized in the odd case of the Pope's assailant, Mehmet Ali Agca, now claim that this Turkish terrorist was trained in the very camp run by Terpil and Wilson.

They further allege that the CIA, through Terpil and Wilson, was quite aware that Agca was headed for Europe with the intent of assassinating a major figure. Israeli intelligence sources have tended to confirm this claim. It appears, according to this view, that the CIA did nothing in order to protect its covert Libyan operation. This is why the Russians made the seemingly bizarre claim that Agca worked for the CIA.

As the Nugan Hand scandal grew, complete with allegations that the bank was involved in narcotics and other illicit activities, official Washington dropped a blanket of security over the entire affair.

We do know that secret, high-level investigations are still going on in Washington into the tangled web of covert commercial and arms deals involving Wilson, Nugan Hand, Libya, Egypt and top former and present officials in the Pentagon and the various intelligence agencies. There is growing speculation that some major financial and ethical irregularities in these secret dealings may have occurred.

## Sacrificial lamb?

The full story of all this international intrigue may not come out for years, if ever. In the meantime, Wilson is in jail for the next 40 years and Terpil is still at large. Wilson, like Gordon Liddy, the head of the White House "Plumbers," has so far refused to provide any details of his intelligence work. Is his silence the result of fear for his life or from patriotic motives? Has Wilson been made the sacrificial lamb for all of the senior government officials seeking to protect their careers?

This bitter and depressing story highlights the nasty world of intelligence operations. The U.S. government had to perform certain unsavory missions for the sake of its national security. Because of domestic political reasons, these operations, such as the secret links to Libya, had to be constructed through unofficial operatives and front organizations, with the inevitable loss of control and, dealing in hundreds of millions of dollars of "black" money, with all the opportunities for financial irregularities.

Wilson's saga also illustrates the continuing immaturity of the American people and Congress. The Soviet Union and the United States are locked in a deadly, ferocious secret war around the world. American intelligence agents must fight this continuing struggle with the same weapons as the Soviets, yet while pretending that they are not. Once U.S. covert operations are exposed, our false morality reacts in shock and horror to the truth we do not want to see. When this happens, the unfortunate soldiers in this bitter struggle — like Wilson and Terpil — often end up being thrown to the wolves.

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