

excessively risk-averse. For example, despite all the advantages of a career under official cover as compared to non-official cover, the average CIA/DO employee still doesn't spend a significant amount of time overseas. Only about 35 percent of CIA/DO employees have spent more than 3 out of the last 10 years overseas. This low ratio indicates that the wrong mindset now dominates what is supposed to be an overseas clandestine service.

The Solution – A New OSS

The answer to the problems described above is to create an environment in which the aggressive non-official cover operations we need to be conducting are not “crowded out” by official cover operations. A small agile and adaptive organization should be built, along the lines of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in World War II, chartered with a corporate culture of taking prudent risks, and operating exclusively from non-official cover (NOC) platforms. This would be a small organization that would augment the existing HUMINT agencies and work against a limited list of targets: terrorists, proliferators and “rogue states.” This organization could be created within an existing HUMINT agency like the CIA or the Defense HUMINT Service (DHS), but creating it as an independent agency would help avoid the possibility that its aggressive non-official cover operations would be “crowded out” by the official cover operations being conducted in these agencies. Creating an independent agency would also avoid the possibility that it would be held back by the culture of risk aversion that exists in agencies like the CIA and the DHS. Another possibility is to create the organization as an independent agency of the Department of Defense.

- Creating a new organization has the advantage of creating a capability to directly target organizations like Al Qaeda without undermining the strengths of the existing HUMINT organizations. For example, two of CIA/DO's strengths are their work with foreign liaison intelligence services and taking “walk in” sources. These are important missions that would not be compatible with a new organization operating exclusively under non-official covers. Thus, there is both room for, and a need for, both CIA/DO and a new organization that operates exclusively from non-official cover collection platforms.