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ALLEGATIONS RELATING TO THE SECURITY CONTROLS ON  
TWO AIR FORCE PROGRAMS

Report No. D-2000-059

December 16, 1999

Office of the Inspector General  
Department of Defense

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December 16, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
(ACQUISITION)  
DIRECTOR, RECONNAISSANCE SYSTEMS PROGRAM  
OFFICE  
DIRECTOR, AIR FORCE SPECIAL PROGRAMS

SUBJECT: Audit Report on Allegations Relating to the Security Controls on  
Two Air Force Programs (Report No. D-2000-059)

We are providing this report for your information and use. We conducted the audit in response to a complaint to the Defense Hotline regarding the use of special access program procedures on two Air Force programs, the Big Safari and the Senior Year programs. Because this report contains no findings or recommendations, no written comments were required, and none were received. Therefore, we are publishing this report in final form.

We appreciate the courtesies extended to the audit staff. For additional information on this report, please contact Mr. Robert K. West at (703) 604-8983 (DSN 664-8983) (rwest@dodig.osd.mil) or Ms. Lois J. Wozniak at (703) 604-8829 (DSN 664-8829) (lwozniak@dodig.osd.mil). See Appendix C for the report distribution. The audit team members are listed inside the back cover.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert J. Lieberman".

Robert J. Lieberman  
Assistant Inspector General  
for Auditing

## Office of the Inspector General, DoD

Report No. D-2000-059  
Project No. 9AD-8007

December 16, 1999

### Allegations Relating to the Security Controls on Two Air Force Programs

#### Executive Summary

**Introduction.** This audit was performed in response to a complaint to the Defense Hotline regarding the use of special access program procedures on two Air Force special access programs.

**Objectives.** The audit objective was to evaluate the following allegations regarding security procedures on the Big Safari and the Senior Year programs.

- Two Air Force programs were designated as special access programs, but were actually nothing more than "collateral" (non-special access) programs.
- The Big Safari Program was employing special access procedures for the entire program, although only a small portion required special access program protection.
- The special access procedures in place for the Big Safari Program at the Greenville, Texas, location were not being followed.
- The Senior Year Program was still being called a special access program even though there had been nothing special to protect in about 4 years.
- Personnel security clearances were being ordered for people on the Senior Year Program who did not need them.

**Results.** Of the five allegations regarding the Big Safari and Senior Year programs, three allegations were unsubstantiated and two allegations were partially substantiated. The overall Big Safari Program was not designated as a special access program. The Big Safari Program provides management, direction, and control of the acquisition, modification, and logistics support for special purpose weapons systems. From time to time, various Big Safari-directed projects were designated as special access required and security guidance was provided on a case-by-case basis. Our review of the Greenville facility and past inspection reports for a Big Safari project at Greenville found that the security procedures were satisfactory. The Senior Year Program was a special access program until July 1999. The Senior Year Program began its transition toward disestablishment as a special access program in 1994. During the transition period, the Senior Year Program Office took the necessary steps to ensure a smooth

and timely transition. Once the special access caveats were removed from the security classification guide in July 1994, the program became a collateral program. The Senior Year Program Office had revised its security classification guide, eliminated its "carve-out" status, changed its funding, and turned security functions over to the Defense Security Service before the program was officially disestablished. Further, we found no validity to allegations that the Senior Year personnel were being required to have more stringent personnel security investigative or adjudicative requirements, which are characteristic of special access programs. In conclusion, no indications of improper security procedures resulted from this audit of the Big Safari and the Senior Year programs.

**Management Comments.** We provided a draft of this report on November 10, 1999. Because the draft report contained no findings or recommendations, written comments were not required, and none were received. Therefore, we are publishing this report in final form.

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## Introduction

This audit was performed in response to a complaint to the Defense Hotline regarding the use of special access program procedures on two Air Force special access programs, the Big Safari and the Senior Year programs.

## Background

The Big Safari and the Senior Year programs are under the oversight of the Reconnaissance Systems Program Office, Air Force Aeronautical Systems Center. The mission of the Program Office is to plan, acquire, and sustain reconnaissance systems that satisfy national command authority requirements.

**Big Safari.** The Big Safari Program provides the management, direction, and control of acquisition, modification, and logistic support for special-purpose weapon systems in the following mission areas:

- electronic combat;
- command and control warfare;
- low intensity conflict;
- unconventional warfare;
- drug interdiction; and
- special access programs.

A three star general or higher approval authority is required for projects under the Big Safari umbrella. The approved projects require special handling because of urgent need or significant impact to national security. The direction for the Big Safari capability was established by Air Force Regulation 66-22, March 1965, which states, "Establish an organization and system to provide the fastest reaction and support for such modification requirements as may be directed...." Big Safari programs:

- are of sufficient importance and priority to warrant preferential treatment, quick reaction and extraordinary procurement procedures (streamlined acquisition management);
- involve only a small number of vehicles or equipment;
- require predominantly in-service engineering modification or installation of existing equipment for which the Air Force Materiel Command has systems and engineering cognizance;
- require continuing unique logistics support by the Air Force Materiel Command or the modification contractor due to the peculiar or nonstandard applications of technology, subsystems, and equipment utilized in the integration system; and
- dictate extraordinary methods and practices to protect sensitive or classified aspects of the capability being acquired.

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The Big Safari Program itself is not a special access program. The Big Safari Security Plan and Classification Guide, dated April 15, 1996, states that "all classified aspects of the Big Safari Program will be controlled at the collateral<sup>1</sup> level." However, from time to time, various Big Safari Program-directed projects are designated special access required, and security guidance is provided as required on a case-by-case basis.

**Senior Year.** The Senior Year Acquisition and Sustainment System, referred to as the Senior Year Program, was a special access umbrella<sup>2</sup> program. The Senior Year Program was created as an unacknowledged special access program in 1955 and was managed by the Central Intelligence Agency until its transfer to the Air Force in 1960. The Senior Year Program was a multi-sensor reconnaissance system, which used the U-2 aircraft as its airborne collection platform. The Air Force had maintained an office to ensure the maximum operational responsiveness and flexibility of the U-2 weapon system.

The Senior Year Program was disestablished as a special access program on July 16, 1999. The U-2 was the remaining program. In 1995, the major special access projects under the Senior Year Program were cancelled, and the last special access project was moved to another special access umbrella program in 1997. Because most customers know the U-2 Program as Senior Year, the U-2 Program would like to retain the name Senior Year for its historic value. See Appendix B for a discussion of events prior to the disestablishment of the Senior Year Program.

**The U-2 Weapon System.** The U-2 Weapon System includes the aircraft, sensors, data links, and ground stations. Typically, these uniquely configured aircraft involve small numbers of airframes and sensors and require rapid acquisition response because of the volatile operational environment in which the systems are employed throughout their life-cycle. The Air Force Materiel Command provides total "cradle to grave" acquisition and sustainment support. The Senior Year Program comprises a number of operations, but its primary mission is to support and sustain U-2 worldwide operational responses at the direction of the National Command Authority, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the theater commander-in-chief. The Senior Year Program supports all service Components (Army, Navy, and Air Force) and other DoD and non-DoD intelligence agencies. The U-2 Program performs sustainment and integration of new development; it does not perform new development.

**Transfer from Garland to Greenville, Texas.** In 1999, the Senior Year (U-2) Program was moved from Garland, Texas, to Greenville, Texas. The change in security procedures concerned some former Garland employees. Because the Senior

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<sup>1</sup> Collateral information is identified as National Security Information under the provisions of Executive Order 12958 but is not subject to enhanced security protection required for Special Access Program information.

<sup>2</sup> An umbrella special access program is a DoD approved program that contains compartments for specific projects within the overall program. Each project within the overall program must be consistent with the Special Access Program Oversight Committee-approved scope of the umbrella special access program.

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Year Program was a collateral program, the Greenville Senior Year Program project facility did not have cipher locks on the doors or access control lists. Those controls existed at Garland from the time the Senior Year Program was a special access program. The controls had not been removed because there was no cost associated in keeping them. Also, classified documents were centrally located at the Garland facility, but each individual was held responsible for his or her own classified documents at the Greenville facility. In addition, the Greenville facility had layered security procedures such as contractor-controlled areas, where access is determined by "need-to-know," because of the large number of foreign customers continuously visiting and the need to protect technical information. The contractor held security briefings to answer any questions regarding the security of the facility.

## **Objectives**

The audit objective was to evaluate the following allegations regarding security procedures on the Big Safari and the Senior Year programs.

- Two Air Force programs were designated as special access programs, but were actually nothing more than "collateral" (non-special access) programs.
- The Big Safari Program was employing special access procedures for the entire program, although only a small portion required special access program protection.
- The special access procedures in place for the Big Safari Program at the Greenville, Texas, location were not being followed.
- The Senior Year Program was still being called a special access program even though there had been nothing special to protect in about 4 years.
- Personnel security clearances were being ordered for people on the Senior Year Program who did not need them.

See Appendix A for a discussion of the audit scope and methodology.

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## Summary of Allegations and Audit Results

**Allegation 1.** The Air Force has two programs that "currently carry the title of 'Special Access Programs' but which are basically nothing more than what the Air Force refers to as 'collateral' (or non-special access) programs."

**Results.** The allegation was partially substantiated. The Big Safari Program was never designated as a special access program. The Big Safari Program directs special access and collateral projects; security guidance is provided for each project on a case-by-case basis.

The Senior Year Program was a designated special access program; however, it was officially disestablished as a special access program on July 16, 1999. The remaining U-2 Program is a collateral program.

**Allegation 2.** The Big Safari Program is employing special access procedures for the entire program, when only a very small portion may require special access protection.

**Results.** The allegation was unsubstantiated. The Big Safari Program provides management, direction, and control of the acquisition, modification, and logistic support for special purpose weapon systems. From time to time, various Big Safari-directed projects are designated as special access required and security guidance is provided on a case-by-case basis. Our review found that appropriate security measures were being implemented according to each project's designated security classification. The collateral project facilities were inspected according to the guidance in the Big Safari Security Plan and Classification Guide and the special access project facilities were inspected by the Air Force Office of Special Intelligence Special Agents. Our review found no indication of improper security procedures being implemented by the Big Safari Program or the projects under its direction.

**Allegation 3.** The special access procedures in place for the Big Safari Program at the Greenville, Texas, location were not being followed.

**Results.** The allegation was unsubstantiated. The Air Force Office of Special Intelligence Special Agents are responsible for security management and oversight of special access programs and prevention of fraud, waste, and abuse. Each special access facility is inspected every 12 to 14 months, depending on the facility's size and previous inspection results; the reports are kept for two years. The agents have the authority to shut down a facility if needed. A Big Safari special access project and a collateral Senior Year project are located in the same Greenville, Texas, facility but on separate floors. Our review of the Greenville facility and the last two inspection reports for the Big Safari special access project at Greenville found that the security procedures were satisfactory.

**Allegation 4.** The Senior Year Program was still being called a special access program even though there had been nothing special to protect in about 4 years, and all the contracts awarded were unclassified.

**Results.** The allegation was partially substantiated. In 1994, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition issued an Interim Message Change stating that the Senior

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Year Security Classification Guide was to be changed to collateral status and that all special access caveats were to be eliminated from the guide, thus making the program a collateral program. Special access program funds had not been obligated for the Senior Year Program since 1995, when the funding was changed to the Defense Airborne Reconnaissance Program funding line. The Senior Year Program had been operating as a collateral program since 1994 and was officially disestablished as a special access program on July 16, 1999.

**Allegation 5.** Personnel security clearances are being ordered for people on the Senior Year Program who did not need them.

**Results.** The allegation was unsubstantiated. In the past 5 years, no one had personnel security investigative or adjudicative requirements that were more stringent than those required for a collateral program. The last special access project under the Senior Year Program was moved to another special access umbrella program in 1997. Our review of the clearance roster for that special access project showed no indications of any improprieties.

### **Conclusion**

No indications of improper security procedures resulted from the audit of the Big Safari and the Senior Year programs. The overall Big Safari Program was not designated as a special access program. Various projects under the Big Safari Program umbrella had been designated special access required; however, appropriate security guidance was provided on a case-by-case basis. From the time the Senior Year Program Office was notified of the intent to disestablish the Senior Year Program as a special access program, the Program Office took the necessary steps to make the transition smooth and timely. When the special access caveats were removed from the security classification guide in July 1994, the program became a collateral program. The Senior Year Program Office had revised its security classification guide, eliminated its "carve-out" status, changed its funding, and turned security functions over to the Defense Security Service before the program was officially disestablished.

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## **Appendix A. Audit Process**

### **Scope and Methodology**

We conducted the audit of the security controls on two Air Force programs from July 1999 through November 1999. We reviewed documentation dated from FY 1994 through FY 1999 related to the security requirements for the Big Safari and the Senior Year programs and interviewed personnel from the Air Force Reconnaissance Systems Program Office, including personnel from the U-2 Management Directorate and the Big Safari Program Office; the Air Force Office of Special Intelligence Special Agents; the Air Force Historical Research Agency; the Central Intelligence Agency; the Defense Contract Audit Agency; and Raytheon Systems Company. The audit focused on the allegations made to the Defense Hotline. We did not use computer-processed data to conduct this audit.

**Limitation to Scope.** Because our objectives were limited to the Defense Hotline allegations, our audit work did not include a review of the management control program.

**Contacts During the Audit.** We visited or contacted individuals and organizations within DoD. Further details are available on request.

**General Accounting Office High-Risk Area.** The General Accounting Office has identified several high-risk areas in the DoD. This report provides coverage of the Defense Weapons Systems Acquisition high-risk area.

### **Prior Coverage**

No prior coverage had been conducted on the subject during the last 5 years.

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## **Appendix B. Senior Year Program Disestablishment History**

The Senior Year Program was officially disestablished as a special access program on July 16, 1999. The following provides a chronology of events in the Senior Year Program's progress toward disestablishment as a special access program.

- On July 13, 1994, the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition issued an Interim Message Change (94-1) to the Senior Year Program's security classification guide, stating that the Senior Year Security Classification Guide was to be changed to collateral status. The new Senior Year Security Classification Guide would eliminate the references to special access required, and a new special access required guide would be disseminated to those contractors providing support to special access projects in the future.
- In August 1995, the Defense Investigative Service (now the Defense Security Service) issued a letter stating that the U-2 Product Directorate, Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, Department of the Air Force, had notified it that the majority of the Senior Year Program had been changed to a collateral status. Therefore, the Air Force intended to transfer the security inspection oversight responsibility for a number of facilities to the Defense Security Service.
- In October 1995, Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, U-2 Product Directorate, relinquished cognizance for certain Senior Year Program contractors to the Defense Security Service. The Program Office decided to turn over inspection responsibility of the Senior Year contractors in two phases due to the volume of work and scope of responsibility and involvement with certain Senior Year contractors.
- In 1995, the Senior Year Program funding changed from a special access funding line item to the Defense Airborne Reconnaissance Program funding line.
- In October 1995, the first phase of contractors was turned over to the Defense Security Service for security inspection oversight.
- In May 1996, a letter change to the May 1995 Senior Year Security Classification Guide stated that the guide was undergoing major revisions to reflect the National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual. The letter change gave guidance regarding information markings that were to be effective immediately.
- In February 1997, the second letter change brought the Senior Year Program security requirements in line with baseline National Industrial Security Program Operating Manual requirements.

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- In October 1997, the second phase of contractors was turned over to Defense Security Service for security inspection oversight.
  - In March 1999, the Senior Year Security Classification Guide was issued.
  - On March 1, 1999, the Office of the Secretary of Defense provided congressional notification of its intent to disestablish the Senior Year Program. After the mandatory "silent response period," the Deputy Secretary of Defense notified the Secretary of the Air Force that the Senior Year Special Access Program was approved for disestablishment.
  - On July 16, 1999, the Senior Year Program was officially disestablished as a special access program.

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Committee on Government Reform  
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## **Audit Team Members**

The Acquisition Management Directorate, Office of the Assistant Inspector General for Auditing, DoD, prepared this report.

Thomas F. Gimble

Robert K. West

Lois J. Wozniak

Julie A. Kienitz

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