

Ex-CIA Official Clarridge Indicted in Iran Arms Case

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Duane R. "Dewey" Clarridge, a former CIA official with a reputation for derring-do, was indicted by a federal grand jury yesterday on seven felony counts of perjury and false statements about a secret 1985 arms shipment to Iran.

He was accused of lying repeatedly before congressional investigating committees and a special presidential review board in stating he had not known beforehand that the shipment contained U.S. Hawk missiles.

Clarridge, 59, became the second former high-ranking CIA official indicted this year in independent

counsel Lawrence E. Walsh's investigation of complicity in a coverup of the Iran-contra scandal. A third CIA official pleaded guilty in July to misdemeanor charges of illegally withholding information from Congress about the affair.

Top Reagan administration and CIA officials have long claimed they had no reason to know at the time of the Nov. 25, 1985, shipment that it contained arms for Tehran. The U.S. weapons were delivered from Israeli stocks as part of administration efforts to free U.S. hostages held in Lebanon by pro-Iranian groups. The shipment was an especially sensitive one because it

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was illegally carried out without a requisite presidential "finding."

The grand jury charged that Clarridge had been told by then-White House aide Oliver L. North six days earlier at a meeting in a McLean restaurant, Charley's Place, that Hawk missiles were to be delivered. The indictment said North had arranged the urgent get-together because of difficulties his operatives and Israeli officials were having in securing the needed flight clearances to get the weapons from Tel Aviv to Tehran by way of Lisbon.

Clarridge, the grand jury said, told North a CIA proprietary airline was available to pick up the missiles in Tel Aviv for more direct delivery. In addition, Clarridge allegedly contacted CIA officers overseas to facilitate the shipment, stayed in contact with them through the Nov. 23-24 weekend and even let North use his office at CIA headquarters in Langley to coordinate the delivery.

According to the grand jury, a third man, Vincent Cannistraro, a CIA official detailed to the National

Security Council staff where North also worked, was present at the meeting at Charley's Place.

Clarridge, who had been chief of the CIA's European operations, denied the charges through his lawyer, William McDaniel of Baltimore.

"Mr. Clarridge served his country with honor and without reproach for over 30 years," McDaniel said. "He is innocent of any wrongdoing. The trial of the charges against him will establish his innocence and he looks forward to it."

Clarridge faces five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on each count if convicted. Because of complexities and delays expected involving classified government documents needed for trial, the case was specially assigned to U.S. District Judge Harold H. Greene, who has handled related cases.

A controversial figure on Capitol Hill, Clarridge was assigned to the European post in 1984 after dust-ups with Capitol Hill over his work as head of the CIA's Latin American division. He had devised the mining of Nicaraguan harbors in the secret war against the Sandinista regime

and boasted about it after enraged members of the Senate intelligence committee learned of the operation.

"Clarridge and [the late CIA Director William J.] Casey essentially created the contra [rebel] program against the Sandinistas in 1981," said one source. Clarridge caught Casey's eye as Rome station chief in 1981 and soon found himself assigned to head the Latin American division despite the fact that he had no background in the region and did not speak Spanish.

"Clarridge was a flamboyant figure who favored Italian silk suits, silk shirts, silk ties and flashy suspenders; he smoked cigars and dined in the finest restaurants," author Joseph Persico wrote in the biography "Casey." Despite Casey's initial reservations, Persico said, the director soon recognized Clarridge as "a doer, a take-charge guy."

Assigned to the European post, Clarridge allegedly met with North about the Hawk shipment when the plan was to have the missiles delivered via a circuitous route. An El Al 747 was dispatched on the first leg, from Tel Aviv to Lisbon, but Portu-

guese officials were unwilling to grant the special clearances needed for the plane to land and transfer the missiles to other aircraft.

The CIA proprietary airline eventually made the delivery, picking up 18 Hawks in Tel Aviv and delivering them to Tehran on Nov. 25, 1985. The CIA acted without a requisite presidential "finding," and the shipment was made in apparent violation of U.S. arms export control law.

The indictment said that while North told Clarridge at their restaurant meeting that the shipment included military equipment, Clarridge told the Senate intelligence committee on Dec. 2, 1986, that he had not known such equipment was involved and "I can't say for sure that he [North] knew."

Similarly, the indictment said, Clarridge told House investigators in April 1987 that North had told him the shipment involved "sophisticated oil drilling equipment."

In all, the grand jury charged, Clarridge lied three times to the Senate intelligence committee, once to the House intelligence committee, once to the presidential review board, once to the House-Senate Iran-contra investigating committees and once to staff members of the House investigating committee.