

# Gerald Bull: another Iran-Contra murder?

by Joseph Brewda

The March 22 assassination of the Belgium-based international arms smuggler Dr. Gerald Bull is possibly the latest in a series of Iran-Contra-related murders. Since the Iran-Contra affair began to emerge in 1986, at least two dozen international arms smugglers and intelligence operatives tied to the affair are known to have met their deaths through bathtub drownings, subway car accidents, bombings, or poisonings. Bull, the owner of Space Research Corp., was killed by a single shot in the neck as he tried to enter his apartment in the fashionable Brussels suburb of Uccle. Police report that there are no witnesses and claim that there was no clear motive. Left untouched was \$20,000 in cash in his pocket. It is not expected that the assailants will ever be captured.

Throughout the entire period of the Reagan-Bush administration weapons dealings with Iran, Bull's SRC was reportedly selling 155mm howitzers to both sides of the Iran-Iraq War. Some report that Bull's firm had the closest relations with Norinco, the largest Communist Chinese arms export firm. Norinco also worked closely with the Reagan White House in selling arms to Iran. More recently, Bull became particularly close to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, and it is reported that the Il-Askandaria weapons complex outside of Baghdad had begun to manufacture his howitzers.

## A Bronfman-U.S. intelligence creation

Originally a well-respected Canadian scientist at Valcartiers weapons lab in Quebec, Bull ostensibly left government work in 1968 when he was hired to become the chairman and scientific brains behind Space Research Corp., then being formed by the Bronfman interests of Seagram's. The official purpose of SRC was to develop a cannon so powerful that it could launch satellites into orbit ballistically. Actually, the firm was always an arms-smuggling depot functioning under the sanction of U.S. and British intelligence. Under the cover of his satellite research, Bull developed one of the world's best 155mm howitzers, capable of firing a tactical nuclear warhead 40 miles. The howitzers were sold to Israel, South Africa, and the Shah's Iran in violation of U.S. and Canadian munitions export regulations.

That the firm operated under the joint, covert sanction of the U.S. and British-run Canadian governments can hardly be contested. The firm literally straddled the U.S.-Canadian

border near Hightower, Quebec, such that the firm's internal driveway was the only border crossing in the remote area! At various times, the firm's board and officials have included Richard Bissell, the former head of CIA covert operations; Gen. Arthur Trudeau, the former head of U.S. Army R&D; Gen. Barksdale Hamlett, the former commander of U.S. Forces in West Berlin; former International Atomic Energy Agency chairman Sterling Cole; and John J. Clancy, Jack Frost, and Rogers Gregory—all former career CIA operatives.

To aid in Middle East operations, the Bronfmans retained Israeli intelligence operative Shaul Eisenberg, the godfather of the Israel-Iran and Israel-China connection, as the firm's overseas representative. Space Research negotiated an exclusive contract allowing for Israel to re-export its products to Iran. These arms were shipped by the Israeli intelligence proprietary Zim Shipping, whose Canadian offices were conveniently housed at SRC offices. Zim was reportedly later used for the Reagan-Bush deals.

Space Research's owners, the Canadian Bronfman family, had come to prominence in the Prohibition era when the clan smuggled Scottish booze over the Canadian border into the United States. More recently, the family has been reportedly active in the narcotics trade, and has been a major funder of the narcotics lobby's primary public relations outfit, the Anti-Defamation League. As could be expected, the Bronfman family's associates in "business" and at the Anti-Defamation League have figured in all aspects of the Reagan-Bush Iranian arms trade policy. Former ADL chairman Kenneth Bialkin, for example, has been the attorney for Adnan Khashoggi, the Saudi businessman first used by the U.S. government to launch the post-1984 phase of the Iranian deals.

## Busted and reorganized

Despite these high-level connections, SRC was indicted for weapons sales to South Africa in 1980, and Bull was jailed. The scandal led to the firm's reorganization. The Bronfmans soon sold it to the colorful Pakistani operative Saad Gabr, then under the financial patronage of Agha Hasan Abedi, the Pakistani chairman of the Swiss-based Bank of Commerce and Credit International. BCCI pleaded guilty to narcotics money laundering in a Tampa, Florida federal court last year. Space Research's reorganization allowed the firm to shift from being a primary supplier of the Shah, to a primary supplier of Khomeini. Abedi's BCCI was the first bank used by Khashoggi in the post-1984 phase of its U.S.-Iranian arms deals.

After getting out of prison, Bull again reorganized Space Research in 1982, apparently severing the operation from Gabr, and restarted operations in Europe. The firm reportedly continued to supply arms to Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and Israel, throughout the period of the Reagan-Bush deals—more than enough time, and more than enough double-dealing, to become expendable.