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The Washington Times

Software likely in hands of terrorist

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Jerry Seper THE WASHINGTON TIMES

1 Accused spy Robert P. Hanssen gave secret U.S. software to his Russian handlers that later went to terrorist Osama bin Laden, allowing him to monitor U.S. efforts to track him down, federal law enforcement officials said.

2 The sophisticated software gives bin Laden access to databases on specific targets of his choosing and the ability to monitor electronic banking transactions, easing money-laundering operations for himself or others, according to the sources.

3 Believed to be an upgraded version of a program known as "Promis" developed in the 1980s by a Washington firm, the software originally was designed by Inslaw Inc. to give U.S. attorneys the ability to keep tabs on their caseloads. The program has since been heavily modified and revised.

4 The sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, believe Mr. Hanssen, a former FBI agent now awaiting trial on federal espionage charges, delivered upgraded versions of the software to his Russian handlers, who then sold it for \$2 million to bin Laden, now being sought in the bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa.

5 Federal prosecutors have declined comment on the Hanssen case.

6 But the government charged in its complaint against the former FBI agent that he made extensive use of the bureau's computerized case management systems - Field Office Information Management Systems (FOIMS) and Community On-Line Intelligence Systems (COINS) - as part of his espionage activities for his Russian handlers.

7 The government also said Mr. Hanssen gave his handlers a technical manual on the U.S. intelligence community's secure network for online access to intelligence databases.

8 The sources said FOIMS and COINS are believed to be upgraded versions of the Promis software program.

9 Inslaw President William A. Hamilton said he had no specific information on the Hanssen case, but noted that government sources told the firm a modified version of the Promis software had been deployed in the mid 1980s as the

9 "standard on-line database software for the gathering and dissemination of intelligence information by U.S. intelligence agencies, the intelligence components of the U.S. armed forces and U.S. law enforcement agencies."

10 "The technical manual the FBI alleges Hanssen gave to the Soviet Union may, therefore, have been related to the use of Promis as the standard software of the U.S. intelligence community," Mr. Hamilton said, noting that Mr. Hanssen was a "computer savvy FBI agent" who reportedly was instrumental in introducing the FOIMS system into his foreign counterintelligence division.

11 Inslaw battled the Justice Department for more than a decade over a \$10 million, three-year contract to install the Promis program. A federal court initially ruled the department used "trickery, fraud and deceit" to steal the Promis program, but that ruling later was overturned in the government's favor.

12 The House Judiciary Committee, following a three-year investigation, ruled in 1992 there was "strong evidence" the Justice Department had conspired to steal the Promis program.

13 Washington attorney Plato Cacheris, who represents Mr. Hanssen, was not available yesterday for comment.

14 Mr. Hanssen pleaded not guilty May 30 to federal charges of passing highly classified U.S. secrets to the Russians over a 15-year period. He faces trial tentatively scheduled for Oct. 29, and could be sentenced to death if convicted.

15 Arrested by FBI agents Feb. 18 as he tried to leave a package of classified documents at a secret drop-off location in a park near his Vienna, Va., home, he was indicted by a federal grand jury May 16 on charges of selling U.S. intelligence secrets to the Soviet Union and Russia beginning in October 1985. Fourteen of the 21 counts carry the death penalty.

16 The indictment said Mr. Hanssen "betrayed his country for over 15 years and knowingly caused grave injury to the security of the United States." It said he conspired with agents from the Soviet KGB and its successor intelligence agency, the SVR, to deliver to Moscow "information relating to the national defense of the United States."

17 The 27-year FBI counterintelligence agent is accused of giving his Russian handlers classified information concerning satellites, early-warning systems, means of defense or retaliation against large-scale attacks, communications intelligence and major elements of defense strategy.

18 Bin Laden, now believed to be in Afghanistan, is a self-proclaimed international terrorist being sought in the bombing of two U.S. embassies in Africa that killed 224 persons, including 12 Americans.

19 The 41-year-old fugitive millionaire was indicted in November by a federal grand jury in New York in the simultaneous explosions Aug. 7 at the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

20 U.S. authorities believe he directed the attacks as part of a campaign aimed at changing U.S. foreign policy by killing U.S. civilians and military personnel worldwide.

21 His organization, known as al-Qaeda, is believed to have targeted U.S. embassies and American soldiers stationed in Saudi Arabia and Somalia.

22 The organization also is accused of housing and training terrorists and of raising money to support its cause.

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