

# Anachronism

by James Carrion

## Preface:

Why am I writing this book? Retrospectively, I have asked myself the same question countless times. The answer, as the question is unavoidable –this story has to be told, and in the process, the burden of this research lifted from my shoulders on to the collective consciousness of the world.

The set of world events that came together in the years 1945 – 1947 are singular in history – a time of great angst after a great war that was followed by a very fragile peace. Out of this fragility which bordered on despair, desperate measures were taken, and although expedient at the time but of questionable legality, their consequences have echoed throughout the decades and still reverberate today.

These questionable decisions and choices made can only be measured against the time in which they were taken as attempting to apply current standards of legality and morality to this time of chaos, are in my opinion, neither justified nor necessary. Indeed, I have often contemplated that if I were in the shoes of the protagonists, I would have made the same decisions. This is my way of asking you, the reader, to suspend your judgment until you turn the last page, and then meditate on those times from the vantage point of hindsight that you enjoy.

As the decision makers realized, their actions were not meant to be publically scrutinized, but remain hidden like an enigma left wrapped in its riddle, a Pandora's Box that should never be opened. That sounds like a conspiracy and perhaps in the classical sense of the word, it is, but there is so much more to this story than simple conspirators with selfish motives - in this story the entire fate of the world hung in the balance.

Documentation written from the perspective of the protagonists may still exist under the lock and key of countless other classified secrets - an official history preserved perhaps for nostalgic perusal when those who inherited this history, yearn for this golden age and to sing the praises of their heroes and their incredible deeds. And sing they should, for truly it is an incredible story, from an amazing time with exceptional characters whose synchronistic actions created a dazzling performance that like a rare comet visiting once in a millennium, shines brightly for a period of time before moving on.

This is not a story that is easily told as equally it was not easy to uncover. My investigation began with the discovery of a single anachronism – in my estimation a fairly big one that piqued my curiosity. By definition, an anachronism is something such as an object that is mistakenly placed in a

time where it does not belong. There are many literary examples of anachronisms, for example, a writer injecting a clock in a story that takes place before clocks existed. Literary anachronisms are contrived by the imagination of the writer unintentionally or for literary effect. But what if a *real* anachronism is discovered - one found in the annals of history that is simply out of place and out of time? What do we make of this and how do we explain its presence?

When in the process of satisfying my curiosity through research I uncovered another anachronism from the same timeframe, and then yet another, my curiosity evolved into a wholesale obsession. There was something about these anachronisms that indicated a *raison d'être*, documented in history and not fiction.

The perplexing question is why did these anachronisms all appear in such a concentrated timeframe, clustered together in a manner that hinted at statistical significance? It was this nagging question that became a dull voice in the back of my head that would not go away, but grew even louder with each new discovery. Perhaps a singular historical anachronism could be chalked up to fantasy or explained away by folklorists or sociologists, but a cluster of anachronisms cannot be so easily dismissed.

As it turns out, detecting anachronisms also serves a useful purpose in the modern world - as a forensic tool to demonstrate the fraudulence of a document or artifact purporting to be from an earlier time. For example, if an alleged historical document contains language that wasn't introduced in the vernacular till a later time, this would indicate the possibility of forgery. Similarly, when many historical anachronisms are discovered clustered together, this cluster is indicative of a "forgery of history", requiring an equivalent forensic approach to uncover the motives, means, and identities of the forgers. It was by using the tools of forensic historical analysis that I was able to synthesize this story.

# **Part 1 – Anachronism**

## CHAPTER 1

### Setting the Stage

I am going to spoil things up front by telling you that this entire story is actually about a very cheap magic trick, one that is so chintzy and so simplistic that perhaps only a five year old would be truly impressed with it. The fact that the magician had the gall to perform it on a world stage with an international audience of adults, is itself the most amazing part of the story.

Although the performance was basic, the tall tales that have sprung from it, told around campfires till this day...makes that performance a complete and utter masterpiece of the magical deception arts. After all, it is every magician's dream that their magic be remembered long after the curtain has fallen.

Equally amazing is that the magician only cared to really impress one particular audience member. Now realize this was a very important audience member, one whose name you would readily recognize if you have achieved any education above the sixth grade. His name was Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin, known to the world as the infamous Soviet leader – Joseph Stalin. For the remainder of this story, I will simply call him Uncle Joe.

Now coincidentally, I have a real Uncle Joe in my family, and I apologize to him a millions time over that I am using his dear name as the shortened label for a brutal dictator, but real Uncle Joe is from Chicago, a retired cop and tough as nails with a thick Chicago beat skin. I pray to God his service revolver retired with him, at least before our next family get together.

Oh yes, let me not forget to tell you who the magician is. Well, actually that is going to be kind of tricky, because in fact there were many magicians who were part of the performance. From a distance they appeared as one crisp starched white shirt and one silk black top hat and cape, but in reality a multitude of performers took the stage.

These many magicians did have one commonality – they belonged to the same magician's guild – a very special guild - international in its nature, and funded by the citizens of its charter member countries. Unlike the egocentric super magi one would encounter today in Las Vegas with slicked back hair and chiseled chins gracing super billboards on the strip, this guild of magicians

preferred to hide behind a mask of anonymity, preferring their audience be focused on the performance and not on the performer. For the purpose of this story I will simply call that magician's guild - Rosetta.

## CHAPTER 2

### When the Circus came to Town

Let me paint a very vivid and morbid scene for you. It is 1945 and the war in Europe is over. It's aftermath - 60 million dead. The citizens of Uncle Joe's country the USSR, made up a third of those 60 million – 20 million Soviet casualties of war.

This incomprehensible scope of human suffering is ghastly, but what is equally disturbing is that modern historians now believe that Uncle Joe was ultimately responsible for killing 20 million more of his own citizens on top of those who died in WW2. No one disputes that Uncle Joe was one very bad person and as maniacal dictators rank he is truly in a class of his own.

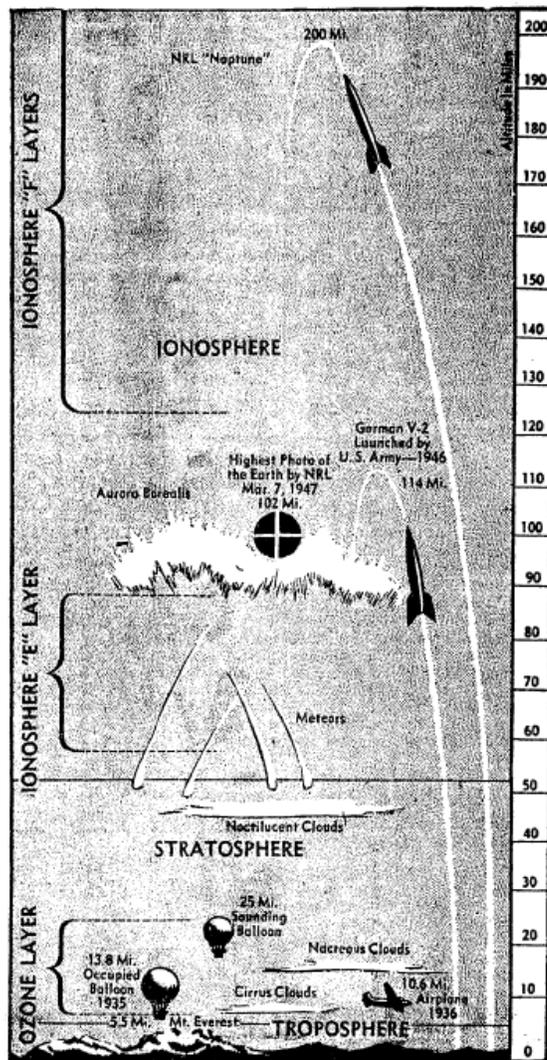
You would think that Uncle Joe would be satisfied to enjoy his hard fought peace - spend some time at his dacha on the Black Sea - fishing with his buddies and trading war stories, while being served shots of vodka by German prisoners of war. But Uncle Joe had other plans – plans as grandiose, demented and as sick as Adolph Hitler – plans for world domination. As he mulled over rebuilding his country, he didn't picture new apartment complexes overlooking the Volga, instead he had visions of a multi-million man army sweeping across the world landscape armed with the latest weaponry, and convincing normal folk that communism would grow on them.

But it was also around this time that Uncle Joe asked himself the question every megalomaniac must ask themselves sooner or later: Who can stop me and my diabolical plans? He already knew the answer. “Perhaps those pesky Americans and their British cousins...” They were his comrades fighting Hitler during WW2 but that was then - in 1947 they were just in Uncle Joe's way on his road to ultimate conquest.

And it was in the aftermath of WW2 victory that brutal Uncle Joe, still gloating over his defeat of Hitler and the Third Reich, began overtly behaving like a spoiled brat who is never content with the toys he has. You see, one of the other kids in the schoolyard, the United States, had an even bigger toy than Uncle Joe – namely the only nuclear capable arsenal in the world at that time. It would be four years after the first nuclear bombs were dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki before Uncle Joe could light the fuse of his own nuclear weapon in 1949.

But in this story the circus came to town in May of 1947, not in 1945. Colorful train cars filled with exotic animals, rough stage hands and eager performers pulled into the Moscow train station. Uncle Joe was right there waving at the menagerie of characters, giddy as a school boy and anxiously waiting to be the first to buy a front row ticket to the greatest show on Earth. This was a performance he highly anticipated and he didn't want to miss a thing.

The circus advertisement he clutched in his hands had appeared in mid-May 1947 newspapers all over the United States.<sup>1</sup> Uncle Joe was an avid reader of the American news. Here's a copy of the original ad:



**HOW HIGH IS UP? . . .** An idea of the tremendous height to which the navy's new rocket missile "Neptune" is expected to soar is given by this diagram, comparing its projected flight with altitudes previously attained by various missiles, balloons and planes. Chart was prepared from data obtained by Glenn L. Martin company, builders of the Neptune, from the Naval Research Laboratory.

Hold on - that's not a circus ad! You are correct, it is not – but it might as well be, because that was its intended purpose – to get Uncle Joe extremely excited and animated about what this simple diagram portrayed:

HOW HIGH IS UP? ... An idea of tremendous height to which the navy's new rocket missile 'Neptune' is expected to soar is given by this diagram, comparing its projected flight with altitudes previously attained by various missiles, balloons and planes. Chart was prepared from data obtained by Glen L. Martin Company, builders of the Neptune, from the Naval Research laboratory.

Why was Uncle Joe so exuberant over this newspaper article? To answer that question, let's rewind to April, 1947. Just one month prior to this ad being splashed across many newspapers in America, Uncle Joe had convened a very special conference in Moscow. All of Uncle Joe's top scientists and military planners were invited.<sup>2</sup> The agenda of this very important conference was to discuss how the USSR could make reality the vision of an amazing new weapon – an airborne craft capable of soaring over 160 miles into the atmosphere and skipping around the world with the greatest of ease.<sup>3</sup>

This visionary airborne weapon was a toy that Uncle Joe didn't have but desperately wanted, just like the nuclear weapon he craved – and now this other kid in the schoolyard had beaten him to it AGAIN!

“Hold on”, Uncle Joe thought, “this looks like a missile and not the airplane type bomber discussed at the conference.” And something else was odd about this ad, one of Joe's advisors pointed out- it was not even an official news release, just some ambiguous reference to data obtained from the Naval Research Laboratory. It also had no byline, another advisor pointed out. But then again, circus ads seldom do.

The ambiguity did not calm Uncle Joe's nerves as he conceived there could be some grain of truth to this weapon. In fact, this thought made him feel downright nauseous, imagining if the missile was real, and could carry a nuclear bomb as its payload, for sure the end of its trajectory flight was zeroed in on Moscow.

If the Americans had both nuclear weapons and a way to deliver them quickly around the world in a continent skipper like the one Uncle Joe was dreaming of, then that would put his plans for world conquest in serious jeopardy. What a way to ruin a dictator's day and his evil plans for mayhem. And that's exactly how Rosetta intended it.

---

<sup>1</sup> [\(1947, May 14\). How High Is Up?. \*The Daily Journal-Gazette and Commercial-Star \[Mattoon, Illinois\]\*. p. 6.](#)  
[\(1947, May 15\). How High Is Up?. \*The Coshocton, Ohio Tribune\*. p. B-2.](#)  
[\(1947, May 15\). How High Is Up?. \*The Daily Times Herald\*, , p. 1](#)  
[\(1947, May 15\). How High Is Up?. \*The Rhinelander \(Wis.\) Daily News\*. p. 2.](#)  
[\(1947, May 16\). How High Is Up?. \*Miami Daily News-Record \[Miami, Okla.\]\*. p. 12.](#)  
[\(1947, May 16\). How High Is Up?. \*Statesville Daily Record\*. p. 8.](#)  
[\(1947, May 17\). How High Is Up?. \*Times Herald \[Olean, N.Y.\]\*. p. 1.](#)  
[\(1947, May 18\). How High Is Up?. \*The Abilene, Texas, Reporter-News\*. p. 18.](#)  
[\(1947, May 18\). How High Is Up?. \*The Port Arthur News\*. p. 2.](#)  
[\(1947, May 23\). How High Is Up?. \*The Amarillo Daily News \[Amarillo Texas\]\*. p. 13.](#)  
[\(1947, May 24\). How High Is Up?. \*Ironwood Daily Globe \[Ironwood, Michigan\]\*. p. 5.](#)  
[\(1947, May 24\). How High Is Up?. \*The Maryville Daily Forum \[Maryville, Missouri\]\*. p. 5.](#)  
[\(1947, May 30\). How High Is Up?. \*The News \[Frederick, Md.\]\*. p. 5.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Shayler, D., & Moule, I. A. (2005). *Women in space: -- following Valentina*. Berlin ; New York : Chichester, UK: Springer. P. 119.

[\(1948, December 21\). Former Red Officer Sees War by 1950. \*Chester Times\*. p. 21.](#) (In an article in the Paris newspaper L'Aurore, Tokayev said that Stalin ordered him personally in April of 1947 to develop German plans for a transatlantic guided missile.)

Dorril, S. (2000). *MI6: Inside the covert world of Her Majesty's secret intelligence service* (1st Free Press ed.). New York; London: Free Press. p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> [\(1964, February 24\). Man and Space. \*The Daily News \[Huntingdon and Mount Union, PA.\]\*. p. 12.](#)

CIA. (1954, October). *Soviet Capabilities and Probable Programs in the Guided Missile Field*. National Intelligence Estimate Number 11-6-54. p. 6.

(The controlling authority of the Soviet missile program was a Special Committee of the Council of Ministers. Stalin reportedly participated in a meeting of the Special Committee in 1946 which discussed a proposal for an intercontinental rocket bomber by German scientist Eugen Sänger.)

## CHAPTER 3

### Mad Science

To explain why Uncle Joe went to bed with an ulcer in May of 1947 after reading an American newspaper, I need to rewind again to two years earlier, to the end of WW2. In vanquished Germany and surrounding areas, there was a great Easter egg hunt going on. In the ruins of German factories and castles, underground bunkers and burned out government buildings, both American and Soviet intelligence agents were in a desperate competitive search for the geese that laid the golden eggs.

The geese were German scientists and their golden eggs were scientific intelligence – German research on exotic new weapons of war like the V-2 rocket. Some of these German scientists you may know by name like missile pioneer Werner Von Braun and the chemist Otto Hahn.

The Americans located and then moved vast numbers of these scientists and their scientific papers and equipment out of Germany under such fancy names as Operations Overcast (Paperclip), Alsos, and Lusty. The Russians spirited away equal numbers of scientists to the USSR, many never to be heard from again. But both the Americans and the Soviets initially missed one very important scientist – brilliant Austrian Eugen Sänger.

Eugen Sänger and his equally brilliant wife, mathematician Irene Brecht, had collaborated, first as colleagues and then as husband and wife, on designing an amazing new aircraft which they dubbed the Amerika Bomber. Eugen had already invested over a decade of his time on the concept and he was passionate about seeing his idea come to life.

What was so interesting about Sänger-Brecht's Amerika Bomber? Well let's just say it was way ahead of its time, a futuristic novelty that sounded more like science fiction than science fact. The manned bomber was designed to lift off using rocket propulsion from an almost 2 mile sled track, shoot over 160 miles into the atmosphere and on the ballistic reentry, rather than glide back to earth, it would bounce off the atmosphere and achieve additional forward motion. This bounce

and skip effect would then repeat itself, propelling the craft across the world – dropping bombs on American cities before returning back to Germany in a little over one hour.

Everyone who has at one time or another found themselves on the bank of a river or on a lakeshore has hunted for that perfect round flat stone to throw across the surface of the water, counting the number of skips obtained. The Amerika Bomber operated under the same concept – it would skip along the atmosphere like a stone would skip across the surface of water.<sup>1</sup>

Although the envisioned payload was a conventional 5,000 pound bomb, this bomb was special – wrapped in multiple blankets of radioactive sand so that when it exploded above an American city, a radioactive cloud of silica particles would cover the entire city, sickening and killing the entire population. This would have been the world's first dirty bomb.<sup>2</sup>

The German government issued Sänger a patent for his idea with the ominous title of *Gliding Bodies for Flight Velocities above Mach 5*.<sup>3</sup> The German High Command also took an interest in his work, setting Eugen up in a posh new secret research facility at Trauen, Germany<sup>4</sup> to experiment with and then perfect the Amerika Bomber.<sup>5</sup>

Sänger wrote a whitepaper on his continent skipper - *On a Rocket Propulsion for Long Distance Bombers*.<sup>6</sup> The German military promptly published a few hundred copies - stamping each one in large black letters "Secret Command Report".<sup>7</sup> Three of these copies reached Moscow at the end of the war – a nice little Easter egg more valuable than a Fabergé, delivered right to Uncle Joe's front door.<sup>8</sup>

After being translated into Russian, the paper was handed to Uncle Joe who read it with great enthusiasm. "If I had this weapon", he mused. "I can bomb the United States from the comfort of my dacha! And when I do get my atomic bomb, I will have the perfect delivery vehicle to lob it across the ocean at those arrogant Americans" he thought further. "I must have it without delay. Then and only then I can chat the way I intend to with Truman."<sup>9</sup>

"Beria!" he screamed at his chief of police Lavrentiy Beria. "I want to talk to this Austrian Sänger! Bring him to me at once!" Beria looked at him sheepishly. "I am sorry Generalissimo, but we don't have Sänger" and hoping to cushion the blow he was expecting, he then added, "but neither do the Americans."

Uncle Joe's face turned the same shade of red as the Soviet flag that hung near his desk and if he could have pulled the sickle off that flag and lopped Beria's head off, he would have right there and then. After his tantrum subsided, he barked out another order. "Beria, put together a conference with my top scientists. We have a new weapon to develop! And tell that no-good son of mine that I want to see him at once!"

---

<sup>1</sup> Heppenheimer, T. A., & United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Office of External Relations. (2007). *Facing the heat barrier: A history of hypersonics*. Washington, DC: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA History Division, Office of External Relations. pp. 2, 10.

Shayler, D., & Moule, I. A. (2005). *Women in space: -- following Valentina*. Berlin ; New York : Chichester, UK: Springer. p. 118.

<sup>2</sup> Myhra, D. (2002). *Sänger: Germany's orbital rocket bomber in World War II*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Pub. pp. 153-156.

<sup>3</sup> Heppenheimer, T. A., & United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Office of External Relations. (2007). *Facing the heat barrier: A history of hypersonics*. Washington, DC: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA History Division, Office of External Relations. p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Tsien, H.S. & Dryden, H.L. & Wattendorf, F.L. & Williams, F.W. & Zwicky, F. & Pickering, W.H. (1946, May). *Technical Intelligence Supplement: A Report of the AAF Scientific Advisory Group*. p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> Shayler, D., & Moule, I. A. (2005). *Women in space: -- following Valentina*. Berlin ; New York : Chichester, UK: Springer. p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> Tsien, H.S. & Dryden, H.L. & Wattendorf, F.L. & Williams, F.W. & Zwicky, F. & Pickering, W.H. (1946, May). *Technical Intelligence Supplement: A Report of the AAF Scientific Advisory Group*. pp. 56, 70.

<sup>7</sup> Heppenheimer, T. A., & United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Office of External Relations. (2007). *Facing the heat barrier: A history of hypersonics*. Washington, DC: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA History Division, Office of External Relations. p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Myhra, D. (2002). *Sänger: Germany's orbital rocket bomber in World War II*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Pub. p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> [\(1948, December 21\). Former Red Officer Sees War by 1950. \*Chester Times\*. p. 21.](#) (Grigori Tokaty-Tokayev quoted as Stalin personally telling him this.)

## CHAPTER 4

### Family Affair

Vasily Iosifovich was just 26 years old and a newly minted Lieutenant General in the Soviet Red Air Force when he was assigned the strangest mission of his military career – kidnapping. Now Vasily was no squeamish light-weight; he knew the horrors of war having flown many combat sorties, personally shooting down one or two German fighter planes in the process. But a kidnapping? That seemed more suited for the mafia types that made up Beria’s secret police goons – the KGB – and completely inappropriate for a Red Air Force General.

However, there was no use in Vasily protesting that kidnapping was not his area of expertise. He knew all too well that anyone questioning orders from this man usually didn’t live to see the next day. Even if that man happened to be Vasily’s own father, good old Uncle Joe.

“Look on the bright side” Vasily said to himself. “I get to take an unplanned European vacation and more importantly I get to be away from *him*.” There was no love lost between father and son. Vasily still felt very deep emotional hurt over his father’s abandonment at a time when the younger Stalin at age 11 was at his most vulnerable, right after the death of Vasily’s mother. Although Vasily didn’t care for his father, he did deeply fear him.

And so like any good Soviet soldier, Vasily obediently departed on his very strange mission to Berlin. Upon arrival he was assigned a cohort in crime, Lieutenant Colonel Grigori Tokaty-Tokayev<sup>1</sup>, whose profession as a Soviet scientist meant he knew as much about kidnapping as Vasily did.

Their kidnapping target was Austrian scientist Eugen Sänger,<sup>2</sup> whose scientific whitepaper was the toast of the April 1947 Moscow conference and the object of Uncle Joe’s obsession. There was nothing that Uncle Joe wanted more than to have Eugen Sänger develop the Amerika Bomber – one sporting a Soviet red star instead of a Nazi swastika.

Vasily and Grigory were ordered to first try and convince Sänger that the weather in Moscow was pleasant year around and that Sänger would really enjoy working for the Soviets.

But if that tactic proved fruitless, well then they were deliver him to Moscow anyway in a “friendly compulsory way”.

Hans Motsch, a German aviation specialist and test pilot who knew firsthand how “persuasive” the Russians could be after he was deported to the USSR in October, 1946, recalled his frequent encounters with the young Stalin.<sup>3</sup>

I remember Vasily Stalin, son of the USSR’s iron-fisted dictator Josef Stalin. He’d come frequently to Podberese’je (about 100 miles from Moscow). We’d all drink vodka, of course. Well each time Vasily came to visit, he’d always tell us right at the start: ‘I will give to anyone their weight in gold who can tell me where to find Eugen Sänger.’

Vasily and Grigory soon found out that despite their differences in chosen profession and social upbringing – they did have something in common – a love of drinking and for women. First scouring Berlin and then Paris, the dictator’s son and the Soviet scientist did their absolute best to locate Sänger – looking for him in every brasserie and brothel they could find in both cities; but for some odd reason Sänger would never show up.

Defeated and drunk, they returned to Berlin admitting their failure and claiming that Eugen Sänger must have died during the war – never mind, that he was alive and well and living under his own name. In fact, the Americans had no problem locating Sänger, although they were not successful in recruiting him.

Uncle Joe was not pleased to say the least, ranting to Tokaty-Tokaev that “this is absolutely intolerable; we defeated the Nazi armies; we occupied Berlin and Peenemünde; but the Americans got the rocket engineers.”<sup>4</sup>

As fate would have it, the bungled mission of the crime incapable duo of Vasily and Grigori, however historically comical during a tragic time, proved to be a very good omen for the magical performance Rosetta was about to put on.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dorril, S. (2000). *MI6: Inside the covert world of Her Majesty's secret intelligence service* (1st Free Press ed.). New York; London: Free Press. p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Heppenheimer, T. A., & United States. National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Office of External Relations. (2007). *Facing the heat barrier: A history of hypersonics*. Washington, DC: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA History Division, Office of External Relations. p. 11.

---

Dorril, S. (2000). *MI6: Inside the covert world of Her Majesty's secret intelligence service* (1st Free Press ed.). New York; London: Free Press. p. 118.

Dorril, S. (2000). *MI6: Inside the covert world of Her Majesty's secret intelligence service* (1st Free Press ed.). New York; London: Free Press. p. 146.

<sup>3</sup> Myhra, D. (2002). *Sänger: Germany's orbital rocket bomber in World War II*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Pub. Introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Swenson, L. S., Grimwood, J. M., Alexander, C. C., & United States. (1966). *This new ocean: A history of Project Mercury*. Washington, DC: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Scientific and Technical Information Division, Office of Technology Utilization.

## CHAPTER 5

### Abracadabra

Uncle Joe was furious at his son's failure, further aggravating the stomach ulcers that plagued him. But it was the front page news story of June 13, 1947<sup>1</sup> that made them erupt like volcanoes.

#### English Nations Have New Weapon

AUCKLAND, N.Z., June 13 (CP) A secret weapon that may play a vital part in world affairs because it is so powerful that it is said to have capabilities approaching the atomic bomb in effectiveness, is reported to have been developed in New Zealand.

The weapon did not 'reach the stage of practical application during the war, but work still is being pursued in the strictest secrecy by scientists in the United States, Britain and New Zealand,' the Canadian Press said. 'No hint of the details of the weapon has been revealed, but it is stated that one means of application would have some similarity to one method of using the atomic bomb.'

Disclosure of the secret weapon follows the announcement last week that the Australian cabinet has approved a five-year defense program at a cost of \$800,000,000. The expenditure on research was said to cover projected rocket range experiments with radio-guided rockets, including missiles with atomic warheads.<sup>2</sup>

Beria very grudgingly placed the newspaper translation in Uncle Joe's hands and stepped away. Uncle Joe began to read and suddenly a strange grimace came over his face. His hands began to shake first out of fear, than in anger. Looking up at Beria he tried to speak, but his words seemed stuck like bugs on fly paper. "Can this really be true?" was all he could manage as he reread the headline.

Beria cleared his throat before replying, “We know nothing of this Anglo weapon, Comrade Stalin, and I don’t think there is anything to this story. It is probably just American propaganda because if there was such a weapon, our spies would have known about it by now.”

“How can you be so sure” Uncle Joe asked incredulously. Beria couldn’t be but he didn’t want to betray his lack of certainty. Uncle Joe didn’t wait for the response. “Get your best people on this and report back to me when you are sure”, Uncle Joe said with a tone of what *would* be certain if Beria failed him.

Dig into that news story Beria did - tasking his entire network of spies to track down every lead, to question every contact and to milk every clandestine source for information on this alleged new weapon of war. What he found out was not comforting in the least.

Less than a week later, Beria paid Uncle Joe a second visit. Clutching the assembled report, Beria looked thin and pale, feeling with a sense of extreme dread that this day would be his last on earth. Resigned to his fate, he handed Uncle Joe the dossier and tried to maintain some sense of composure.

Uncle Joe read the summary, flipped to the second page, flipped back to the first, and read the summary again before sinking into his large armchair with a look of utter despair. “So it is true,” Uncle Joe said softly to Beria. “The Americans are already developing a weapon comparable to the Amerika Bomber”. And that was not even the first rabbit, Rosetta managed to pull out of its hat.

---

<sup>1</sup> (1947, June 13). [Science Tries for New Weapon Matching Atom Bomb in Power. \*Amarillo Daily News\*. p. 1.](#)

(1947, June 13). [English Nations Have New Weapon. \*The Charleston Daily Mail\*. p. 1.](#)

(1947, June 13). [Powerful Secret Weapon Hinted. \*Florence Morning News\*. p. 1.](#)

(1947, June 13). [Secret Weapon ‘Like A-Bomb’ Is Developed. \*Kingsport News\*. p. 1.](#)

(1947, June 13). [Report Invention of New Weapon. \*The Times Recorder\*. p. 1.](#)

(1947, June 13). [New Zealand Tells of Secret Weapon Vital as A-Bomb. \*The Coshocton Tribune\*. p. 1.](#)

(1947, June 13). [Hint of Secret Weapon Given. \*The Abilene Reporter-News\*. p. 1.](#)

<sup>2</sup> (1947, June 13) [Develops New Weapon. \*The Winnipeg Free Press\*. p. 2.](#)

## CHAPTER 6

### Magic Down Under

Thomas David James Leech looked like the kind of guy you wouldn't mind pounding back a few beers with at a local Auckland pub. Rotund and rosy-cheeked with an inviting warm smile, Leech was not your classical looking intellectual. In fact, if you did meet him at a bar, you probably would never guess at his very illustrious academic and scientific career first in his native Australia and then in New Zealand.

College Dean, distinguished lecturer, text book author – all titles he could rightly claim. But the title he was most proud of, was one that came as a surprise to him in June of 1947 - Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE). One step below knighthood, the Monarchy awards a CBE for important services rendered to the crown.

Leech did render significant service to the British Empire in its time of need during WW2, serving in the most distinguished role of New Zealand's Acting Director of Scientific Developments in support of the war effort.

All CBE honorees were listed in the London Gazette with Leech's name appearing in the Gazette's June 12, 1947 third supplement detailing the King's birthday Honors list.<sup>1</sup>

The KING has been graciously pleased, on the occasion of the Celebration of His Majesty's Birthday and on the advice of His Majesty's New Zealand Ministers, to give orders for the following promotions in, and appointments to, the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire:

To be Commanders of the Civil Division of the said Most Excellent Order: Thomas David James Leech, Esq., Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Auckland University College.

The reading of the honors list is symbiotic with the Trooping of the Colors, that most spectacular of royal displays annually held in June regardless of the reigning monarch's true birth date so as to compensate for the unpredictability of London's weather.

Even though Leech was one of many who were awarded royal title in June, 1947, curiously enough he among all the honorees was the only one to make newspaper headlines across the world, the day after his name appeared on the prestigious list.

Leech's sudden notoriety had nothing to do with him being a commonwealth citizen, as many others from every reach of the empire – from Burma to India to Jamaica were also honored by King George VI. Rather it was the nature of Leech' contribution to King and Country that aroused the interest of journalists and newspaper editor's world-wide.

#### Report New Secret Weapon Developed<sup>2</sup>

June 13, 1946 Auckland, N.Z. (AP) The Canadian Press said today that development of a secret weapon, 'with capabilities approaching the atomic bomb in effectiveness', lay behind the naming of an Auckland University Professor to the birthday honors list of King George VI.

The professor, T.D. Leech, received a commandership of the Order of the British Empire. He was identified as director of research for the weapon project.

The weapon did not reach the stage of practical application during the war, but work is still being pursued in the strictest secrecy by scientists in the United States, Britain and New Zealand, the Canadian Press said. No hint of the details of the weapon has been revealed, but it is stated that one means of application would have some similarity to one method of using the atomic bomb.

The secret weapon project originated with the idea of a Wellington, N.Z. man who communicated the plan to Britain and the United States. Both countries immediately made development plans. The project was to have been carried out in Florida, but was moved to New Zealand and Pacific areas owing to the fears of espionage.

Leech was selected to lead the research because he had previously done work distantly related. He had a team of 170 American and New Zealand experts, most of whom were given no idea of the ultimate objective, for security reasons.

It is not exactly clear how or when Rosetta first leaked these details to the New Zealand press but the news story spread like wild fire to Britain and to the United States before being delivered by newspaper boy Beria to a very displeased Soviet dictator.

The media frenzy that followed was exactly what Rosetta planned – seeding the press with a little clue here and another clue there over many days – forcing Beria’s analysts to painstakingly piece together the puzzle of why an Australian living in New Zealand could cause Uncle Joe so much angst. In the deception black arts, subtlety is everything.

When Beria returned with the newly compiled dossiers that he fearfully handed off to the dictator, he hoped that Uncle Joe would at least finish reading the first page before firing a bullet into Beria’s temple.

Sovershenno Sekretno (Top Secret)

KGB Report on Anglo Secret Weapon Project

Comrade Stalin,

In response to your request to research the facts surrounding the recent Anglo press reports on a new secret British/American/New Zealand weapon project, we have compiled the following dossier on the principals involved, an Australian and an American.

Subject: Thomas David James Leech

Profession: Scientist/Academic

Factual checks of what was reported on the subject in the international press.

1. KGB has ascertained that subject’s credentials are accurate and match those released to the press. Thomas David James Leech is the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at Auckland University. KGB’s Australian sources have confirmed that the subject was the Acting Director of Scientific Development and Research for New Zealand during WW2 and was involved in Top Secret research on behalf of the British and the Americans.

2. Subject is an expert in aerodynamics and is the author of an aeronautical textbook: *The Principles of Flight: An introduction to Aerodynamics*.<sup>3</sup> Subject's association with Professor W. A. Miller of the Sydney University Civil Engineering Department has been confirmed, and Professor Miller's statement that subject had expert knowledge of and enthusiasm for aerodynamics, in conjunction with subject's confirmed expertise, lends credence to Miller's statement that the new secret weapon might be in the nature of an airborne missile such as the German rocket bomb.<sup>4</sup>

3. Regarding subject's stated role as the Director of the Top Secret weapons project, KGB sources have confirmed subject's relationship with the American scientist (see page 2).<sup>5</sup>

4. Additional Corroboration:

An Australian cabinet member and fellow traveler has confirmed that the Australian government has allocated the equivalent of over 100 million U.S. dollars to future missile research for the Empire rocket range in Australia where experiments will be conducted with radio-guided rockets, including missiles with atomic warheads. Subject's role in that future research is not confirmed but plausible.<sup>6</sup>

Australian sources have also indicated significant military maneuvers nearby, with heavy construction equipment being transported to, the Flinders Mountains in South Australia. This may corroborate press reports that missile tests firings would begin in that area in a couple of months.

Acquiring new sources and agents in New Zealand was a low priority during and after WW2 and it is possible that an Anglo Top Secret project could have been conducted without our knowledge and that it is still ongoing. It would be remiss to point out to Generalissimo Stalin that KGB's primary task was infiltrating the American atomic bomb project and all of our resources were successfully focused on that pursuit.

The last sentence did not appear to placate Uncle Joe in the least, but fortunately for Beria, Uncle Joe's thoughts were spinning too fast to think of KGB's espionage faux pas. The report had his full attention.

What started out as just a dubious newspaper reveal had grown into a full intelligence panic after the KGB pieced together the scattered clues gathered from the press and its network of sources and a slightly clearer picture of this Top Secret project began to emerge. But what Uncle Joe and company could not have known in 1947 was that among some of the “truths” leaked to the press were some bold faced lies that could only be revealed through the modern day lens of forensic historical analysis.

In 1947, the picture Rosetta was painting looked all too menacing and all too real to discard as fiction or propaganda. Too many things did add up, and it became Uncle Joe’s obsession to find out why.

Other American news articles appeared to corroborate that the U.S. was already developing something similar to the radioactive dirty bomb that Sanger envisioned for his Amerika Bomber with the June 14, 1947 Amarillo Daily News speculating that the secret weapon could be radioactive dusts or mists: “Their possibility was explained to President Roosevelt by scientists in 1939 and more recently Glen Martin mentioned them as bombs that American military authorities are studying.”<sup>7</sup>

Remember Uncle Joe’s Circus ad? The president of the same Glen L. Martin Company that was developing the Neptune missile was now also openly discussing new American weapons of war. Although I could not locate a 1947 news source for Mr. Martin’s alleged comments, I did find his comments made a year later on March 25, 1948 where he was quoted in the Salt Lake Tribune saying:<sup>8</sup>

The United States has developed a radioactive cloud more deadly than the first atom bomb and fatal to any human touched by it. The deadly new sky weapon is almost ready for use, just in case.

Martin said tests of radioactive clouds still are a top military secret but that he was able to make the general disclosure because the subject had been mentioned recently in a scientific magazine.

Martin, president of Glen L. Martin Co., also said that the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima was now obsolete. He said military security prevented his elaborating.

It is odd that Mr. Martin was rehashing the media speculation on the Leech-Snodgrass super weapon from a year earlier but what is even odder is that Mr. Martin's claimed he had insider knowledge from his ties to the defense industry. We know today that all of this talk of radioactive mist and nuclear weapons being obsolete in the 1940s is pure rubbish. But in 1947, Rosetta was using its close contacts with the military industrial complex to get its message out.

But before I delve any deeper, let's not forget about Thomas David James Leech. By all accounts, Leech took his international front page appearance in stride, neither confirming nor denying the media speculation and only volunteering his surprise that the press was reporting the atomic bomb obsolete. No worse for the wear, Leech took his CBE and went back to his ordinary academic life.

Leech, because of his important war service, deserved his CBE regardless of Rosetta's meddling and his newly acquired title allowed him on official occasions to wear the CBE's fleur-de-lis shaped military ribbon emblazoned with the order's motto "For God and the Empire".

When the royal pomp and circumstance of the Trooping of the Colors was over and after the precisely parading troops had long returned to their barracks and the Royal Air Force flyboys were back on terra firma, Leech could be found at his favorite local Auckland pub downing a New Zealand draught while minding the six o'clock swill.

If you were grateful enough to buy him a round, for service to his country, he may have flashed back in appreciation a glimpse of the other ribbon he acquired that day. One that he didn't normally show off publicly – one that only the initiated would understand anyway – the one shaped like a dancing faun that bore Rosetta's motto: "For the Magical Deception Arts".

---

<sup>1</sup> [\(1947, June 12\). \*Supplement to the London Gazette\*. p. 2608.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [\(1947, June 13\). \*Speculation over New Secret Weapon\*. \*The Gettysburg Times\*. p. 2.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Leech, T. D. J. & Hart, K. R. M. (1931). *The principles of flight, or, An Introduction to the study of aerodynamics*. Sydney : Commonwealth Publications

<sup>4</sup> [\(1947, June 14\). \*Savant Hints Weapon Is Rocket Bomb Type\*. \*Bismark Tribune\*. p. 7.](#)

[\(1947, June 14\). \*U.S. Scientist Helped Make New Secret Lethal Weapon\*. \*The Lowell Sun\*. p. 1.](#)

[\(1947, June 14\). \*New Weapon May Be Airborne\*. \*The Indiana Evening Gazette\*. p. 11.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). \*American Aids in Development of New Weapon\*. \*The Abilene Texas Reporter-News\*. p. 13.](#)

<sup>5</sup> [\(1947, June 15\). \*Scientist Admits Working on Secret Weapon, but Mum on What Type It Is\*. \*The Abilene Texas Reporter-News\*. p. 1.](#)

---

<sup>6</sup> [\(1947, May 4\). Australians Plan Rocket Range. \*Chicago Tribune\*. p. 18.](#)

<sup>7</sup> [\(1947, June 14\). Science Hints at Deadly Mist. \*Amarillo Daily News\*. p. 5.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [\(1948, March 25\). Radioactive Cloud of U. S. Deadlier Than A-Bomb. \*Salt Lake Tribune\*. p. 1.](#)

## CHAPTER 7

### Kissing Cousins

Leave it to the Americans to hog up the spotlight. It may have been an Aussie turned Kiwi who raised the curtain of the greatest show on earth, but the ring master was decidedly American, and a quite nerdy one at that, even by 1947 standards.

Unlike beer buddy Leech, 39 year old James Marion Snodgrass looked every bit the stereotypical scientist with a long narrow face substantially highlighted by black rimmed glasses,

short hair parted to one side with a sullen stare and pouty lips that alluded to difficulty in cracking a smile. All Snodgrass needed was a white lab coat and some beakers and flasks and he was Hollywood ready for the next science fiction blockbuster. With his undergraduate at Oberlin College, and postgraduate at the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard Medical School, Doctor Snodgrass had the academic background to match.

Rosetta leaked Snodgrass' name to the press on June 13, 1947<sup>1</sup> as an American work associate of Leech on the Top Secret weapons project. The media hounds tracked him down to Cincinnati where he was now working for the Dayton Acme company and soon his photo was gracing the front page of newspapers around the world.

**IS A-BOMB PASSE?**

### U. S. Scientist Helped Make New Secret Lethal Weapon

America and Britain Keep Details Hidden But Leave No Doubt Device Exists

**NEW YORK, June 14 (AP)—**The Herald Tribune quotes a 39-year-old, American scientist it says shared in the development of the secret Anglo-American weapon reported from New Zealand as saying that the weapon exists "and that first reports, although exaggerated, are substantially true."

The scientist, James Marion Snodgrass of Cincinnati, is further quoted as saying that the weapon was not connected in any way with the atom bomb and that it was not a biological weapon.

Existence of the weapon first was reported when Prof. T. D. J. Leech of New Zealand was mentioned on the birthday honors list of King George VI in London. A news dispatch reported Dr. Leech as saying his weapon was an effective alternative to the atomic bomb. Later dispatches mentioned a Prof. J. M. Snodgrass of the University of California as a co-worker.

Original reports said the secret weapon outvalued the atom bomb.

The Herald Tribune says it reached Snodgrass in Cincinnati and quoted him as saying that he worked on the weapon in New Zealand and that he believed it to be a weapon of tremendous importance.

"But farther than that he would not go," the paper says. "He would not discuss its nature or whether it was for use against personnel or vessels."

The Herald Tribune quotes Snodgrass as saying the Navy holds all reports on it "although he recalled having spoken to Dr. Vannevar Bush, wartime scientific leader about it."

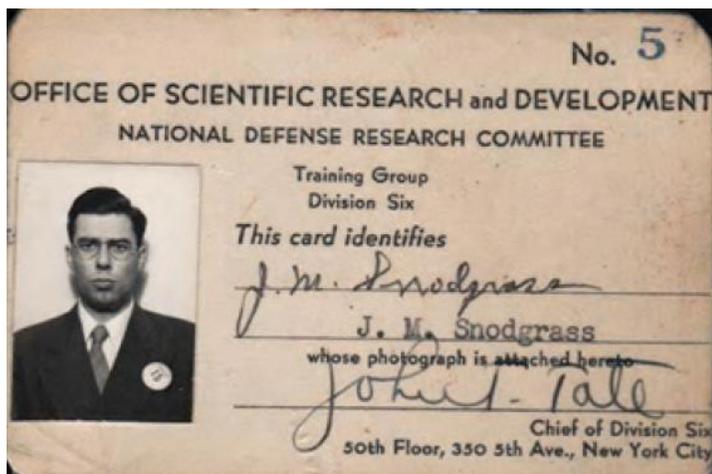
The paper says Snodgrass was a biophysicist and had done work on the effect of electric currents on the human body in the years that preceded the wartime work. At present he is chief engineer of the motion picture sound division of the Payton-Acme company of Cincinnati.

**Possible Clue**

**SYDNEY, Australia, June 14 (AP)—**Prof. W. A. Miller of the Sydney university civil engineering department said today a new secret weapon mentioned in Auckland, N. Z., reports "might be in the nature of an airborne missile such as the German rocket bomb."

Miller emphasized to reporters, however, that he himself had received no indication of the nature of the project and that he made the comment only because he knew Prof. David James Leech of Auckland to have "an expert knowledge of and enthusiasm for aerodynamics."

Snodgrass just didn't just look the part, he played the part in real life, confirming to the media that he worked for the National Defense Research Council (NRDC) during the war and he did work with Leech on the hush-hush Top Secret weapons project. He elaborated that the weapon's development started during the war but was not completed until after hostilities was ended, and that the weapon was not related to the atomic bomb nor was it a biological weapon. But it was awesome!



Snodgrass dropped some additional very important clues - the Top Secret weapon was being developed under the auspices of the U.S. Navy. Secondly, Dr. Vannevar Bush, head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development (OSRD) was briefed on the project. OSRD superseded the NRDC and centrally coordinated wartime scientific research projects including the biggest of them all – the Manhattan Project.

Finally Snodgrass casually mentioned that the weapon's work was going to be carried out in Florida but was moved to the Pacific because of fears of espionage. Then he clammed up and said nothing more to the press about the Top Secret project or his role in its development – and he kept his mouth shut till the day he died.

Like Leech, an award was eventually bestowed on Snodgrass as well – not for his collaboration with Leech on the 1947 Top Secret project, but instead for his work on antisubmarine warfare during his stint at the NRDC from 1942-1946.<sup>2</sup>

Snodgrass went on after the war to pursue a long and distinguished career as an oceanographer at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography from 1948 until he retired in 1974, racking up numerous scientific honors and scientific society memberships including an IEEE Life Fellow and making it into the *World's Who's Who in Science*<sup>3</sup> and *American Men and Woman of Science*. He received in 1968, the highest award the U.S. Navy can bestow on a civilian – the Navy's Distinguished Public Service award for his outstanding contributions to the U.S. Navy in the field of oceanographic communication and instrumentation.<sup>4</sup> Before Snodgrass died, he graciously donated his papers, unpublished autobiography and other war service and work memories to the Scripps Institute where I was able to review them in early 2009.

But how did Snodgrass who left wartime service in 1946 to work as the chief engineer of a cartoon sounding company like the Dayton ACME Corporation come to have his pouty face plastered all over the newspapers in June, 1947? What exactly was this Top Secret project, as awesome as the atomic bomb, really about? What were the roles of our Kiwi and American scientists in the project? To answer these questions, we need to examine all of the gathered clues so far and begin to fit them into the 1947 puzzle – real scientists, real Top Secret work, real honors and awards, but most importantly of all – real lies.

---

<sup>1</sup> [\(1947, June 15\). Scientist Admits Working on Secret Weapon, but Mum on What Type It Is. \*The Abilene Texas Reporter-News\*. pp. 1, 13.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Quote Scientist on New Weapon. \*Racine Sunday Bulletin\*. p. 2.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Secret Weapon Reports Are Exaggerated, Scientist Says. \*The Delta Democrat Times\*. p. 9.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Scientist Silent on Secret Bomb. \*The Amarillo Sunday News-Globe\*. p. 12.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Secret Weapon Termed as Effective as Atomic Bomb. \*Big Spring \(Texas\) Herald\*. p. 7.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). New Secret Weapon Awesome as A-Bomb Bio-Physicist Says. \*Corpus Christi Caller Times\*. p. 9.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Scientist Says U.S. Has Awesome Secret Weapon. \*The Coshocton, Ohio Tribune\*. p. 8.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Confirms New Secret Weapon 'As Awesome as Atom Bomb'. \*Council Bluffs, Iowa, Nonpareil\*. p. 1.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Another Secret Device Greater Than Atomic Bomb. \*Cumberland Sunday Times\*. p. 1.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Scientist Confirms Report of Secret Anglo-American Weapon. \*The Galveston News\*. p. 8.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Confirms 'Super-Weapon' Story. \*The Lacrosse Tribune\*. p. 5.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Secret Weapon Rivals A-Bomb. \*Oakland Tribune\*. p. 2-A.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Physicist Gives Out 'Secrets' On New Weapon. \*Ogden \(Utah\) Standard Examiner\*. p. 11-A.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Physicist Admits New Weapon Made. \*The Post Standard\*. p. 1.](#)

[\(1947, June 15\). Awesome New Secret Weapon Said Developed. \*Walla Walla Union-Bulletin\*. p. 1.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Snodgrass Papers. Scripps Institute Library.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Snodgrass Papers. Scripps Institute Library.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Snodgrass Papers. Scripps Institute Library.](#)

## CHAPTER 8

### Cowabunga Kiwi Style

James Marion Snodgrass checked out of the Moana Hotel in Oahu, Hawaii, on December 8, 1943 and made his way down to the ship dock to board the USS Hutchins, DD476, a Fletcher class Destroyer, for what would be the start of a three month jaunt around the Pacific, only returning to Pearl Harbor on March 21, 1944.<sup>1</sup> Three days later on December 11, he crossed the equator for the first time earning himself initiation into the “Solemn Mysteries of the Order of the Ancient Deep.”

Pollywog (initiate) Snodgrass was submitted to the most miserable of treatment by the Shellbacks (already initiated) at his “Crossing the Line” ceremony. He was forced to crawl through a canvas tunnel filled with aromatic garbage, paddled while crawling over the slippery deck, sprayed with high pressure streams of water from two fire hoses while climbing over cargo nets ten feet high. But the ultimate volunteered humility was having to kiss the engine room fireman’s – “the baby’s” grease covered stomach.<sup>2</sup>

In the wartime, very security conscious Navy, the date and longitude of his crossing was omitted from his Sons of Neptune membership card - Snodgrass filling them in years after the war had ended. The garbage he crawled through was subsequently sunk so the ship would leave no clues for the enemy of its passage.

On the way to Espiritu Santo, Snodgrass liked to spend time on deck where he spied as many as seven waterspouts directly in front of the Hutchins. Most of the sailors paid no attention to what was then a common site. The open air and the splash of the ocean spray was a welcome relief from the three tier cramped rack he slept in with five officers just below the main deck. Fortunately, there was well shaded reading light on the bulkhead at the head end of his bunk where he could read a book borrowed from the ship’s library.

Snodgrass’ work on antisubmarine warfare placed him in very high demand in early 1944 as reflected by his hectic travel schedule in the Pacific theater. Traveling from Pearl Harbor to Funafuti to Espiritu Santo where he celebrated ringing in the New Year. Then to Noumea, Efate,

Espiritu Santo, and Purvis Bay just in the month of January. Back to Espiritu Santo, Noumea, New Caledonia, Brisbane, Sydney, Brisbane again, finally returning to Noumea where he stayed a month from February 16 to March 16, 1944.<sup>3</sup> It was during this month long reprieve from his nonstop schedule that Snodgrass had the opportunity to work on the Top Secret project with Kiwi scientist Thomas David James Leech, hardly enough time to develop a super weapon.

In between his Top Secret work on Noumea, Snodgrass could occasionally catch a little R&R. He was personally invited by the General Officer Commanding, New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Pacific to a Kiwi concert party in the Hickson Theater – a musical revue for a rendition of *Take It Easy, Soldier*, held on March 13, 1944.<sup>4</sup>

As Snodgrass sat and watched the performance, little could he guess that he too would soon play a major part in a staged performance - not a musical, but a magical act, the like of which the world had never seen before.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Snodgrass Papers. Scripps Institute Library.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Snodgrass Papers. Scripps Institute Library.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Snodgrass Papers. Scripps Institute Library.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Snodgrass Papers. Scripps Institute Library.](#)

## CHAPTER 9

### Tall Tales

The press speculation on the nature of the June 1947 Top Secret weapon ranged from the incredibly ridiculous to the deductively plausible. From radioactive death ray to airborne missile, the press had a field day trying to guess what Leech and Snodgrass were brewing in their laboratory. The media's curiosity was only piqued by the British who refused to even comment on the weapon story:

#### British Refuse To Talk About Secret Weapon<sup>1</sup>

LONDON, June 13 (AP) British government ministries declined comment today on New Zealand reports concerning the purported development of a super-secret super-weapon approaching the atomic bomb in importance.

The defense ministry, the air ministry, the war office, the admiralty and the ministry of supply all refused to discuss stories out of Auckland which quoted 'most reliable' sources as saying research on such an offensive weapon was being pursued in the strictest secrecy by scientists in New Zealand, Great Britain and the United States.

While the British clammed up, the Americans were blabbing away with certain defense industry figureheads and major military leaders simultaneously giving science fiction lectures that further spun the public speculation wheel. We can't fault the world public for being completely confused by the mish mash of conflicting information bantered about in the press.

To give you a taste of what the average American was being bombarded with in June of 1947 when reading the morning newspaper, here's a sampling of the surreal stories floating in the press, in addition to the Leech-Snodgrass weapon. On June 13, 1947 the Press reported that:<sup>2</sup>

#### Spaceship Here?

Washington (AP) The Army Air Forces announced today the award of a contract for design of an airplane that would be capable of flying faster than 2,200 miles an hour and reach heights of 35 to 60 miles. .

The contract went to the Douglas Aircraft Co. of Santa Monica, California. The proposed craft is the third of a series of supersonic planes, or those capable of traveling faster than the 783 miles per hour speed of sound.

The story is oddly anachronistic as the proposed 2,220 mph speed was only accomplished decades later by the SR-71 black bird, developed in the 1960s by Douglas' competitor Lockheed. On June 14, 1947 the Alton Daily Telegraph reported that:<sup>3</sup>

#### Envisions Sound Weapon to Upset Entire Populations

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. June 14 (AP) - Weapons as terrifying as the atom bomb—super sounds that would upset the nervous systems of whole populations, light waves, and shooting clouds out of the sky to control rainfall – were raised as possibilities today in any war of the future by an American air-force commander. General George C. Kenney, head of the strategic air force, filed the dog-whistle as an example of the effectiveness of sound waves in a prepared address before Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduates.

An airplane equipped with a sort of super dog whistle, he said, conceivably could fly around a city for a while and upset the nervous systems of the whole population. I believe we need to do some research along this line. It may be just a fantastic dream. It may not.

Light waves, he said, offered a similar field. Below the infra reds and above the ultra-violets there may be weapons of future warfare as devastating as the atomic bomb, he asserted. Other nations may find them. We must keep pace in order to be able to counter or defend against such threats.

General Kenney said that at present clouds could be broken up and start rainfall at a specific place on a limited scale, and added: Instead of allowing rain clouds to drive past arid and semi-arid sections, we should be able to shoot them down and put the rain where we need it. If we can extend this progress we can stop rain from falling where it has been falling for ages. It is not inconceivable that the nation that first learns to plot the paths of air masses accurately and learns to control the time and place of precipitation will dominate the globe. The change of a few inches of

rainfall a year in many parts of the world would mean the difference between normal crops and starvation.

What purpose did it serve for General Kenney to increase American society's collective angst by painting a picture of a future war with sound and weather manipulation weapons at the same time that the press was already in a tizzy over something potentially bigger than the atomic bomb? Or perhaps that was the purpose – to reinforce the message that American science like Nazi science didn't place limits on the imaginative ways it could wage war.

Interestingly, a January 18, 1947 memo from General Lauris Norstad, Director of Plans and Operations, specifically warned Army and Army Air Force Commanders that:

It is wrong to mislead the U.S. public by creating the impression that hostilities, if they come in the foreseeable future, are certainly going to be of the 'Buck Rogers' type. We should be careful to relate prophecies as to new methods of war and new weapons to the time when such prophecies might come true.<sup>4</sup>

Norstad's admonishment was ignored by Kenney and others because their angst generating speeches were ultimately intended for Uncle Joe, making him play the game of "guess what we have sitting in our secret arsenal - could be an intercontinental missile – could be the next storm cloud gathering over your capital. What is certain is that you don't have it." The Cold War was in full swing.

But can we label these anachronistic weapons as just propaganda in an emerging competition between two super powers? Or was there another hand at play here? Perhaps one that wore a crisp white glove and tipped a tall black hat to the audience to show them nothing was inside before pulling out a futuristic weapon of war.

---

<sup>1</sup> [\(1947, June 14\). British Refuse to Talk about Secret Weapon. \*Daily Capital News\*, June 14, 1947. p. 6.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [\(1947, June 14\). Space Ship Here?. \*The Amarillo Daily New\*. p. 5.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [\(1947, June 14\). Envisions Sound Weapon to Upset Entire Populations. \*Alton Evening Telegraph\*. p. 1.](#)

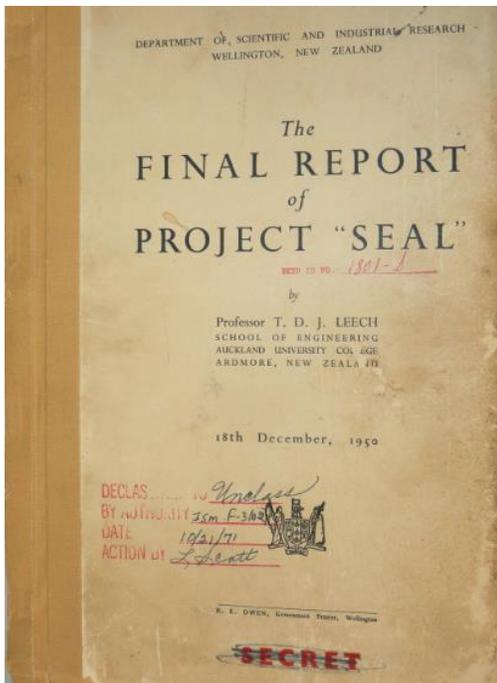
<sup>4</sup> National Archives College Park, RG 165, Entry 421, Box 051, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Office of the Director of Plans and Operations [pp. 1, 2, 3, 4.](#)

## CHAPTER 10

### Making Waves

We would still be guessing like the press did in 1947 what new secret wonder weapon the United States and its post WW2 allies had, if not for one undisputable fact – the project – as significant as the atomic bomb – the scourge of Uncle Joe – carried out in the most utmost of secrecy in a far off land, was secret no more.

The project's full 138 page report titled *The Final Report of Project Seal*, dated December 18, 1950 and stamped SECRET in bright red letters, was written by Thomas David James Leech himself and declassified in 1971. Copy number 5 of 15 total copies published sat unobtrusively on a shelf in the special section of the Scripps Institute library where I reviewed it in early 2009.



The uncensored report was eye opening to say the least, and even more so after careful comparison to what the press was reporting in 1947. I confess I chuckled a little while reading it, because it seemed to me that Leech in addition to documenting for posterity his important research was also setting the official record straight on what the press got all wrong in 1947.

It turns out that Project Seal was not a continent skipping airborne weapon or a city depopulating radioactive mist or a tornado spawning weather manipulation machine – it was something equally intriguing – a wave generator – in other words a tsunami creator.

Hurricanes and typhoons can obliterate entire country coastlines but tsunamis strike a special fear in the heart of those who neighbor next to the sea. At least hurricanes and typhoons drop a courtesy arrival card days before they roar ashore– but with a tsunami, just like a tornado– the terror is sudden and utterly devastating. New Zealand Civil Defense officials estimate that every 10 years, New Zealand could expect to be hit by a tsunami a meter high but every 40 or 50 years be walloped with a much more dangerous wave. Which is why a New Zealander conceived of the tsunami creator in the first place and it was a New Zealander who brought the project to life.

But nothing irritated Leech more in 1947 while talking to the press than having to follow the Rosetta script that:

The secret weapon project originated with the idea of a Wellington, N. Z., man who communicated the idea to Britain and the United States. Both countries immediately made development plans. The project was to have been carried out in Florida, but was moved to New Zealand and Pacific areas owing to the fears of espionage.<sup>1</sup>

Like the garbage filled canvas chute that Snodgrass crawled through at his crossing the line ceremony, this news blurb was partly filled with rubbish and it stunk the same. The truth Leech revealed in his classified report was that Project Seal was a joint U.S.-New Zealand Project and Britain played no role in its initiation or future development. From the declassified report:

#### Origin of Project

Project Seal, or the investigation of the potentialities of inundation by means of artificially produced tidal waves arose from a suggestion by (N.Z) Wing Commander E.A. Gibson to Lieutenant General Sir Edward Puttick, Chief of General Staff (N.Z.) on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1944. The former had noted whilst engaged upon surveys in the Pacific Area during the period 1936 to 1942, that blasting operations upon submerged coral formations occasionally were attended by unexpectedly large waves.

General Puttick instructed Colonel C. W. Salmon, the N.Z. Chiefs of Staff Representative in the South Pacific area (ENZEDOPAC) to place the proposal before Admiral W.F. Halsey, Commander of the South Pacific Area (COMSPAC).

Arrangements were made for Wing Commander Gibson, Professor J. M. Snodgrass, University of California Division of War Research, who was in the area investigating problems related to submarine warfare, and Professor T.D.J. Leech, who was acting Director of Scientific Developments, New Zealand, to examine the idea at Noumea in February 1944.

New Caledonian Experiments: It was decided to test the suggestion by ad hoc trials under the guidance of a team comprising Captain W.L. Edman, U.S.N., Colonel Salmon, Wing Commander Gibson, Professors Snodgrass and Leech.

And just so there would be absolutely no doubt about the British non-role in the Project, Leech placed an important note at the bottom of the title page that read:

‘Seal’ Project is regarded as a joint United States/New Zealand project. Disclosure of the report or any information therein to a third country other than the United Kingdom is prohibited without the consent of the appropriate authorities in the United States of America and New Zealand.

As proud as Leech was in raising the curtain of the greatest show on earth, he was an even prouder Kiwi, and his knee-jerk patriotic reaction was to set the record straight that it was one of his countrymen who came up with the idea and it was under Leech’s tutelage that the project came to life. More importantly, Leech wanted to emphasize that the two sponsors and equal partners were the United States Navy and New Zealand armed forces and not the British. Evidently, Leech felt comfortable venting his patriotism within the pages of a classified report. Leech elaborates further that:

The results (of the trials) were incorporated in a report dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 1944, which was approved by Admiral Halsey and transmitted by him to the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff with a request that New Zealand undertake further investigations as shown by the following extract: The results of these experiments, in my opinion, show that inundation in amphibious warfare has definite and far reaching

possibilities as an offensive weapon. It would be very desirable to have further developments carried out to establish a practicable method and procedure which could be used in offensive warfare. I would be grateful if this development could be continued to completion by New Zealand officers. All practicable assistance of facilities and personnel in this Command will be at your disposal.

Again Leech's Kiwi pride shines through. After the successful trials in Noumea, Admiral Halsey had personally requested that New Zealand take the lead role in further developing Project Seal. The New Zealand war cabinet would approve Halsey's request on May 5, 1944, establishing an Army Research Unit known as the 24<sup>th</sup> Army Troops Company with the Kiwis managing most of the work with the exception of explosives handling which was tasked to the U.S. Navy. The unit never achieved strength above 150 men – miniscule in comparison to the thousands that supported the Manhattan Project.<sup>2</sup>

After the successful Project Seal trials of February to March 1944, Seal operations moved from Noumea to an experimental station on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula in the Hauraki Gulf, New Zealand, close to Auckland. It is at this juncture, when the March 1944 trials ended and before full blown experimentation began that Snodgrass' association with the project ends. Leech describes why Snodgrass exits the scene:

It was originally intended that Leech would be assisted by a senior group comprising Professor Snodgrass and two eminent Australian hydraulic engineers, Messrs. T.A. Lang and F. de L. Venables. After protracted negotiations these gentlemen were not able to join the team, and the technical direction of the whole project remained throughout the responsibility of Leech.

You can sense a little of Leech's resentment reflected in this passage. After all, he did the bulk of the project work but it was the American Snodgrass, despite only participating in the Seal trials, who got more of the press limelight in 1947. CBE or no CBE, magic show or not, Leech made sure to document how Kiwi proud he was of his country's contributions to wartime research.

Meanwhile Snodgrass returned to his Pacific submarine warfare duties before heading back to Pearl Harbor, crossing the equator once more but this time as a shellback submitting any

polliwogs to deck abuse and prodding them into kissing the greasy baby's tummy. His involvement in Project Seal was over, but his role in Rosetta's grand performance was about to begin.

---

<sup>1</sup> [\(1947, June 13\). Science Tries for New Weapon Matching Atom Bomb in Power. \*Amarillo Daily News\*. p. 1.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Project Seal Final Report. Scripps Institute Library.](#)

## CHAPTER 11

### Kiwi and Proud

Documented in the Project Seal final report are additional inconsistencies vis-à-vis the press coverage on the Leech-Snodgrass weapon – all of which help to lay bare the truth-lie-truth script that Rosetta wrote ultimately for Uncle Joe’s benefit.

Britain most certainly did not initiate or work on the project as Leech critically pointed out in the opening pages of the report, but our dear Professor Leech was not quite done with his tongue lashing of the Brits. He also felt the need to defend his U.S. Navy coworkers to counter what the press was then reporting, that “the weapon was conceived by the British and although United States naval officers were not enthusiastic, the British pressed the project, first on an obscure Pacific island in 1943 and later in New Zealand”.

This rubbed Leech the wrong way because the complete opposite was true. It was not the Americans who were pessimistic, but the British! From the Project Seal report:

#### Scope of Work at Whangaparaoa

Contemporaneously with the setting up of the Experimental Station, Dr. E. Marsden, Secretary D.S.I.R. and Brigadier R.S. Park were able to discuss the question with U.K. scientists interested in cognate problems. These include Sir Geoffrey Taylor, Adviser to the Admiralty, Professor E.D. Ellis, together with Professor Chapman and Dr. W. G. Penny of the Imperial College of Science and Technology. These scientists had been interested in the study of the effects of firing submerged charges; and with the exception of Sir Geoffrey Taylor, all were pessimistic. Somewhat later, Dr. Marsden discussed the problem with Dr. Vannevar Bush in Washington, and his views were more encouraging.

But it when revealing the ultimate fate of Project Seal that Leech’s resentment is most noticeable:

It was also unfortunate that the majority of the U.K. authorities were originally pessimistic...These factors, combined with the growing ascendancy of the allied

nations in the Pacific theatre reduced the operational priority of the project and caused the New Zealand Government to close it down in January 1945, before the full experimental program was completed and the fundamental scientific problems were solved.

What? How could Project Seal have died on the research vine in January, 1945 if Leech and Snodgrass confirmed it was alive and kicking in June of 1947? If you are asking yourself that same question, you have taken the critical-thinking leap from “what an interesting story to - what is this anachronistic hocus pocus?”

If Project Seal was truly still being worked on in great secrecy in 1947, then you would expect a mention of this in the Project Seal final report written in 1950. Nope, the report was explicit – the project died in 1945 and the experimental station on the Whangaparaoa Peninsula had long closed its doors.

Leech goes on to detail that even though Project Seal was dead, the lessons learned were still useful for further testing “wave generation by artificial means” – but that opportunity came in 1946, not 1947. Subsequent Events:

In 1946, Dr. Karl Compton, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Evaluation Board, visited New Zealand and discussed the Seal project with Leech, who had been invited to represent New Zealand and Australia in a technical capacity at the second Bikini atom bomb trial. The latter was unable to accept the invitation because of the critical conditions at the Auckland University College. However he supplied data relative to the location of the charge at the critical depth nearer the water surface together with forecasts of wave amplitudes at predetermined points at which wave recorders were to be established.

Held in July 1946 at Bikini atoll in the Marshall Islands, Operation Crossroad’s purpose was to test the effect of nuclear weapons on naval ships and surrounding areas. The two bombs tested were the fourth and fifth atomic weapons ever used in the world at that time, Trinity, Hiroshima and Nagasaki preceding. The first 23 kiloton weapon labeled Able was detonated at an altitude of 520 feet on July 1, 1946; the second equally powerful bomb was Baker which was detonated 90 feet underwater on July 25, 1946.

According to the Project Seal final report, Leech himself established the critical depth at which to place the second atomic bomb, hoping to validate Project Seal's short life by generating a large destructive tsunami wave. This is corroborated by a Top Secret report from the Joint Chiefs of Staff filed after the second atomic blast:

Waves outside the water column, about 1000 feet from the center of the explosion, were 80 to 100 feet in height. These waves rapidly diminished in size as they proceeded outward, the highest wave reaching the beach of Bikini Island being 7 feet. Waves did not pass over the island and no material damage occurred there.<sup>1</sup>

So this brings us to another conundrum. How could Project Seal be as powerful and significant a weapon as the atomic bomb, as Leech-Snodgrass informed the press in 1947, if it took an atomic bomb to make sizeable waves to begin with, as tested at Bikini?

Even when placed at the optimal depth extrapolated from the Project Seal experiments, the Bikini underwater blast did not generate a significant enough wave to even get a surfer salivating, let alone drown embedded enemy troops offshore as the offensive weapon was intended to be used. Dropping the atomic bomb directly on the beach would have had far more devastating consequences than the Baker underwater burp did.

From that point of view, Project Seal proved to be failure. Which begs the next question – why did Leech and Snodgrass promote it as a wonder weapon in 1947 when they knew of its dismal results in 1946 even with the help of an atomic weapon? Something mighty fishy was going on here. The U.S. did not test another nuclear bomb underwater until May 14, 1955 with the Wigwam shot.

Even though Leech did not witness firsthand the awesome atomic energy release, his one-time colleague James Marion Snodgrass did, receiving orders to report to the U.S. Navy Motion Picture Liaison Office in Hollywood for further assignment in support of Operations Crossroads and alluding to the press that he was absent from the U.S. during the Bikini test timeframe.

Interestingly, Snodgrass' unfinished autobiography does not mention his participation in Operations Crossroads but a copy of the orders are in his donated papers at the Scripps Institute. Why the silence? It is obvious to anyone reading Snodgrass' autobiography that he was equally proud of both his scientific career and his wartime service. The Snodgrass' papers at the Scripps

institute includes a large quantity of biographical material that documents his war and post war period research.

Also notably absent from his biographical records are any newspaper clippings or even mention that he made the front page news in mid-June 1947. In fact the only reference to the news blitz was in a letter written to Snodgrass by a friend wanting to get reacquainted after seeing him in the newspaper, and this letter was filed all by itself in a folder labeled 1947.<sup>2</sup>

I found this to be very odd. If you made the international news spotlight with journalists hounding you to find out your role in a secret project that was allegedly as significant as the atomic bomb, wouldn't you at least mention this in your autobiography, especially after that project was declassified? Curious indeed.

Perhaps the reason Snodgrass did not write about Crossroads or his 1947 notoriety is because he didn't want to draw attention to it. Not everyone in a performance need take a bow, especially if you are under a security oath that binds you to forever silence.

James Marion Snodgrass, experienced in the world of classified wartime scientific research, took his secrecy oath seriously and carried his 1947 secrets with him to the grave. His service to his country, just like the submarines he hunted in the Pacific, was silent running, only surfacing when necessary and for effect before slipping back below the waves into the dark waters known as scientific intelligence.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Truman Library. Joint Chiefs of Staff Evaluation Board Atomic Tests, Second Preliminary Report. July 30, 1946. p. 3.](#)

[\(1946, August 2\). Atomic Rays Deal Death Stealthily; Bikini Has Uncovered No Defenses. \*New York Times\*. p. 7.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Snodgrass Papers. Scripps Institute Library.](#)

## CHAPTER 12

### Convenient News

Two things that simply don't mix in the world of Intelligence are covert operations and unsolicited publicity. The Greeks didn't send advance notice to the Trojans that their horse was really a human piñata, the British didn't send out a press release when they broke the Enigma code and the Americans didn't throw a block party for Tennessee Valley locals when building Manhattan Project facilities. KYMS - Keep Your Mouth Shut – is the mantra of everyone who dons a clandestine cloak and those who wish to play the Intelligence game must sign a strict security waiver acknowledging that failure to KYMS could lead to time behind bars or even worse a seat on death row.

When secrecy and publicity do inadvertently mix, it is normally not a benign reaction. Witness the Watergate scandal or the release of the Pentagon Papers or more recently Wikileaks' and Edward Snowden's disclosures of classified documents – all examples of what happens when information meant to remain secret reaches the light of day and public scrutiny.

But what if an alleged secret is publically released for effect, serving a greater purpose than an inadvertent or untimely disclosure? Historically, intelligence agencies have purposely leaked information, real or imaginary, in support of two mutually exclusive national security strategic objectives – psychological operations and deception operations. The difference between these is subtle but significant. Psychological operations are meant to influence the mindset of your enemy while deception is meant to motivate your enemy to perform an action or an inaction.

To explain this in laymen's terms, think of the difference between a TV series and the commercials interleaved in between. A TV series is akin to a psychological operation, attempting to evoke a certain mood in the viewer – in a sitcom, joy – in a drama, tension - with the ultimate goal of capturing the audience member's attention for a fixed period of time by making them *feel* a certain way.

The interleaved commercials are more like deceptions - bombarding you with information that sounds wholly appetizing – but not necessarily to make you feel - as much as to move you to

action, whether that is picking up the phone to place an order or purchasing the advertised product off a store shelf or a car lot. In the context of this story, getting Uncle Joe to task his entire espionage network to find out the nature of the 1947 super weapon was a deception end game.

Dr. Joseph W. Caddell, a lecturer on military history at North Carolina State University outlines the conditions affecting deception in his paper *Deception 101*:<sup>1</sup>

A quick review of the historical literature reveals scholarly interest in the nature of deception dating back to Sun Tzu, Vegetius, Machiavelli, and the oft-quoted Clausewitz. In more recent years, the evolution of the ‘Principles of War’ in the American and British armies embraced the advantages of ‘surprise’ and ‘security’. Intrinsic to both of these principles is recognition of the importance of fooling your opponent and, in turn, not being fooled yourself.

What may be more problematical is finding consensus as to how deception works and how best to avoid being taken in. In broad terms, it is obvious that flaws in logical analysis and synthesis make being deceived more likely. Ignorance, arrogance, and fear all complicate one’s ability to detect false information. Preconceived ideas or simple prejudice often lead to that phenomenon known as ‘cognitive dissonance’, where one ignores vital information simply because it interferes with preexisting concepts or theories.

The significance here is that effective deception is often based on exploitation of the victim’s cognitive assumptions. The German philosopher Goethe is remembered for his observation that ‘We are never deceived, we deceive ourselves.’ This is more than a philosophical truism. It is both a recipe for formulating deception and a warning for those who wish to avoid being deceived.

What Caddell succinctly stated is that when it comes to being deceived, you are your own worst enemy. If your opponent can find your prejudicial trigger, they can maximally exploit it to deceive you without you even realizing the deception. The cognitive dissonance your prejudice evokes will cause you to ignore the glaring red flags that someone else would not disregard.

Case in point is Uncle Joe’s obsession with the Sanger Amerika Bomber – so convinced was he of this weapon’s plausibility, and so desirous was he of building one, that it didn’t take

much for Rosetta to convince him that the Anglo allies had beaten him to the punch – especially when it was Uncle Joe’s own intelligence service that wove the tale from Rosetta’s strategically placed clues, in essence becoming the conduit for deception transmission:

The links or ‘channels’ between deceivers and targets make deception possible, and their variety is unlimited. A channel could be a newspaper monitored by the target ... diplomats, or spies.<sup>2</sup> Caddell described how ‘someone practicing deception needs a route through which to send their disinformation—their adversary’s intelligence organizations often provide that route’.<sup>3</sup>

Little did Beria know that by piecing together the clues of the Leech-Snodgrass weapon for Uncle Joe, he was playing into Rosetta’s carefully crafted plan. Contributing to Uncle Joe’s fall into deception was the promotion of his own cult of personality which coupled with his notorious intolerance for dissent made his entourage unlikely to express their honest opinions to him. If Uncle Joe declared there was a real man in the moon, you dare not correct him, as doing so would be literal suicide.

If the aim of deception is to move the deceived to action – what exactly was Rosetta interested in getting Uncle Joe to do besides just sending the KGB on a wild scientific intelligence goose chase? To answer that question, we first unmask the magicians known as Rosetta.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Caddell, J. W., & Army War College \(U.S.\). \(2004\). Deception 101: Primer on deception. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Daniel, D.C., & Herbig, K.L. \(Eds.\). \(1981\). Strategic Military Deception. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press. p. 18.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Daniel, D.C., & Herbig, K.L. \(Eds.\). \(1981\). Strategic Military Deception. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press. p. 18.](#)

## CHAPTER 13

### Nothing New Under the Sun

To understand the present, one must diligently study the past, because whether due to laziness, proven effectiveness or just a downright desire to repeat good luck, we are all creatures of habit. Once we hit on a winning formula, we tend to milk it for all it is worth. This axiom applies equally to you, your neighbor as well as to the guy wearing a cloak and wielding a dagger.

To understand the game that Rosetta played in 1947 and those who played it, we only need to rewind to a few years earlier when war was being waged with maximum effect – total war. The game began with the British before being adopted by the Americans – a game I call grand deception – also known as the “Big Lie”. In military terms it is called strategic deception and was used to great effect during WW2.

If you don’t know the history of strategic deception, it is worth reading up on as it is immeasurably fascinating - playing such a significant role in the allied defeat of the axis powers that undoubtedly the war’s outcome would have been far different in its absence. An extremely good read is *The Deceivers*, a superbly written and documented expose of WW2 deception operations.<sup>1</sup>

With such unassuming names like the London Controlling Section (LCS) in the UK and Joint Security Control (JCS) on the American side, these two organizations and their sub-units of brilliant minds, waged war as no other war had ever been fought before – a war where sleight of hand and illusion were the principal weapons – more potent than a tank and more effective than a bomb.

Interestingly, the British would have preferred you never heard of the magnificent deceptions the Anglo allies perpetrated on the enemy during WW2. Colonel Ronald Wingate of the London Controlling Section clearly emphasized this when he kept the LCS functioning informally after the war by hosting dinner parties at his club for former members. “He ensured that the mysteries of deception remained secret by getting LCS members to swear to never discuss publicly what it was they had done, since we might have to take on the Russian General Staff”<sup>2</sup>

As I pointed out previously, the primary purpose of a deception operation is to make the enemy act in the way the deceivers want – whether that is to defend an area they think will be attacked – leaving the true target poorly defended – or whether that is to get a formation of enemy bombers to drop their bomb loads on what appears to be your airfield of prized fighters – blowing up a bunch of rubber inflatable dummies instead. By plying the enemy in such a way – not only can the advantage accrue to an inferior force employing deception, but it also provides those who are skilled at it, equal footing with a commanding general in the theater of war. The deceiver – the magician - playing a role as important as the man with the brass stars on his epaulet.

I won't repeat in this brief space the history of the major deception successes of WW2 as numerous books and even major motions pictures have chronicled these incredible stories like *The Man Who Never Was*, the antics of the Beach Jumpers, and the very successful D-Day deception cover stories.<sup>3</sup> What I will do instead, is compare LCS/JSC's successful wartime modus operandi to similar events from 1946-1947, in the process lifting the indelible fingerprint of Rosetta's deception operations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Holt, T. (2004). *The deceivers: Allied military deception in the Second World War*. New York: Scribner.

<sup>2</sup> Dorril, S. (2000). *MI6: Inside the covert world of Her Majesty's secret intelligence service* (1st Free Press ed.). New York; London: Free Press. p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> Shapiro, S. and Forrester, T. (2004). *Hoodwinked: Outwitting the Enemy: Stories From The Second World War*. Annick Press Ltd.

## CHAPTER 14

### Spies Like Us

I began this story by telling you that the Rosetta magicians only had one audience member in mind – Uncle Joe. What Rosetta really desired was to read his thoughts and to know what his next moves would be in the immediate postwar period. Would he initiate World War 3? Would he coexist with the West despite his belligerent talk? Would he listen to reason or only to force? As Churchill so succinctly put it in October, 1939, "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma".

What motivated Rosetta's formation besides the desire to read Uncle Joe's thoughts were a most interesting set of events that took place at the end of WW2. In September 1945, Ukrainian cipher clerk Igor Gouzenko, walked out of the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa carrying a brief case full of secrets with the intention of defecting to the West. Little did he realize at the time that that his defection would ignite a cold war between two super powers.

In addition to Soviet cryptographic material, Gouzenko carried with him insider knowledge that the Soviet Union was engaged in a massive espionage operation against the United States and its allies. Turned away by the newspapers, the Justice Ministry and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), he spent his first night of "freedom" huddled with his son and pregnant wife in a neighbor's apartment watching through a peephole as his apartment was ransacked by Uncle Joe's agents who were desperate to get their cipher clerk back.

When Gouzenko was finally taken seriously by the RCMP, he was taken to Camp X – a WW2 commando school on the northwestern shore of Lake Ontario where he was debriefed by counterintelligence and cryptographic experts. What he revealed - later confirmed by whistle blowers, other defectors and interrogated Soviet agents, was that the United States had been infiltrated from sea to shining sign by a massive network of Uncle Joe's spies. From the White House to the State Department to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Soviet spies had lodged themselves into every aspect of American society.

News of Gouzenko's defection leaked out to leading American columnist Drew Pearson, who promptly informed his audience of some 20 million Americans. The unsolicited publicity forced the Canadian Government to quickly take action and on the morning of February 15, 1946 the R.C.M.P arrested fifteen spies revealed by Gouzenko.<sup>1</sup>

The Canadian Prime Minister, Mackenzie King issued a secret order to establish a Royal Commission to hold a public inquiry into Gouzenko's allegations, presided over by two judges of the Supreme Court of Canada. These public hearings and subsequent trials were front page news culminating with the conviction of Fred Rose, a member of the Canadian Parliament who was sentenced to six years in prison. On March 6, 1946 based on documents Gouzenko provided, nuclear scientist Alan Nunn May was arrested in England and later convicted and sentenced to ten years hard labor.

It was because of Gouzenko's revelations in late 1945 that the ABC (American, British, Canadian) leadership finally woke up to the realization that the enemy was playing in their own backyards. The internal threat of Soviet spies passing on vital information to Uncle Joe threatened to consume the ABC way of life from the inside out. To combat this menace, these covert Soviet spies had to be neutralized as quickly as possible and spy hunting would eventually become one of Rosetta's primary mandates.

Rosetta's deception operations transpired between early 1946 and the summer of 1947 during the nebulous period after WW2 when the U.S. intelligence community found itself in a state of limbo. The OSS had been disbanded and the National Intelligence Authority (NIA), the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) and military intelligence services had temporary stewardship of the U.S. intelligence community until the 1947 National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) could take hold. Meanwhile Soviet spies were running rampant in the United States.

It is in this period of uncertainty, that a small group of patriotic Anglo allies came together to create the greatest magicians guild the world has ever seen and is ever likely to see again. It is in this period of warmongering, posturing and threats of renewed total war that Rosetta was born.

## CHAPTER 15

### The Big Apple

The precedents for Rosetta can be traced back to WW2 on both sides of the Atlantic. While LCS/JCS waged deception in the theater of war, other agencies were fine-tuning their magical black arts on American soil. Let us first examine these precedents in the western hemisphere.

William Samuel Stephenson, also commonly known by his codename Intrepid, was the senior representative of the British Special Intelligence Service (SIS – now MI6) in the western hemisphere during and immediately after WW2. In charge of an organization known as British Security Coordination (BSC), housed on the 35th and 36th floors of the International Building, Rockefeller Center in New York City, and working under the cover of the British Passport Control Office, Stephenson played a very important role in both intelligence history as well as WW2 allied victory.

Assigned to his BSC role by Winston Churchill himself, Stephenson was tasked to protect British assets in the Americas by disrupting Nazi saboteurs and spies, rally American pro-British public opinion and to convince the United States to abandon neutrality to join Britain in the fight against Hitler. Stephenson was overwhelmingly successful on all accounts.

With thousands of BSC agents operating throughout the Americas, Stephenson's intelligence exploits are the thing of legend, many kept secret till decades later. Stephenson set up Camp X in Oshawa, Canada on Lake Ontario opposite Rochester (today known as Intrepid Park) to train agents from the OSS, FBI and the British SOE (Special Operations Executive) in all of the espionage arts that would allow them to operate behind enemy lines. Wild Bill Donovan and James Bond author Ian Fleming were some of its notable alumni.

Camp X also housed Hydra, a powerful radio transmission facility that became a very important link between the United States and Britain's codebreaking organizations during and after the war. The Army Security Agency (ASA, predecessor of the NSA) and the British Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS, the predecessor of GCHQ) used Hydra to exchange intercepted enemy codes known as communications Intelligence (COMINT), BSC acting as the relay.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately after the war, the American and British continued their codebreaking relationship under the March 1946 UK-USA Agreement which specifically called for the continued use of Hydra supplemented by an American landline to be installed between Camp X and Washington.<sup>3</sup>

BSC under Stephenson, a true renaissance man in the history of intelligence, pioneered propaganda, psychological warfare, deception and counterintelligence techniques that would influence in a large way the operations of the wartime OSS, the post-war Central Intelligence Group (CIG) and CIG's successor, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In his recommendation for Stephenson to receive the U.S. Medal of Merit, the highest honor that could be bestowed on a civilian, William Donovan of the OSS wrote that "in the field of counter-espionage it was Sir William who enabled the Counter-Espionage Branch of OSS to begin its operations by drawing upon the experience, techniques and training facilities of an established British organization".<sup>4</sup>

Stephenson also had a working relationship with the master deceivers of the London Controlling Section and personally briefed Roosevelt on the top secret LCS deception known as Operation Mincemeat. This 1943 operation involved releasing a dead body from a submarine off the coast of Spain that had an attached briefcase. Inside the briefcase were forged documents that would hopefully convince the German high command that the Allies planned to invade Greece and Sardinia instead of Sicily. The operation was overwhelmingly successful. The Royal Navy intelligence officer who was in charge of Mincemeat, Commander Ewen Montagu, visited New York to brief Stephenson, and later documented the Mincemeat operation in his book *The Man Who Never Was*.<sup>5</sup>

William Stephenson just so happened to be in Ottawa on a routine official visit when Igor Gouzenko made his desperate escape to the West. Hearing rumors of the defection, Stephenson called on Mr. Norman Robertson, Under-Secretary of State of the Canadian Department of External Affairs and Mr. Thomas Archibald Stone, Counsellor of the Canadian Embassy in Washington who was visiting Robertson, to both ascertain the story's truthfulness and to see what he could do to turn things around in Gouzenko's favor.<sup>6</sup>

Stephenson a practical man, had no time for fools. "The career chiefs of the Secret Intelligence Service had always treated Stephenson with caution. When he saw a need for action, he refused to waste time going through bureaucratic channels."<sup>7</sup> One of Stephenson's staff, Roald

Dahl commented that: “No postwar politician wanted him to come within a mile, because he cut through red tape and got things done without regard for men with tiny minds.”<sup>8</sup>

Unlike the Canadian authorities who rejected Gouzenko initially, Stephenson understood very well the code clerk’s importance as well as the present real danger of the KGB killing Gouzenko if they could find him. Stephenson vowed to not let that happen and convinced Robertson to involve the RCMP and secure Gouzenko’s safety.<sup>9</sup>

Gouzenko spent his first night of “freedom” fearing for his life, constantly looking out the peephole of his neighbor’s apartment for the KGB to return. Shortly before 4 a.m. there was another low, careful knock at his apartment door. “But whoever it was left before I could identify him”, Gouzenko wrote afterwards. In fact it was Stephenson and Stone who had come to check on Gouzenko’s well-being.<sup>10</sup>

The next morning Gouzenko was brought to RCMP headquarters, while his wife and child remained in the neighbor’s apartment under police protection. After telling his story and showing the secret documents he removed from the Soviet embassy, he was finally granted the asylum he sought. Gouzenko and his family were then taken to BSC’s Camp X where they would be safe from the vengeful arm of the KGB while he was interrogated:

Gouzenko’s interrogation proved a lengthy business, and several weeks passed before the whole story had been pieced together, supplemented by information from London and Washington, since the trail led to Nunn May, who had returned to England and to the United States, where a similar network of spies was found to be operating. Meanwhile Stephenson had sent the RCMP two of his most experienced staff to help with the inquiries, while he put his secure telekrypton facilities at the disposal of the Canadians for the purpose of communicating with London and New York, since there was a danger that the Canadian ciphers had been compromised.<sup>11</sup>

Stephenson delayed dissolving BSC although its wartime mission was complete and kept on a small staff to assist with the Gouzenko case, focusing all of his efforts on the case for the first six months of 1946, only after which BSC allegedly closed its doors at Rockefeller Center.<sup>12</sup>

Gouzenko’s importance cannot be overstated. First he provided important and timely information needed to confirm the counterintelligence threat at America’s doorstep. More

importantly, his intimate knowledge of Soviet cryptographic practices assisted the U.S. Army Security Agency (ASA, predecessor of the NSA) and the British Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS, predecessor of GCHQ) with their own Soviet codebreaking efforts.

Stephenson's involvement in the Gouzenko case was one of his last great acts of service to King and Country. But it was the unorthodox expedient methods that BSC under Stephenson employed during the war that is of more interest to our story. Those BSC wartime operations, well-documented soon after the war but kept secret for many years, provide the precedent as well as the detailed blueprint for the Rosetta deception.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 235.

[Benson, R. L. \(1997\). \*A history of U.S. communications intelligence during World War II : policy and administration\*. Fort George G. Meade, Maryland: Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency. p. 14.](#)

<sup>2</sup> *The Secret History of British Intelligence in The Americas, 1940 – 45* (St. Ermin's Press), 451,

[Benson, R. L. \(1997\). \*A history of U.S. communications intelligence during World War II : policy and administration\*. Fort George G. Meade, Maryland: Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency. p. 14.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [UK-USA COMINT Agreement \(Appendix C\). February 26, 1946. p. 2.](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Donovan Letter of Recommendation. May 17, 1945. U.S. National Archives College Park, RG 218, Central Decimal File 1942-45, Box 37.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. pp. 186-187.

<sup>6</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 229.

<sup>7</sup> Stevenson, W. (1983). *Intrepid's last case*. Villard Books. p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Stevenson, W. (1983). *Intrepid's last case*. Villard Books. p. 74.

<sup>9</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 230.

<sup>10</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 232.

<sup>11</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 234.

<sup>12</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 236.

## CHAPTER 16

### Trailblazers

In *The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas 1940 – 1945*, written shortly after WW2 and not available to the general public until decades later, BSC insiders reveal the unorthodox methods they employed to support Britain's war efforts and to ultimately achieve victory. BSC's controversial wartime operations included fielding of thousands of British agents on American soil, covertly fighting U.S. based anti-British opposition groups, planting rumors, manipulating the press, forging documents, using sex to coerce or embarrass opponents and other questionably legal actions pulled from its black arts bag of tricks. BSC embodied the cliché that all is fair in love and war.

BSC Agents operating on American Soil: BSC was a very large organization and although it is not certain how many personnel BSC employed in the United States, estimates range from 1000<sup>1</sup> to as many as 3000.<sup>2</sup> However in 1942, BSC's ability to conduct operations in the United States was threatened by American legislation. Democratic Senator Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee introduced a bill that would require all agents of foreign governments working in the United States to register with the Justice Department and to provide all of the specifics on their activities. Stephenson knew that if the McKellar Act passed, BSC would be forced to provide a detailed list of its black arts operations on American soil. The subsequent public backlash would surely result in angry demands to expel the British organization.<sup>3</sup>

To counteract the bill, Stephenson successfully milked his back door channels to President Roosevelt who vetoed the bill, only allowing it to pass after a provision was added to exclude BSC. When the McKellar Act was signed into law on May 1, 1942, BSC was only obligated to file with the Department of Justice a general statement of BSC's security functions and a list of its personnel but could exclude all of the lurid details. Stephenson breathed a collective sigh of relief and continued BSC's mission unhindered.<sup>4</sup>

When pro-Axis groups in the United States were drowning out the pro-interventionist voices, William Stephenson took charge:

He instructed the recently created SOE division to declare a covert war against the mass of American groups which were organized throughout the country spreading isolationism and anti-British feeling. It was agreed to seek out all existing pro-British interventionist organizations, to subsidize them where necessary and to assist them in every way possible.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the pro-British groups infiltrated and subsidized included the American Labor Committee to aid British Labor, the League of Human Rights, and the Free World Association. BSC also had close ties with the American Labor Committee. The British connection with these societies was never suspected as BSC was careful to ensure that no British citizens were members nor used as intermediaries.<sup>6</sup>

Press Manipulation: BSC mastered the art of media manipulation, using its extensive list of newspapers and radio contacts to initiate propaganda campaigns. Among the newspapers that BSC could count on were the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune, the New York Post and the Baltimore Sun and “because of BSC’s insistence, as a matter of policy... on restricting its output to accurate information which had genuine news value, publicity for a campaign, once it had been launched, was largely self-generating”.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, BSC would plant a story that the public really wanted to hear and once released the story took on a life of its own. For example, BSC planted news articles in the New York Herald Tribune on the subject of fifth columns (sabotage, disinformation, or espionage carried out by enemy sympathizers) which then spread virally throughout the U.S. media.<sup>8</sup>

“All that was necessary was contact through a reliable intermediary with one influential newspaper. It should not be thought, however, that the method was simple to apply. The utmost discretion had to be exercised at all times.”<sup>9</sup>

In another propaganda campaign, an article on a German fifth column in Japan was featured in the New York Herald Tribune:

It comprised information which had all the appearance of being at once authentic, and uncolored by organized propaganda. It was regarded, therefore as ‘hard’ news and created something of a sensation. It was syndicated in forty leading newspapers

throughout the United States and Canada and was widely quoted by American radio commentators.<sup>10</sup>

Once the story of the German fifth column in Japan had “broken”, the BSC kept it alive by placing corroborating information in the press and then ensuring that the article was transmitted worldwide through other media contacts.

BSC cultivated the leading news commentators of the day including both Walter Winchell and Drew Pearson using intermediaries to pass on information to the competing columnists that collectively reached over 25 million Americans. Some of the stories drafted by BSC were even published verbatim by Winchell. Stephenson and his staff frequented the “New Yorkiest” place in New York City, the infamous Stork Club, where Winchell and the FBI’s J. Edgar Hoover dined together on occasion.<sup>11</sup>

An important aspect of planting propaganda stories was being careful of where the story would originate. BSC considered it important that the story have “the appearance of news originating from strictly American sources but which was directed to targets outside of the United States”. Rosetta used a similar ploy when it leaked the Leech-Snodgrass story in New Zealand and rode the wave of publicity back to the United States.

BSC established a relationship with the Overseas News Agency and agreed to give the ONA a monthly subsidy in exchange for ONA’s cooperation in distributing BSC’s version of the news to “not only channel propaganda outwards but to assure wide dissemination of material originated by BSC and intended for internal consumption”.<sup>12</sup>

In April 1941, ONA counted more than forty-five English-language newspapers as its clients including the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune, the New York Post, the New York Daily News, the Washington Times Herald and the Washington Post, the San Francisco Chronicle, the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Kansas City Star. BSC arranged to expand ONA’s clients to many foreign newspapers in order to push its message out to a worldwide audience.<sup>13</sup>

BSC also used Britanova, the news agency clandestinely controlled by Special Operations Executive (SOE) in London. Britanova “assisted in disseminating abroad news stories planted by BSC in American newspapers”.<sup>14</sup>

Under Stephenson's direction, the pro-British, anti-Axis message that was molded primarily for American but eventually a worldwide audience became the "viral marketing" of its time, and was done so cleverly and covertly, that no one suspected the source flew the Union Jack. The incredible and far reaching media manipulation methods that BSC perfected during the war would be recycled by Rosetta with equal success.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> [Boyd, W. \(2006, August 19\). The Secret Persuaders. The Guardian.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 164.

<sup>5</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 81.

<sup>7</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 55.

<sup>8</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 57.

<sup>9</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 58.

<sup>10</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 92.

<sup>11</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 124.

<sup>12</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 59.

<sup>14</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 59.

## CHAPTER 17

### Unconventional Means

In the BSC official history which was written for internal consumption only, the author offered candid and often unflattering assessments of the American wartime agencies and leadership and even greater unflattering views of American society: <sup>1</sup>

A country that is extremely heterogeneous in character offers a wide variety of choice in propaganda methods. While it is possibly true to say that all Americans are intensely suspicious of propaganda, it is certain that a great many of them are unusually susceptible to it even in its most patent form. It is unlikely that any propagandist would seriously attempt to influence politically the people of England, say, or France through the medium of astrological predictions. Yet in the United States this was done with effective if limited results.

The propaganda event alluded to is the amazing story of how BSC used astrology to push its covert agenda, a story which is worth recounting verbatim. <sup>2</sup>

In the summer of 1941, Louis de Wohl, a bogus Hungarian astrologer, was sent over to the United States by London. He was to be controlled by the BSC, but his instructions were that he must never mention Britain or show in any way that he was especially interested in her welfare. His mission was to shake public confidence in the invincibility of Adolf Hitler.

It was planned that the first prophecies which de Wohl would make on his arrival in the United States should coincide and harmonize with prearranged astrological and magical predictions of Hitler's fall to be made in other parts of the world. By this means it was hoped not only to convince the public but to alarm Hitler himself who was intensely superstitious and a great believer in astrology.

BSC then went to great lengths to bolster de Wohl's believability by arranging a major press conference on his arrival in the U.S., planting news stories around the world of "corroborating" astrological reports and arranging for associated "predictions" to magically come

true; all to bolster de Wohl's prestige among the American public and ensure his pessimistic predictions reached the ears of Hitler himself.<sup>3</sup>

Public Polls: David Mackenzie Ogilvy, widely recognized as the father of modern advertising was a BSC employee. He was also a Gallup associate director and used Gallup polling on BSCs behalf to measure American public opinion.<sup>4</sup> The polling provided BSC an important feedback loop to know whether their propaganda and other efforts were successful.

Ogilvy's polling methodology was also employed in 1944 by General Eisenhower's Psychological Warfare Board in Europe and "since those days the U.S. Government has also made consistent use of Dr. Gallup's techniques, both overtly and secretly".<sup>5</sup>

Forged Documents: BSC's Station M – a laboratory in Canada set up with the aid of the RCMP, and under cover of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation became forgery central where all kinds of letters and documents were manufactured in support of BSC's mission. Drawing upon its well-stocked collection of original papers and inks, the technicians of Station M created the most incredible forgeries that could withstand even the most careful microscopic examination.<sup>6</sup>

"Station M produced no document which was not an exact imitation in every detail of what it purported to be and enabled BSC to provide London with a regular supply of documents which were invaluable for agents in the field."<sup>7</sup>

Rumor Factory: In 1941, BSC created a unit for spreading rumors - the New York office directing the campaigns with material usually supplied by London.<sup>8</sup> The BSC rumor mill exploited all the propaganda channels at its disposal including newspapers, magazines, radio, and news agencies and through special diplomatic and commercial channels.<sup>9</sup>

Much of the rumor spreading in Latin America was done by word of mouth, and whispering campaigns were carried out on many different social levels through the contacts which agents maintained with governmental, diplomatic, professional, social, commercial and working-class circles...

It is worth mentioning the rules of thumb BSC observed when running a rumor operation:<sup>10</sup>

1. A good rumor should never be traceable to its source
2. A rumor should be of the kind which is likely to gain in the telling

3. Particular rumors should be designed to appeal to particular groups
4. A particular rumor should have a specific purpose. The objectives of rumor-spreading may be many, but a single rumor cannot be expected to serve more than one of them
5. Rumors are most effective if they can be originated in several different places simultaneously and in such a way that they shuttle back and forth, with each new report apparently confirming previous ones.

The following extract from a report sent to London by BSC in 1941 illustrates the application of these rumor rules:<sup>11</sup>

This rumor, after publication in the New York Post on August 15<sup>th</sup>, was cabled to Moscow by the Tass correspondent in Washington. It was broadcast from Moscow the following day in the form of a report from Switzerland. Presumably it was also published in the Moscow press and was sent thence to London by the British correspondents in Moscow. It was then cabled from London back to the United States by the United Press and was published in a completely new form on August 19<sup>th</sup> in the N.Y. Daily News, N.Y. Herald Tribune, and the N.Y. Daily Mirror.

This “shuttling” of news from one venue to another gave the appearance of multi-source confirmation of its validity. In reality, it was simply a mind-game played to great effect.

On the radio front, BSC pushed out its subversive propaganda to a worldwide audience through the powerful 50,000 watt transmitter at station WRUL near Boston, the station receiving funding from BSC. WRUL had a rule against broadcasting material which did not first appear in the American press, but BSC maneuvered around this by planting its own material in friendly newspapers, and then quoting it.<sup>12</sup>

William Stephenson was very close to William Donovan of OSS fame who before the war ran the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI), a U.S. intelligence and propaganda agency founded by President Roosevelt. During the war, COI was split in half with the propaganda functions going to the Office of War Information (OWI) and the remaining intelligence functions forming the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). BSC migrated propaganda operations to OWI and trained its recruits in the fine art of propaganda<sup>13</sup> and

maintained close contact with OSS to assist Donovan get the fledgling intelligence organization off the ground.

Even after relegating propaganda operations to the Americans, “BSC maintained contact with a number of key American newspapermen until the end of the war... because there were occasional items of special concern which London requested BSC to ‘plant’ in the U.S. press.”<sup>14</sup> Rosetta would similarly call on its small cadre of established press contacts when it came time to market its deception operation.

In summary, BSC extensively employed the black deception arts to further its agenda including exploiting the belief in the supernatural, using public polls as a feedback loop, forging documents, spreading rumors and planting its version of the news in the press through shuttling and multi-source confirmation. Rosetta would employ these same techniques in pursuit of its own agenda.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> Hyde, H. M. (1963). *Room 3603; the story of the British intelligence center in New York during World War II*. New York: Farrar, Straus. p. 198.

<sup>6</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 105.

<sup>7</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 105.

<sup>8</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 109.

<sup>9</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 110.

<sup>10</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 111.

<sup>11</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 112.

<sup>12</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 61.

<sup>13</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 120.

<sup>14</sup> Stephenson, W. S. (Editor). (1998). *British Security Coordination: The Secret History of British Intelligence in the Americas, 1940-45*. St. Ermin's Press. p. 123.

## **Part 2: Rocket Deception**

## CHAPTER 18

### Occult Science

Dennis Wheatley was the kind of person that all budding writers aspire to be – prolific and in demand. Specializing in the dark and macabre world of occult literature, by the end of his career, he had over 70 books on bookstore shelves and an adoring audience of millions of fans.<sup>1</sup>

But just like the shadow characters in the bizarre tales he wrote, Dennis had a shadow side of his own – playing an important role during WW2 on behalf of his majesty's government. Dennis was one of the principal deceivers at the London Controlling Section (LCS), serving in that capacity from 1941 - 1944. LCS along with Joint Security Control (JSC), its American counterpart were the masterminds behind the great World War 2 deception operations and Dennis was its then longest serving member.<sup>2</sup>

What makes Dennis pertinent to this story however, was not his wartime work but what he conceived in 1945 about the future of strategic deception in the post war period:<sup>3</sup>

Author Dennis Wheatley, suggested that in peacetime, after the great reduction of our forces, military deception would be almost valueless in persuading our potential enemies that Britain was to be feared. But it could be done, he argued by 'scientific deception'.

Wheatley envisaged creating a dummy secret base which would be visible to reconnaissance aircraft. It would subsequently be leaked that the base 'possessed a new scientific weapon of great power – perhaps one which would enable us to bombard Moscow with atom bombs – then not considered possible – or something of that kind'. The chair of the chiefs of staff committee, Dickie Dickson, thought the idea 'sound', and it may be that something similar was put into practice.

It was put into practice two years later in postwar 1947 when the Leech-Snodgrass weapon was leaked to the press – although the methodology and venue were altered to fit the new deception plan. The new scientific weapon of great power would not just be British but also American; the leak would come through the press and not through reconnaissance, but the endgame would be the

same – convince Uncle Joe that a nuclear bomb could be effortlessly and imminently delivered to his front door – courtesy of his former allies and now cold war enemies. But even prior to Snodgrass and Leech making headlines around the world in June of 1947, Wheatley’s strategic deception game had already been played out a year earlier in 1946 in the first operation that can be attributed to Rosetta, an operation that will be explored in great detail in the next chapters.

Wheatley practiced deception using the same methodology he used to craft his fiction novels – carefully and slowly dangling one tantalizing clue at a time in front of the reader so that the picture he wanted to paint would become crystal clear only over time.

Wheatley and his fellow deceivers on LCS and JSC knew from past experience that a deception operation needed some very basic ingredients to produce successful results – a clear objective for the deception, a clear action that the intended victim of the deception would perform, and finally sufficient time to carry the deception out.<sup>4</sup> These tried and true deception principals were established through trial and error early in WW2 before they were perfected toward the end of the war in Europe – culminating with the deception operations surrounding D-Day.

Since it goes without saying, that Rosetta’s deceptions exposed in this story have not been officially acknowledged, it is impossible to ascertain without access to the official still highly classified documentation an exact date that the deceptions were initiated, but based on the clues gathered through forensic historical analysis, it is probable that the operation was planned in late 1945 and initiated in two phases – phase one in 1946 and phase two in 1947, for mutually exclusive reasons.

Regardless of the exact chronology, the tell-tale signs of these deception operations are undeniable. If you doubt my analysis up to this point and are itching to throw this book next to the others on your conspiracy theory book shelf – I only ask you get through the next few chapters before you close the cover forever. And if you are a patient person and read it till the end, I promise that what will be revealed is just as Wheatley titled one of his books – *Stranger than Fiction*.

---

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.denniswheatley.info>

<sup>2</sup> Holt, T. (2004). *The deceivers: Allied military deception in the Second World War*. New York: Scribner. p. 170.

<sup>3</sup> Dorril, S. (2000). *MI6: Inside the covert world of Her Majesty's secret intelligence service* (1st Free Press ed.). New York; London: Free Press. p. 158.

<sup>4</sup> Holt, T. (2004). *The deceivers: Allied military deception in the Second World War*. New York: Scribner. Chapter 2: The Art of Deception.

## CHAPTER 19

### Ghost Rockets over Sweden

On April 15, 1947 a report from William D. Wright, U.S. naval attaché in Stockholm Sweden, was sent to the Intelligence Division of the Office of Naval Operations with the subject line: *Alleged Rockets over Sweden*.<sup>1</sup> What the report referred to was a spate of strange sightings in the skies over Sweden that began in May of 1946, today commonly known as the “Ghost Rockets”.

Then popularly thought to be Russian missile experiments over Scandinavia, the strange events had the earmarking of a genuine mystery with hundreds of eyewitnesses describing missile type objects in flight. These reports created an almost daily churn of speculation in the world press until the Scandinavian authorities stepped in and instituted a news blackout allegedly to prevent the Soviets from using the data to refine their missile trajectories.

The Ghost Rockets arrived on the world stage just one year after VE day, placing the neighboring countries of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark on high security alert with the intense angst also felt in Britain and the U.S. - for many confirming their worst fears, the Soviets as predicted, were hell bent on instigating another world war. But despite all of the sightings and intense investigations, by mid-1947 the Ghost Rockets left radar blips no more and it was the U.S. attaché’s final opinion that:

Regarding the alleged rockets over Sweden in 1946, the widespread press reports last summer were not based on available factual evidence; that it is very doubtful if any of the reported missiles landed in Sweden, and that while a few stray guided missiles may have passed over Sweden, the Swedes have as yet brought forth no tangible evidence, and still insist officially that there is none.

While it is possible that a few captured V-2’s or other Russian-launched guided missiles may have gone astray and landed in Baltic waters, it is not believed that any have landed in Sweden. However it is quite possible that a few guided missile may have passed over Swedish territory. The subject has in the past few months

been allowed to die a quiet death, and Swedish officials prefer to dismiss it as an unexplained press sensation.

Examining these 1946 events using the lens of forensic historical analysis unequivocally shows that the Ghost Rockets were in fact Rosetta's pilot project or as I will refer to it from now on, Phase One of the Rosetta Deception. Its purpose was to demonstrate the usefulness of deception operations during peace time while at the same time accomplishing two very specific goals. The first goal was psychological warfare that would portray Uncle Joe on the rampage in those countries on the western side of the iron curtain. The second goal was true deception, with the intended purpose of breaking the Soviet diplomatic code in order to read Uncle Joe's thoughts.

The supporting evidence for the deception will be the classified Secret and Top Secret paper trail left by those U.S. intelligence personnel who were on the front lines of the operation, not all of who were in on the deception. What that paper trail will show is an amazing magic show, the likes of which the world has never seen before and is unlikely to witness again.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Serial 22-S-47, Stockholm, Sweden. \(April 15, 1947\). U.S. naval Attaché, Personal Evaluation Rated A2.](#)

## CHAPTER 20

### Rockets in Flight

Backtracking our story to May, 1946 when the rockets first started flying over Scandinavia, let's examine the official declassified correspondence that documents these amazing events. The once Secret and Top Secret documentation is extensive and piecing together a discernible picture from the scattered clues they offer is challenging to say the least.

But first an important history lesson. During the timeframe of these events, the United States did not have the intelligence organizations that we know today. There was no CIA, no DIA, no NSA and no Department of Homeland Security. The World War 2 Office of Strategic Services (OSS) had been disbanded and in its place was a fledgling organization known as the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) that used a subordinate service called the Strategic Services Unit (SSU) to gather intelligence abroad. In addition, the U.S. relied on its foreign embassies and their military staff known as attachés to gather foreign intelligence from their embassy posts. The combined staff of U.S. diplomats and attachés was known as the American legation for that country. Other countries also had their own legations and attachés that would represent them abroad.

Each U.S. military service, at that time the Army and the Navy, would have representative attachés on the legation. The Army had military attachés (MA) that would report to the War Department Military Intelligence Division (MID), and the Navy had naval attachés (NA) that would report to the Chief of Naval Intelligence. There were no Air Force or Marine attachés as the U.S. Air Force was not yet in existence and the U.S. Marine Corps was subordinate to the Navy.

The U.S. attachés stationed in Stockholm, Sweden; Oslo, Norway; Helsinki, Finland; Copenhagen, Denmark; London, England; and Paris, France, all played very key roles in this story. For brevity, I will refer to them by their military service, legation city, and last name, for example, the naval attaché in Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston will be referred to simply as NA Stockholm Winston and the Army military attaché in Moscow, Russia, Robert C. Macon will be referred to as MA Moscow Macon. A list of the attachés with their full names is available in appendix X. Now back to our story.

On July 16, 1946 a classified message from MA Stockholm Kessler reported that the Swedish army staff was studying 300 to 400 rocket incidents and that six objects had been observed to explode in the air and fifty points of impact were observed but there was no evidence the rockets were radio controlled.<sup>1</sup>

Kessler elaborated that the Swedish Defense Research institute was studying rocket fragments but only small fragments were found and appear to be nonferrous. Kessler also said that Afton Bladet - a Swedish tabloid, had reported that the Russians established a research base with German scientists on Dago Island (modern day Hiiumaa Island), near Estonia, and there were two circular rocket courses, both with a radius of approximately 300 kilometers with rockets launched clockwise from Dago.

Kessler revealed that highly placed Swedish officials believed that the rockets were being launched by Russia either for its psychological effect as a “war of nerves” or for research purposes and that the Swedes were nervous about this information being released to the U.S. and Britain out of fear that the Soviets will scream “Western Bloc”. Sweden although neutral during WW2, now found itself in the unenviable political position of being strategically located between two world super powers and was afraid to pick a side.

President Truman was briefed on the rockets in a memo dated August 1, 1946 from Edwin Kennedy Wright on behalf of Hoyt Vandenberg, Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) with the subject line *Ghost Rockets over Scandinavia*.<sup>2</sup> The memo detailed that since May 25, 1946 there had been press reports of rockets over Sweden and that on July 19, 1946, two rockets were reported to have fallen in Norway. Both the Swedish and Norwegian governments imposed a news blackout. MA Stockholm Kessler “has confirmed these reports, and obtained additional but inconclusive information. Although ten such missiles have fallen within Sweden, the Swedish General Staff as of yet have been unable to reach firm conclusions based on the fragments recovered.”

The memo for the President then stated that the Director of Intelligence of the War Department General Staff, General Stephen J. Chamberlin, has concluded that:

- The missiles are of the V-1 type
- They carry no warhead, but have a small demolition charge for self-destruction

- They outrange the V-1, and if nonferrous they are carrying more fuel, and use a turbojet engine like the Germans were working on at the end of the war
- Characteristic noiselessness
- Course controlled by radio or preset-controls (turns and circular courses have been indicated)
- Launched from some Soviet controlled point in the vicinity of the Gulf of Finland

Since the Soviet Union has vast areas to experiment from, these rockets could have a political purpose:

- Intimidation of Sweden and Norway by proximity
- Intimidation of Great Britain by proximity
- Intimidation of the U.S. by demonstrating scientific intelligence the U.S. doesn't have

Amazingly, on July 13, 1946, brothers Joseph and Stewart Alsop wrote an article in the Washington Post on the Ghost Rockets including the detail that the rockets were set to self-destruct, information that the President of the United States was not made aware of until two weeks later. Someone in the War Department was leaking information to the press.

Vandenberg who drafted the President's memo and Chamberlin who provided the details were both members of the U.S. deception planning organization, subordinate to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, known as Joint Security Control (JSC); Chamberlin having just relieved Vandenberg as chief deception planner for the Army two months prior on June 19, 1946. Chamberlin who was the Army's Director of Intelligence was copied on all Ghost Rocket reports, providing him on behalf of Rosetta, a front row seat to how well the deception was unfolding.

---

<sup>1</sup> [From USMA Stockholm, Sweden to War Department for MILID, Nr. 1042 \(July 16, 1946\).](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Memorandum for the President \(August 1, 1946\), National Archives, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman's File, Admiral Leahy, 1942-48, Box 21.](#)

## CHAPTER 21

### Loop-de-Loop

In addition to Rosetta's Chamberlin and Vandenberg, another Joint Security Control member who was in the loop on the Ghost Rocket intelligence was General Clayton Bissell. Bissell's arrived at Joint Security Control (JSC) on February 7, 1944 when he replaced George V. Strong as G-2 (Director of Intelligence).<sup>1</sup>

Bissell's two year stint at JSC involved closely coordinating allied WW2 deception operations with his counterparts at the London Controlling Section. In the postwar period Bissell was replaced on JSC by Hoyt Vandenberg so he could assume the post of military attaché to Great Britain and soon found himself on the sending end of Ghost Rocket intelligence.

On August 16, 1946, a message from Bissell to the Commanding General for Air, General Carl Spaatz reported that Squadron Leader Heath and Captain Malone of the British War Department were in Sweden on other matters and were asked to investigate missiles as additional duty but did not discover anything more than was reported in the press.<sup>2</sup>

As it turns out, Squadron Leader Heath was a member of the "Rafwaffe", Flight 1426 - the British enemy aircraft evaluation unit.<sup>3</sup> When a Nazi launched V-1 prototype crashed in Sweden during the war, it was Heath who was sent to photograph the weapon.<sup>4</sup>

It was not happenstance that Heath was in Sweden when the Ghost Rockets were falling. Rosetta dispatched Heath to the scene hoping that Uncle Joe's intelligence would come to the same conclusion, that someone was conducting experiments with V-weapons. This was confirmed by an August 22, 1946 message from Bissell to Chamberlain summarizing recent London press reports including one that indicated that it was the Air Ministry that had dispatched Heath and Malone, specifically to investigate the Ghost Rockets. In addition it was leaked to the British press that the Swedes had requested radar support from England - a leak that then triggered the withdrawal of the radar request.

As the rockets flew overhead, the flurry of official correspondence continued. On August 16, 1946 a message from the Commanding General, U.S. Forces European Theater, Joseph T.

McNarney to MA Moscow Macon, stated that it was his opinion that the missile launches came from the former German missile launch site at Peenemünde, evidenced by the presence of a Russian technical commission there and although Peenemünde was destroyed during the war, repairs had been made. McNarney also thought it probable that 100 rockets of the V-2 type were involved and that all equipment would be dismantled and taken to Russia after the experimentation was done. McNarney requested evaluation reports on where in Russia the missiles would be reassembled.<sup>5</sup>

Close examination of both Kessler and McNarney's messages reveal two differences from what was reported to President Truman. First, although Kessler explicitly stated the rockets were not radio controlled, the opposite was briefed to Truman. Secondly, McNarney thought that the rockets were V-2s whereas Truman was told that they were V-1s.

On August 22, 1946, Colonel Richard P. Klocko of the War Department Intelligence Division sent a follow-up message to General McNarney asking on what basis McNarney opined that Peenemünde was the launch site?<sup>6</sup> Two days later, McNarney responded to Colonel Klocko, explaining the basis for Peenemünde:<sup>7</sup>

Swedish radar plots indicate Peenemünde and possible Baltic coastal areas. Dr. Gröttrup, German in charge of the V-2 in Bleicherode was identified at Peenemünde in June, reportedly in charge of experimentation. Notable increase in activity in Peenemünde in May and June and the ferry at Wolgast and branch rail line restored. V-2s brought from Nordhausen on special lab rail cars and to be launched from rail cars. Presence of Russian technical commission at Peenemünde for some time led by Colonel Maksim and Lieutenant Colonel Swentitski, apparently engaged in reparations and later removal to the USSR.

McNarney's response is interesting, leading with his strongest point - that Swedish radar data proves it. Where McNarney received the Swedish radar data is not known, nor does he reveal his other sources of information for why Peenemünde was suspect. The press was also being fed the same radar data story:

Mystery Rocket Source Indicated: Swedish radar installation at Vaxholm has determined that a number of the recent 'mystery rockets' came from the general

direction of Peenemünde, an experimental base in the Russia zone of Germany, a Stockholm dispatch to the Daily Telegraph said today.<sup>8</sup>

Peenemünde also appeared to be a foregone conclusion based on an August 29, 1946 memo to SSU in Heidelberg, Germany from future CIA Director Richard Helms, who was then at SSU in Washington. Helms did not ask for details of any other possible launch locations, just Peenemünde:

Request Berlin attempt to obtain following information on rocket development at Peenemünde: (1) Changes, if any, which have been made in V-1 and V-2 as used by the Germans. (2) Amount of production undertaken on V-1 and V-2. (3) New devices being developed particularly anti-aircraft rockets. (4) Fields of science emphasized in research. (5) Ratio of effort between research and development phase and actual production phase. (6) Any critical material shortages. (7) Any rocket firing from Peenemünde, its purpose, and techniques used. (8) Contents of rocket warhead at present, whether dummy load of sand, or concrete, measuring instruments, or actual explosive. (9) Whether standard table of organization and drill been worked out for firing.

However, Peenemünde was the least likely launch location because during WW2 it was largely destroyed by the Royal Air Force in August 1943<sup>9</sup>, prompting the Germans to move their V-2 production to an underground facility built by slave labor at the Mittelwerk near Nordhausen. McNarney's source alleged that the Soviets were moving the V-2s back to Peenemünde after repairs were made but history shows that this simply did not happen. In fact, Stalin had signed a secret order on May 13, 1946 ordering the transfer of all ballistic missile work and the deportation of thousands of scientists from Germany to Russia by year's end.

Caught up in this mass deportation which took place on October 22, 1946 under the cover name Operation Osoaviakhim<sup>10</sup> was the aforementioned Dr. Helmut Gröttrup, a V-2 engineer who served as Werner Von Braun's deputy for guidance, control, and telemetry at Peenemünde<sup>11</sup> but who was still at Bleicherode, some 600 KM from Peenemünde, when he and wife were forced to board the train for their new home in the Soviet Union.<sup>12</sup>

But McNarney's memorandum still promoted Russian launchings from Peenemünde:

There was no other German testing area where rockets could be launched into the sea, otherwise it would require a complete reconstruction of available German equipment for the Russian rail gauge and transshipment of V-2s and associated lab equipment and technicians to great distances inside Russia which would place them out of contact with research centers in Germany. Small scale experiments in Baltic area were possible but not likely and the figure of 100 V-2s although questionable was confirmed by two sources.

McNarney's two sources confirming 100 V-2s were off the mark by more than 50 percent. Although the Russians had rebuilt the Mittelwerk factory and resumed V-2 production, by April 1946 they had managed only to put together seven V-2 rockets of which only four were ready for testing and by the end of 1946, only forty two V-2s had been assembled using spare or manufactured parts.<sup>13</sup>

Uncle Joe's May 1946 decree also established a network of missile research and development facilities around Moscow and made the Soviet ballistic missile program the second highest priority project, the primary being the development of the Soviet A-bomb.<sup>14</sup> It would be in the Soviet Union and not occupied Germany that Soviet missile testing would be conducted and the assembled V-2s were test fired from Kapustin Yar in 1947,<sup>15</sup> not Peenemünde in 1946.

Uncle Joe's small arsenal of V-2s which would not even be tested until over a year later could not possibly have been responsible for the hundreds of Ghost Rocket sightings from May through August, 1946. Even the CIG's own Office of Research and Estimates (ORE) in an October 31, 1946<sup>16</sup> report stated that:

Guided Missiles: Ground to Ground. The U.S.S.R is not believed to be capable of carrying out advanced development and quantity production of radically new weapons of this type within the next ten years. However, by making full use of German facilities under Soviet control, the U.S.S.R is capable of attaining by 1950 quantity production of V-1 and V-2 missiles with increased ranges and some improvements in accuracy.

This was further confirmed by another CIA estimate that written from the hindsight of 1954 stated that:<sup>17</sup>

The estimated dates given for missile availability are the earliest probable years during which small quantities of missiles could have been produced and placed in the hands of trained personnel of one operational unit, thus constituting a limited capability for operational employment. These dates are based on the assumption that a concerted and continuous effort began in 1948.

A November, 1946 British Air Intelligence report also expressed skepticism that the Russians were behind the Ghost Rockets:<sup>18</sup>

It is interesting to note that, on interrogation of Germans who had been working for the Russians during the past months on guided control systems, and who escaped during the recent transfer to Russia, no information was forthcoming of work in any way connected with the Scandinavian observations.

If Uncle Joe was not launching rockets from Peenemünde or from anywhere else in 1946 but they were indeed flying as eyewitnesses claimed, where did they originate and who was behind them?

---

<sup>1</sup> Holt, T. (2004). *The deceivers: Allied military deception in the Second World War*. New York: Scribner. p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> [From USMA London, England sgd. Bissell to War Department for COMGENAIR, Nr. 70910 \(August 16, 1946\).](#)

<sup>3</sup> Skaarup, H. (2006). *RCAF War Prize Flights, German and Japanese Warbird Survivors*. Bloomington Indiana, iUniverse. p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Graham-Stewart M. (2009). *WARS, War, Art, Racism & Slavery*. p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> [From CGUSFET, Frankfurt, Germany sgd. McNarney to USMA Moscow, Russia, Nr. S-2074 \(August 16, 1946\).](#)

<sup>6</sup> [From WDGID/Collection Center for COMGENUSFET, Frankfurt, Germany, Nr. WAR 98230 \(August 22, 1946\).](#)

(Klocko, who later wrote his War College thesis on *The Impact of Guided Missiles on the U.S. Air Force*, coincidentally played a key role in forming the Air Force's own Signal Intelligence Agency, the U.S. Air Force Security Service in 1947 *Brief History from USAFSS to AIA - A Legacy More Than Half a Century Old Continues*. p. 1. Retrieved from <http://www.afisr.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-061130-022.pdf>).

<sup>7</sup> [From HQ USFET Frankfurt, sgd. McNarney to War Department for WDGID, Nr. S-2643 \(August 24, 1946\).](#)

<sup>8</sup> [\(1946, August 27\). Mystery Rocket Source Indicated. The Altoona Mirror \[Altoona, PA\]. p. 3.](#)

<sup>9</sup> Tsien, H.S. & Dryden, H.L. & Wattendorf, F.L. & Williams, F.W. & Zwicky, F. & Pickering, W.H. (1946, May). *Technical Intelligence Supplement: A Report of the AAF Scientific Advisory Group*. p. 48.

<sup>10</sup> Jackson, P. & Siegel, J. L. (eds.). (2005). *Intelligence and Statecraft: The Use and Limits of Intelligence in International Society*. Westport, Praeger. p. 186.

<sup>11</sup> Siddiqi, A. A. *Germans in Russia: Cold War, Technology Transfer, and National Identity*. *Osiris* 24, no. 1 (2009): p. 125.

<sup>12</sup> Siddiqi, A. A. *Germans in Russia: Cold War, Technology Transfer, and National Identity*. *Osiris* 24, no. 1 (2009): p. 127.

<sup>13</sup> Siddiqi, A. A. *Germans in Russia: Cold War, Technology Transfer, and National Identity*. *Osiris* 24, no. 1 (2009): p. 126.

<sup>14</sup> Siddiqi, A. A. *Germans in Russia: Cold War, Technology Transfer, and National Identity*. *Osiris* 24, no. 1 (2009): p. 126.

---

<sup>15</sup> Siddiqi, A. A. *Germans in Russia: Cold War, Technology Transfer, and National Identity*. *Osiris* 24, no. 1 (2009): p. 133.

<sup>16</sup> [Soviet Capabilities for the Development and Production of Certain Types of Weapons and Equipment, CIG, ORE 3/1 \(October 31, 1946\)](#).

<sup>17</sup> CIA. (1954, October). *Soviet Capabilities and Probable Programs in the Guided Missile Field*. National Intelligence Estimate Number 11-6-54. p. 8.

<sup>18</sup> APR40/2842. A.I.2 Paper 272/46. *Second Report of Investigation of Missile Activity over Scandinavia*. (November 1946).

## CHAPTER 22

### Who Wants to Know?

Making headlines around the world in late summer of 1946, the Ghost Rockets captured the attention of not only the inquisitive public but also American military leaders outside of the European theater. Everyone was curious as to what was flying over Scandinavia.

On August 19, 1946, a fact-finding inquiry from the Commanding General Pacific Air Command, Tokyo, Japan, General Ennis C. Whitehead was sent to the Commanding General of the Army Air Force, Carl Spaatz. Whitehead wanted information on the “Swedish Robot Weapon incidents”<sup>1</sup> asking “are they rockets or jets – V-1 or V-2 type? What bases were used? What radius of action obtained? Accuracy? Type of warhead?”

Whitehead, ignorant of what was flying over Sweden was seeking Spaatz’s enlightenment. Spaatz replied in a message dated the same day:

The objects appear to be guided missiles with turbo jet or ram jet engines, similar to an enlarged V-1. If flying at supersonic speed, the wings would be smaller and shorter than those on the V-1, probably resembling an A-9 missile. Peenemünde is the most likely source, but other possible launch areas or observation stations include the, the Porkkala Area of Finland, or the Aland Islands or Dago Islands off of Estonia. Missiles are launched from the north German coast in a northerly direction along the Baltic with a 700 mile radius reported at speeds definitely in excess of 100 miles per hour. The accuracy is not known, but use of long range control of direction and propulsion, long range homing on cities, and probable short range homing have been reported. Natural gas has been reportedly used as fuel, although multiple step rocket propulsion also have been employed. Self-destruction by explosion or burning charge seems to be indicated. V-3 and V-4 missiles have been reported in these tests, although the positive identification of V-3 and V-4 is not confirmed.

Spaatz's mishmash of information echoed General Chamberlin's assessment that made it in the August 1, 1946 presidential briefing. Spaatz along with General George C. McDonald of Joint Security Control were also copied on all rocket intelligence.

Of interest is Spaatz's mention of V-3 and V-4 rockets. Whereas the V-3 was a WW2 German supergun working on the multi-charge principle whereby secondary propellant charges were fired to add velocity to a projectile, no one knew exactly what the V-4 was.

An article in the August 23, 1946 Canberra Times, "Soviet Developing Secret War Weapons in German" cited German officials who claimed that "the Russians are also working on a V-4 rocket, which is very powerful", appearing to confirm Spaatz's information. A British report from July 6, 1946 described what a V-4 could possibly be:<sup>2</sup>

Several recent reports also suggest the possibility that the V-4 is in production. It is claimed that a range of 5,000 km will be achieved. Our experts suggest that there is nothing to justify the perfection of this missile at this time. However, the rocket is a trajectory weapon. One possibility is that the V-4 is the completed A-9, an assisted A-4/V-2, which at the end of its powered trajectory would go into a long glide and give a range of 2,000 miles.

This British report equated the unknown V-4 with the A-9 missile that Spaatz mentioned in his response to Whitehead. The A-9 was essentially a winged version of the V-2, the wings giving it a much longer range than the ballistic V-2.

All of this rocket speculation was turned on its head however by a message from MA Moscow Macon to General Chamberlin on August 19, 1946, stating that a Swedish Air Officer, Major Stig Wennerström, was in Moscow on an official visit for a Soviet airshow and had information to share on the rockets. As the Swedes were the ones under bombardment, all ears perked up to this inside Swedish military source:<sup>3</sup>

Wennerström revealed that 200 flying bombs had passed over Swedish territory traveling south to north, some on a zig-zag course. Radar plotting indicated that most came from Peenemünde, but some from the Soviet Baltic coastal area. Only one curved east towards Norway while all others curved west. The missiles are not V-1 but similar and slightly larger, are radio controlled, with no warhead except to

self-destruct. They have been seen as high as 1,000 and as low as 15 meters, travelling at 400 to 600 kilometers per hour and appeared to be under good control. The max plotted course was 1,000 kilometers and could have been longer but there was no Swedish plotting station in the far north. No reports of missiles over Finland and have probably fallen in the Bothnia Gulf.

Extensive work in Murmansk for some launching project and Soviet wide-spread aerial mapping of the Kola Peninsula for possible mining of uranium. The Soviets restored and are operating German underground experimental facility in the Harz Mountains near Nordhausen.

Macon then added that most launchings were from Peenemünde for experimental reasons (passing on what he had been told by General McNarney) and that the silence of the Soviet press coupled with continued launchings, even after all the world publicity, indicated that the Soviets were playing, a war of nerves.

Swedish Air Officer Wennerström's information also seemed to be in line with Vandenberg's August 1 memo to the president and with Spaatz's response to Whitehead, specifically that the rockets were more of the V-1 type than V-2, were radio controlled, self-destructed and were launched from a Soviet controlled area.

An August 26, 1946 follow up memo from MA Moscow Macon further revealed that Wennerström had not volunteered the information but was directly approached by members of the American Moscow legation. Wennerström refused to say specifically that the Russians were firing the rockets but gave the launch location as Peenemünde, the direction of their travel and categorically stated that they were projectiles and not meteors, all indications that they were of Russian origin. Wennerström also said that the Swedes had classified the bomb information as secret, that Swedish press statements were being controlled and that radar had been procured from the British.

These observations were complemented by an August 27, 1946 report from NA London Shelly who said that:

It is reliably reported that the Russians are firing salvoes of a long range form of the V-1 rocket weapon from the Island of Oesel (modern day Saaremaa Island), just

north of the Gulf of Riga. This is only 150 miles from Stockholm, and the range of these projectiles appears to be in some cases well over 600 miles. The three Scandinavian capitals are thus within easy range of Oesel. A further unconfirmed report states that similar batteries have been established near Petrozvodsk on Lake Onega, which is 600 miles from Narvik and 500 miles from Kirkenes.

Reports were also flowing in to Washington from the U.S. Legation in France where Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter, who would a year later replace Vandenberg as the first director of the newly born CIA, was playing a similar feedback role as Clayton Bissell was in London. NA Paris Hillenkoetter had been the naval attaché in Paris since July 31, 1946 after replacing Rear Admiral Hewlett Thebaud.

Thebaud, who was a wartime member of Joint Security Control as well as the Director of Naval Intelligence then assumed the role of naval attaché in Brussels, Belgium, where he would also serve in a feedback role for Rosetta.

On August 13, 1946, NA Paris Hillenkoetter submitted a *Report on Guided Missiles sent from Soviet Controlled Territories over Scandinavian Territories*, sourced from the French Government via their military attachés posted abroad. The title of the report itself reflected the Rosetta messaging that only the Soviets could be responsible.<sup>4</sup>

Hillenkoetter described how the Swedes were reserved on what the rockets were but the Finns leaned toward the meteor theory. Hillenkoetter also relayed the French belief that with the high number of reports in July “it is impossible to doubt that they are projectiles” and he included with his report a chart of alleged radar tracks that showed Peenemünde as the origin.

An August 20, 1946 message from MA Helsinki Warren to General Chamberlin stated that the Finnish Army Intelligence confirmed Chamberlin’s opinion that Peenemünde was the launching site. The short message doesn’t offer a source or basis for the concurrence.<sup>5</sup>

Up to this point all indicators from many different sources squarely pointed the finger at the Soviets as the rocket provocateurs and even pinpointed from where the missiles were being launched from. It sounded like clean-cut closed case. If only that were true.

Gautama Buddha once said that there are three things that cannot be long hidden: the sun, the moon and the truth. The truth in this story is that despite how horrible a dictator Uncle Joe was, he was not to blame for the Ghost Rockets over Scandinavia. It may have taken almost 70 years to unravel this lie, but the truth as Buddha proclaimed is indeed shining through.

---

<sup>1</sup> [From CG PACUSA Tokyo, Japan to War Department for CGAAF, Nr. A 97331 GV \(August 19, 1946\).](#)

<sup>2</sup> *Report of Suspected V-Weapons over the Baltic.* (July 6, 1946). FO 371/56951. UK Archives.

<sup>3</sup> [From MA Moscow, Russia, sgd. Macon to War Department for Chamberlin, Nr. MAX 50693 \(August 19, 1946\).](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Serial 39-S-46 from naval attaché Paris, France, Hillenkoetter. \(August 13, 1946\).](#)

<sup>5</sup> [From MA Helsinki, Finland sgd. Warren to War Department for MILID, Nr. 25 \(August 20, 1946\).](#)

## CHAPTER 23

### Press Field Day

The appearance of the Ghost Rockets over Scandinavia had the press scrambling to report on the latest dramatic sightings. This included the very sensational press report that a Ghost Rocket on August 12, 1946 allegedly crashed head-on into a Swedish military plane, killing the crew of three:<sup>1</sup>

Sweden declared an open season on unidentified rockets today as three airmen were reported killed in a head-on crash with one of the missiles. Government authorities prepared a nationwide ‘rocket-hunting’ program and alerted all military units, air bases and radar stations to be on the lookout for the cigar-shaped ‘ghost bombs.’

The newspaper Afton Bladet quoted ‘investigators’ as reporting that three fliers were killed yesterday when their military reconnaissance plane crashed into a rocket near Vaggeryd, in southern Sweden. The dispatch said radio contact with the plane was broken just before the crash and that the front of the ship was completely crushed by the impact.

A follow up news story a week later showed a photo of the plane’s mangled wreckage.<sup>2</sup> The only problem with this amazing mid-air collision however, was that there was no substance to the story as confirmed by researchers digging into Swedish secret archives<sup>3</sup> as well as by declassified memorandum that indicated that the Ghost Rockets caused no loss of life.<sup>4</sup> This false crash story was planted by Rosetta strictly for Uncle Joe’s benefit.

As to Sweden declaring open season on the rockets and tasking all of their forces to hunt them down – that also was a Rosetta lie. Four days after the alleged crash, an August 16, 1946 Intelligence report from NA Stockholm Winston reported that “Swedish press and public aroused, but Swedish Air Force officers still on summer leave, aircraft warning net not mobilized, and no attempts made to intercept missiles with jet fighters”.<sup>5</sup> Rosetta wanted the world to believe that Russian rockets were not only flying with impunity over Scandinavia but now had drawn some of the first casualties of the emerging Cold War.

On August 22, 1946, Clayton Bissell, acting in a Rosetta feedback role, reported to General Chamberlin the increased scope of the British press activity:

The Evening Standard's Norman Barrymaine, diplomatic correspondent, stated that Sweden was trying to solve the rocket puzzle after the first appeared late May over the town of Landskrona, when a rocket was observed to explode and produce four smaller rockets that continued on their course. General Doolittle now in Stockholm on private business will be consulted by the Swedish Government. Fragments of bombs found so far bear no markings. No lives lost. Swedish General Staff believe missiles fired from Peenemünde.<sup>6</sup>

General James Doolittle, a former war hero and Medal of Honor recipient and VP of Shell Union Oil Corporation was on an extended business world tour, hopping continents in the same B-25 he had used to bomb Tokyo. His travels took him to South America, northern Europe, Africa and then southern Europe before returning back to the U.S.<sup>7</sup>

Earlier in the year Doolittle addressed the first postwar MIT graduating class and almost in premonition of the Ghost Rockets stated that "pilotless, wingless, gyro-stabilized, rocket-propelled air weapons have already achieved speeds of around 2,500 miles an hour and we may anticipate that the air weapons of the future will also be radio-controlled and radar-directed".<sup>8</sup>

Doolittle's preannounced<sup>9</sup> arrival in Stockholm on August 20, 1946 was at Rosetta's behest, hoping that press articles on the Swedes consulting with U.S. officials would pique Soviet interest. Doolittle was probably put up to the task by close friend and fellow Rosetta member Hoyt Vandenberg who during WW2, served as Chief of Staff of the 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force, under Doolittle.

Rosetta planted the rumor of Doolittle's mission in the August 13, 1946 edition of the New York Times detailing that:<sup>10</sup>

There were persistent rumors that Sweden was going to, or already had, borrowed several complete radar outfits from Great Britain to obtain the quickest results. It is also believed that the United States' foremost long-distance bombing expert, Lieutenant General James H. Doolittle, who is now retired, is coming to Sweden to inspect the radar equipment, although the official explanation is that he is coming as a business man for the Shell Company.

Doolittle arrived in Stockholm on August 20, 1946 and the British radar technicians and equipment known as Task Force 196, were scheduled to arrive in Sweden two days later with an “open cover” story that they were training the Swedish Air Force on the use of radar, Sweden having just received their first Vampire jets. Instead Task Force 196 stood idly by at Heathrow airport waiting for an order to deploy which never came. The Swedish Prime Minister withdrew the request on August 21, 1946 on alleged political grounds after the task force’s deployment was leaked to the press.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to Doolittle, another well-known American to arrive in Sweden at the same time was David Sarnoff, President of RCA. Sarnoff whose RCA office at 30 Rockefeller Center in New York, only a hop skip away from William Stephenson’s British Security Coordination’s (BSC) office , was quoted saying after his trip to Stockholm: <sup>12</sup>

Radio and electronics have reached the point of development where they can influence the course of war, Mr. Sarnoff said, citing the reported ‘ghost bombs’ over Sweden and the flight of two pilotless Flying Fortresses from Hawaii to California under radio control from a mother ship.

‘It is frightening to recall’, he continued ‘that not a single V-2 rocket aimed at England during World War II was shot down.’

Mr. Sarnoff told of visiting Sweden recently and said he is convinced that the ‘ghost bombs’ are no myth but real missiles.

The simultaneous presence of these two prominent Americans in Stockholm was no coincidence. Both Doolittle and Sarnoff were playing an important role in Rosetta’s deception by keeping the Ghost Rocket mystery very much alive in the foreign as well as the American press. “National political leaders, high level diplomats, civil servants, businessmen, and news reporters often play starring roles in strategic deceptions.”<sup>13</sup>

On August 21, 1946, Sarnoff was interviewed by the Swedish press and was quoted saying that radar could easily track and identify the rockets. On the same day, Doolittle unofficially inquired of Swedish officials if radar was being used.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile Bissell passed on to Chamberlin what the London press was saying about the radar:

The Daily Express report by Guy Eden stated that British radar experts were sent to investigate, have reported to Whitehall and will return to Sweden with radar equipment. Sweden asked for the loan of radar and was granted.

Intelligence Section of the Air Ministry has reported that a news leak has occurred regarding radar units being requested by Sweden and sending of guided missile technicians. Source of leak not determined and British Foreign Office is concerned. Sweden has withdrawn radar and technician requests.

The source of the leak was made very clear by MA Moscow Macon who reported on August 26, 1946, confidential information relayed from the British Foreign Office through the Moscow British Charge D' Affaires, that the "British were going to leak the bomb information from London."<sup>15</sup>

Macon's message is highly revealing. The British themselves were going to leak to the press that they intended to send radar equipment to Sweden. In true BSC fashion, Rosetta would milk the radar request and withdrawal for all it was worth, also leaking information through the London press that the radar equipment would be delivered instead in January and was being sent specifically to track down the Ghost Rockets.<sup>16</sup> Rosetta wanted to manipulate the public's perception that the rockets were not British, otherwise it would obviate the need for radar equipment from the United Kingdom.

Doolittle and Sarnoff's presence in Stockholm was also for effect; if the Swedes were consulting prominent Americans to help solve the mystery then the obvious deduced conclusion was that the rockets were also not American. This left one world power to blame, the Soviet Union.

Uncle Joe on the other hand knew that he was not the one launching barrages of V-Weapons from occupied areas in Germany but since the press was reporting weapons research going on in the British zone of occupation, he would draw the conclusion Rosetta intended - that the British were the rocketeers.

Getting back to the news merry-go-round, Bissell reported to Chamberlin that "rockets are the number one talking point in Sweden. Swedish Government has asked the public to report all observations. Three days later, 300 reports were received and 500 reports were being evaluated".

Bissell and Chamberlin must have been delighted that Rosetta's publicity campaign had taken off with such a bang. The rocket stories created such a flurry of press activity that it became the number one topic of the day. William Stephenson would have been very proud that BSC's media manipulation techniques were being recycled with equal success.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> [\(1946, August 14\). Sweden Declares War on Rockets. \*Mansfield News Journal\*. p. 2.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Sweden Declares Open Season on Rocket Bombs. \*The Altoona Mirror \[Altoona PA.\]\*. p. 10.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Sweden Declares War on Rockets: Three Fliers Killed. \*The Evening Observer \[Dunkirk, N.Y.\]\*. p. 3.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Sweden Declares an Open Season on Mystery Rockets. \*The Hayward Review\*. p. 2.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Rocket Hunt On, Report 3 Killed. \*The Daily News \[Huntingdon, PA.\]\*. p. 1.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Sweden Alerts All Armed Forces as Rockets Kill Three. \*Oakland Tribune\*. p. 2.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Sweden Alerts Forces as Rocket Kills Trio. \*The Berkshire County Eagle \[Pittsfield, Mass.\]\*. p. 1.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Ghost Rocket Kills Three Swede Fliers. \*The Sandusky Register Star-News \[Sandusky, Ohio\]\*. p. 1.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Rocket Kills Swedish Fliers. \*Tucson Daily Citizen\*. p. 4.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Rocket Kills Three Airmen over Sweden. \*Winnipeg Free Press\*. p. 1.](#)  
[\(1946, August 14\). Three Swedish Fliers Killed by Rocket. \*The Yuma Daily Sun and Arizona Sentinel\*. p. 3.](#)  
<sup>2</sup> [\(1946, August 20\). Wreckage of a Swedish... \*Olean Times Herald\*. p. 2.](#)  
[\(1946, August 19\). After "Ghost" Rocket Hit Plane. \*The Altoona Mirror \[Altoona PA.\]\*. p. 4.](#)  
[\(1946, August 20\). After "Ghost" Rocket Hit Plane. \*The Daily Mail \[Hagerstown, MD.\]\*. p. 9.](#)  
<sup>3</sup> [Liljegren, A. Project 1946: The 'Ghost Rocket' Documents Released by the Swedish Defence Staff.](#)  
<sup>4</sup> Report 39-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston (August 30, 1946).  
<sup>5</sup> [Report 35-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston \(August 16, 1946\).](#)  
<sup>6</sup> [From USMA, London, England, sgd. Bissell to War Department for MILID, Nr. 70930 \(August 22, 1946\).](#)  
<sup>7</sup> [\(1946, April 14\). Doolittle in Venezuela. \*New York Times\*. p. 13.](#)  
[\(1946, September 4\). Doolittle Arrives in Cairo. \*New York Times\*. p. 5.](#)  
[\(1946, September 11\). Doolittle Arrives in Madrid. \*New York Times\*. p. 10.](#)  
<sup>8</sup> [\(1946, February 26\). Flight Soon at 1,000 Miles an Hour Forecast by Doolittle at M.I.T. \*New York Times\*. p. 30.](#)  
<sup>9</sup> [\(1946, August 13\). Swedes Use Radar In Fight On Missiles - Doolittle Believed Called In as Aide - Stockholm Studies Steps to End Violations. \*New York Times\*. p. 4.](#)  
<sup>10</sup> [\(1946, August 13\). Swedes Use Radar In Fight On Missiles - Doolittle Believed Called In as Aide - Stockholm Studies Steps to End Violations. \*New York Times\*. p. 4.](#)  
<sup>11</sup> Löf, S. (3/2002). *Svensk Flyghistorisk Tidskrift, Swedish Aviation Historical Society*.  
<sup>12</sup> [\(1946, October 1\). Sarnoff Predicts Weather Control and Delivery of the Mail by Radio. \*New York Times\*. p. 1.](#)  
<sup>13</sup> [Herbig, K. L. & Daniel, D. C. \(January 1981\). \*Battle of Wits: Synthesizing and Extrapolating from NPS Research on Strategic Military Deception\*. p. 18.](#)  
<sup>14</sup> Report 38-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston. (August 23, 1946).  
<sup>15</sup> From USMA, Moscow, Russian, sgd. Macon to War Department for MILID, Nr. 5790 (August 26, 1946).  
<sup>16</sup> Top Secret Letter from J. Thyme Herderson to Clement R. Attlee FO 371/56951 (August 26, 1946)

## CHAPTER 24

### Deception by Air

A common thread of the 1946 Ghost Rockets was a surplus of press coverage and eyewitness testimony tempered with a deplorable amount of tangible physical evidence. Eventually lumped in with similar “unexplainable” phenomenon like modern day UFO sightings, the Ghost Rockets were by mid-1947 already chalked up to a wave of public hysteria brought on by a case of emerging Cold War nerves. The truth of the matter is stranger than fiction.

The August 16, 23 and 30, 1946 intelligence reports from NA Stockholm Winston, are undoubtedly the most comprehensive non-Rosetta estimates of what was going on in Sweden during the Ghost Rocket period. Winston’s August 16, 1946 memo revealed that: <sup>1</sup>

No tangible evidence, yet Swedish Defense Staff insist they are rockets. Swedish press and public aroused, but Swedish Air Force officers still on summer leave, aircraft warning net not mobilized, and no attempts made to intercept missiles with jet fighters; improbable that rockets, if any are Russian or British, but possible that they are Swedish. Defense Staff evasive and their communique contradictory and confusing. Sweden may be experimenting with rockets, but it is concealing the fact and encouraging the belief that rockets of foreign origin are being launched over Sweden, with civilian observers reporting jet fighters, contrails, and meteors as rockets.

In the absence of any tangible evidence, this report is an attempt to formulate a hypothesis on their nature and origin.

No U.S. military or naval personnel in Sweden have seen any fragments, photographs, radar tracks, points of impact or other evidence of any kind that prove missiles have been seen over Swedish territory. The official Swedish military belief is that they are rockets.

Although sighting over Stockholm caused a great uproar in the Swedish press and considerable concern among the Swedish public, the Swedish Air Force has not

called back its officers from their summer leave, and the Swedish aircraft warning net has not been mobilized. Although sightings indicate objects flying at low altitude allows for Swedish jet-propelled interception, the apparent lack of concern and energy on the part of the military is peculiar.

Since the Swedish Defense Staff obviously wishes us to believe that the objects are rockets, yet is taking no defensive precautions, the various hypotheses are:

Case 1: Rockets are of Russian Origin – to pressure the Swedes in connection with the proposed Russian-Swedish trade agreement, or to frighten them away from any consideration of joining a Western Bloc. Or possibly to demonstrate a new weapon to counter our atom bomb demonstrations. This is not likely as the reported ranges would require a new propellant and far more efficient control system than the best German rockets, and therefore doubtful the Russians would risk having the rockets shot down at low altitude, giving away such secret technology.

Case 2: Rockets are of British Origin – British Assistant RAF Attaché stated that he believed the objects were rockets and also stated that he would like to ‘plant’ a false clue to worry the Russians, giving a purported course indicating that the rockets had been launched from Denmark or British-occupied territory. The British are extremely worried about the European situation and our demobilization and would like to keep us armed for the eventual blowup with the Russians. While the Swedish are unconcerned, the British are extremely worried and have offered radar technicians and equipment to Sweden.

Case 3: Rockets are of Swedish Origin – it is probable that Sweden, which recovered the first V-2 rocket and has personnel and resources capable of designing and producing rockets is engaged in development. What are being observed are Swedish rockets and the Swedish Defense Staff wishes to conceal the details of its own rockets. Since Sweden has no other proving ground than its own territory, it would be hard to conceal these rocket tests. The August meteor showers and jet airplanes might account for most of these reports, if it were not for the Defense Staff’s insistence that they believe part of the sightings are rockets. The Swedes report officially that these objects have been tracked both by radar and range-

finders, but their lack of action is extraordinary. No matter whether the reported objects are Swedish rockets, jet fighters, or meteoric showers, the Defense Staff is encouraging the belief that they are rockets and issuing evasive reports which are in many ways contradictory. Motives for this behavior could be to influence public opinion for increased defense funding, to alert the West against Russia expansionism, or because the Swedes know the British fear guided missiles and creating the suspicion that the Russians were launching rockets would be an inexpensive way to keep the British mobilized. The Swedish Defense Staff does not want to tell us what it knows but still will not discourage the rocket theory. This could be justified later to the Swedish public on the grounds of national security.

Winston was so perturbed by Swedish inaction in conjunction with the Swedes withholding information, that he made four additional emphatic points:

1. The Swedish Defense Staff know the origin of these missiles and are not worried about them
2. That if the missiles are real, they are of Swedish origin and under Swedish control
3. That the Swedish Defense Staff wishes to encourage the belief that there are Russian rockets over Sweden
4. That the Swedish Defense Staff will conceal any evidence of the true nature of the reported objects until it deems expedient to release the information

The report's final summary is the most revealing of all, offering up four possible theories:

1. The rockets are a combination of natural phenomena and aircraft sightings, and the reports are mostly imaginary and the result of public hysteria
2. The rockets are Swedish with the motive of experimentation or to produce a psychological result
3. The rockets are Russian
4. The rockets are of foreign origin other than Russia

Winston then states that there was no agreement even within his office on which possibility was most likely. NA Stockholm Wright believed theory one had a 50% probability, theory three a

40% probability, theory two a 10% probability and finally theory four a 0% probability. Winston himself assigned a 70% probability to theory one, a 20% probability to theory two, an 8% probability to theory three and a 2 % probability to theory four. A follow-up message from MA Stockholm Kessler stated that he favored theory one, with theories two, three, four as possible and of these, theory two had the strongest second place possibility.<sup>2</sup>

In summary, all three attachés found theory one the most likely - that the rockets were a combination of natural phenomena and aircraft sightings, and the reports were mostly imaginary and the result of public hysteria. All three attachés also found theory four to be the least likely, that the rockets were of foreign origin other than Russia. They only differed on which theory would make second or third place.

It is fascinating to me that theory four, which most closely encompasses the Rosetta deception, was the one voted least probable. Rosetta could be very proud that their well-crafted deception ensured that the evidence trail did not lead back to them, at least at that point in time. But by using modern forensic history tools that include access to declassified documents from British, American, Swedish and Russian archives, we can say unequivocally that the evidentiary trail leads directly to the master magicians of Rosetta.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Report 35-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston \(August 16, 1946\).](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Nr. 1079 from MA Stockholm, Sweden sgd. Kessler to War Department for MILID. \(August 20, 1946\).](#)

## CHAPTER 25

### Swedish Meatballs

In an August 23, 1946 follow up Secret memorandum with subject line “Sweden Guided Missiles”, NA Stockholm Winston, commented on what the “unofficial” Swedish Defense Staff sources were sharing with the Americans:

Swedish intelligence officers have passed information to U.S. intelligence officers both in Stockholm (known as Source 69) and in Moscow (Wennerström) which indicate an attempt to ‘plant’ the impression that large numbers of Russian-launched rockets have passed over Sweden, giving detail to infer that they are extremely efficient guided missiles. The Swedish intelligence officer who ‘planted’ this information in Moscow (Wennerström) also intimated that Russian uranium mining activities and launching sites were being developed, giving the implication of atomic warfare with radio-controlled guided missiles.

In the same memorandum Winston also reveals what the “official” Swedish Defense Staff had revealed regarding radar tracking of the rockets:

Swedish Defense Staff reports that longest radar track, unsubstantiated by visual sighting, is only 4,500 meters, conflicting with previous announcements, while Swedish intelligence officers tell M/A Moscow and SSU Stockholm that radar tracks show that source as Peenemünde

4,500 meters – barely three miles – is insufficient to determine the direction of origin of any aerial object. Yet the Defense Staff’s spokesman, Major Ahlgren, stated in a report to the press on August 7 that it was possible to determine the course of these objects in some cases as far as 1,000 kilometers, and that their course could be followed by radar. Another official Swedish source stated that the Swedes possess radar tracings indicating that the rockets were fired from either Peenemünde or the peninsula of Hela, i.e., from Russian territory.

The most revealing part of this memo is that the Swedish radar data which had been lauded by Hillenkoetter in Paris, McNarney in Germany, the Swedish press, and the Swedish Defense Staff, simply did not exist. While we could momentarily excuse Hillenkoetter, McNarney and the press who would have sourced the radar data second hand, the same could not be said about the Swedish Defense Staff itself.

While the Swedish unofficial sources like Wennerström in Moscow and Source 69 in Stockholm were promoting long range radar tracking, the Defense staff members like Ahlgren were embarrassingly admitting that this radar data consisted of just a single 4,500 meter track. In other words, while the unofficial Swedish Defense sources were promoting the outlandish and spectacular nature of the rockets, the official Swedish Defense sources who were much more subdued, had little to no evidence to substantiate these outlandish claims.

Winston pointed out these contradictions in the same memorandum by stating:

From the foregoing it can be seen that, while the Swedish Defense Staff attempts to avoid releasing any definite details regarding the reported rockets, it also does not deny their existence. In addition, it permits the development of a rocket psychosis by the Swedish press and among the Swedish people, without taking positive action to intercept and identify the source and nature of the reported missiles.

Keeping their inside knowledge of the nonexistent radar data to themselves, Ahlgren and his cohorts did nothing to stop the press from running with the more sensational stories. Winston then advanced the following theories for the very peculiar Swedish behavior:

1. That the Swedish Defense Staff wished to alarm the Swedes into approval of increased defense appropriation (a theory which Winston did not consider likely).
2. That the Swedish Defense Staff wished to alert the West against the Russian menace to keep Britain mobilized and to keep the U.S. from demobilizing.

Winston's memo is significant because it provides a very detailed assessment of the then current Ghost Rocket intelligence while also summarizing very nicely his condemning accusations against the Swedes:

That the Swedish Defense Staff permitted the development of a rocket psychosis in the press, by inaction and inference, in order to keep the U.S. and Great Britain alerted and to delay their demobilization.

That Swedish intelligence officers, either independently or with the connivance of the Defense Staff, 'planted' detailed information intended to convince the U.S. that the rocket reports were factual.

That the Swedish Defense Staff, upon learning of the U.S. ultimatum to Yugoslavia and the explosive situation in the Near East, became apprehensive that the situation was getting out of control, and that the rocket hysteria which they had permitted to develop would be identified by the UN as a contributing factor to any resulting hostilities, with serious consequences for Sweden such as the refusal to admit Sweden to the UN, as a trouble-making nation which precipitated hostilities by encouraging a rocket hoax that had promoted ill-will between Russia and the U.S.

That the Swedish Defense Staff, noting the growing concern and criticism in the U.S. press of Swedish inaction, on August 22, 1946 initiated a hedging action as an alibi which could later be substantiated, by officially asking that the shipment of radar equipment from the U.S. be expedited, implying unofficially that it was needed to search for the reported rockets.

That the Swedish Defense Staff belatedly announced for the first time, and then only under pressure of critical events in international relations, that it was experimenting with rockets, and that the experiments had been 'going on for quite a long time,' and that the Swedish Defense Staff issued this announcement as a covering action, deliberately withholding it earlier in order to encourage the development of a rocket psychosis which would direct U.S. suspicion at Russia.

That the Swedish Prime Minister's statement in the press on August 14 was either deliberately designed to give credence to the reports of foreign rockets over Sweden, or that it was deliberately distorted to give this impression.

That the attitude of the Swedish Defense Staff in this matter has been deceitful, evasive, and deliberately misleading, with the object of giving the impression to the government of the United States that Russian rockets had been fired across Sweden.

That the Swedish government has deliberately withheld any evidence which would confirm or disprove the reported rocket sightings, and is now trying to cover up its actions through fear of the consequences.

Winston's unyielding indictment of Swedish complicity is compelling, but was this really just a Cold War game being played by the Swedes, one that pitted East against West, or was there something more to their deliberate lies, evasiveness and lack of cooperation?

## CHAPTER 26

### Lies and Consequences

On August 9, 1946, Dragomir Zecevic, flying a Yak-3 of the Yugoslav Air Force shot down a U.S. Army Air Force C-47A transport over Ljubljana, Yugoslavia and the entire crew was taken prisoner. Ten days later, Vladimir Vodopivec, also flying a Yak-3 of the Yugoslav Air Force shot down another U.S. Army Air Force C-47 transport over Bled, Yugoslavia, but this time there were no survivors.

On August 21, 1946, the Americans sent a 48 hour ultimatum to Yugoslavia demanding satisfaction and the return of prisoners. To emphasize that the Americans meant business, Strategic Air Command sent six B-29s officially described as “nuclear bombers” to Europe which made daily flights hugging the borders of Russia and Yugoslavia.<sup>1</sup> Tensions reached an all-time high between Marshall Tito’s regime, allied with the Soviets, and the Americans who were determined not to let the provocations go unpunished.<sup>2</sup> Just before the ultimatum deadline expired, Tito backed down and released the crew.<sup>3</sup>

On August 24, 1946, MA Stockholm Kessler sent a message to General Chamberlin that “the situation on the spook rockets was developing rapidly with the U.S. ultimatum to Yugoslavia the possible impetus.”<sup>4</sup> Kessler advanced the theory that the rockets were an:

...unintentional hoax that was exploited by the Swedish Defense Staff to justify an increase in their defense budget and also to alert the West against the East. The rapidly deteriorating East – West relations however placed Sweden in the dangerous position of being blamed for contributing to this breakdown. Kessler believed that Sweden naturally would like to cover its tracks if this was true.

He then elaborated that the latest developments after the Yugoslav ultimatum announcement may support the hoax theory:

The Swedish Air Force requested from the Americans six SCR-615 radar sets for tracking rockets which would allow the Swedes to claim they really wanted to solve the mystery. In addition, the Swedish Royal Air Force announced to the press that

the Swedish Company BOFORS had been developing rockets for some time which could account for some of the sightings.

On August 23, 1946 the Press suddenly got 'realistic' and published two rocket reports with full immediate explanations – a meteorological balloon that exploded and a magpie that fell on an electrical wire – whereas previously these would have been left as unexplained. Cannot say that the Swedes lied to the U.S., but they also did nothing to publically allay the missile fears.

Kessler then passed on the same information that Winston had earlier: that unofficial Swedish Defense Staff sources including an informant, known only as Source 69, told a SSU officer that Sweden had radar tracks proving that the rockets came from Soviet controlled areas and also that a highly placed member of the Swedish Air Force indicated that the rockets originated from Russian territory.

Kessler's subsequent commentary is insightful. As both releases took place prior to the Yugoslav ultimatum, Kessler believed that Wennerström's information may have been "a plant, or a personal opinion, or may have been the facts, but information from source 69 is either a plant or the facts." Kessler then expressed doubts that either source was truthful as that would render the earlier official Swedish statements that there was no rocket evidence as untrue. If the Swedish unofficial sources were to be believed than that meant the official Swedish sources were lying. The Swedes could not have their cake and eat it too.

If the unofficial sources however were to change their story, Kessler reasoned, then his hoax theory was plausible. If the sources stuck to their guns, then it was possible that Sweden was playing a dangerous political game of trying to "ride two horses, continuing to contribute to deterioration of great power relations to get the Russian Bear off Sweden's neck."

Little did Kessler know that the two Swedish unofficial sources were indeed plants and their rumor mongering was intentional, just as Rosetta planned. These Cold War lies however had real consequences - elevating the risk of triggering a hot war. With the recent crisis in Yugoslavia creating a tense atmosphere that could lead to a real fight, Rosetta's rhetoric had to be toned down. This is reflected in Truman's second presidential briefing where Uncle Joe's war of nerves was now watered down to scientific experimentation and also in a separate August 24, 1946

Vandenberg briefing to the President where the possibility of impending war was discussed:<sup>5</sup>  
“During the past two weeks there has been a series of development which suggest that some consideration should be given to the possibility of near-term Soviet military action.”

Vandenberg then enumerates all the recent events, from Yugoslavia shooting down the two American planes to Soviet military troop movements to the likelihood of Russia having an atomic bomb. Completely absent from the lengthy memo to President Truman is any mention of the rocket activity over Scandinavia.

---

<sup>1</sup> Keeney, L. Douglas. (2011). *15 minutes : General Curtis LeMay and the countdown to nuclear annihilation*. New York :St. Martin's Press, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> [\(1946, August 23\). The Courier-Mail \[Brisbane, Qld.\]. p. 1.](#)

<sup>3</sup> (1946, August 22). Tito Releases U.S. Fliers. *Prescott Evening Courier*. P. 1.

<sup>4</sup> [Nr. 1083 from USMA Stockholm sgd. Kessler to War Department for MILID. \(August 24, 1946\).](#)

<sup>5</sup> [National Archives, Truman Library, CIG Memorandum to Truman \(August 24, 1946\).](#)

## CHAPTER 27

### Radar No-Go

With the Yugoslav crisis causing war sabers to rattle, the Stockholm attachés felt the urgent need to get the bottom of the Ghost Rocket mystery once and for all. On August 26, 1946, NA Stockholm Winston and MA Stockholm Connelly interviewed Major Nils Ahlgren of the Swedish Defense Staff to find out first-hand what the Swedes knew.

Ahlgren opened up the conversation by saying that about 500 reports had been received by the Defense Staff to date, and that 50% of those were light phenomena and 10% were description of cigar-shaped objects, mostly passing at an altitude of 100-200 meters. Ahlgren then showed the attachés a clipping from a Swedish newspaper on the rockets and said that “the British say they are self-destroying rockets launched by the Russians. What do you think?”

The flabbergasted attachés looked at each other in disbelief before firing back at Ahlgren. “What do we think? What do YOU think?” Ahlgren’s response was equally dumbfounding. “I begin to wonder very much about these reports. I can’t understand it.”

This awkward scene is important to analyze. Here was the official Swedish Defense Staff spokesperson who had at his fingertips all of the rocket reports, all of the alleged rocket radar data and all physical rocket evidence that may have been recovered and yet all he could manage to say was how clueless he was on the whole subject. The question and answer session that ensued was no less awkward.

When Ahlgren was asked why if the rockets fly so low don’t the Swedes just shoot one down, he responded that only a single Swedish pilot had seen one. But given that Ahlgren just reported that the Swedes had in their possession over 500 reported sightings, it seems improbable that all but one were ground-based observations.

As it turned out, the single Swedish pilot lucky enough to have seen a Ghost Rocket from the air was the already suspect unofficial Swedish source: Stig Wennerström. While at the Tushino airshow in Moscow, Wennerström revealed to a foreign attaché that “bombs have been observed from the ground and a few by airmen whilst in flight. He himself had seen one whilst he was flying

over Sweden and he estimated the speed of the bomb at 400-600 kilometers per hour.” Wennerström’s statement both contradicted Ahlgren’s and also implicated himself as the single aerial witness.<sup>1</sup>

When asked why the Swedes didn’t shoot them down with anti-aircraft guns, Ahlgren’s response was just as disingenuous: “We can’t go shooting all over the country.” For a country that collectively had been brought to the point of mass hysteria by the sensational rocket press reports, Ahlgren’s answer was simply ridiculous. How could the Swedes NOT defend themselves if an arsenal of real airborne objects were violating Swedish airspace?

When asked what about employing radar to track the rockets, Ahlgren responded that “radar wouldn’t be much help as we couldn’t get enough radar sets.” When Winston reminded Ahlgren that the U.S. was sending six radar sets and the British were also providing some, Ahlgren responded that “it isn’t enough to cover all of Sweden.” Winston not relenting, shot back “Isn’t it enough to cover your south and east coasts?” to which Ahlgren again evaded “Oh no, not nearly enough.”

Winston, feeling irritated at this point asked “Don’t you think you could determine the direction, altitude, speed, course, and origin of any aerial object that crosses your coast from Malmö to Gävle with that many radar sets?” Ahlgren’s response: “No I don’t believe it is possible.”

Ahlgren then countered with his own question “Don’t you think it’s possible that the rockets come from long range, probably two-stage or three-stage rockets?” Winston not taken off guard, countered sarcastically “not without dropping fragments which could be recovered, and not without sound, as reported, and not in horizontal flight at 300 meters altitude.” Ahlgren evidently saw no merit in either shooting down the intruders violating Swedish sovereign airspace nor trying to track them down on radar.

When Winston asked to see any radar tracks Ahlgren *did* have, the Swede drew on a piece of paper a straight line that then curved counterclockwise to a 90 degree angle, stating that the speed of this rocket was 843 miles per hour. When Winston asked how long the rocket was tracked, Ahlgren stuttered “Why – uh – just a minute”, then appearing flustered, Ahlgren excused himself and left the room to confer with another Swede in the next room. Winston noted

that Ahlgren had sensed the attaché's skepticism that a rocket traveling 843 miles per hour could make such a right angle turn. Ahlgren returned to the room after five minutes with a revised answer: "You see, we could only follow it for a few seconds at which point we lost it."

The Swede from the next room then walked in and handed Winston two alleged radar tracks. When asked if these tracks were confirmed visually, Ahlgren responded "No, one was at night and for the other it was too cloudy." Winston became suspicious that the Swedes introduced this new radar evidence only after he expressed skepticism about Ahlgren's initial hand-drawn radar track.

Winston's overall assessment of Ahlgren's interview was less than flattering:

Major Ahlgren's statements are obviously being directed by higher authority which limits what he can say and he is reflecting the attitude of skepticism first noted in the Swedish press on August 22. Ahlgren appears to realize that he is in an awkward position and does not relish it.

In the same report, Winston relayed information from the local SSU representative in Stockholm who had interviewed Colonel Curt Kempff, the senior Swedish Army Intelligence Officer in Stockholm. Kempff told his SSU contact that he still believed the rockets were Russian, basing his beliefs on the single Swedish pilot observation (Wennerström) and the radar data which he had reviewed, one track indicating the source as Ösel and the other as Peenemünde, both tracks following a counterclockwise course. Kempff admitted that he had no other proof to base his beliefs on than that.

Just five days before Ahlgren was interviewed by the American attachés, the NY Times had reported that General David Sarnoff and General James Doolittle had arrived in Stockholm independently of each other and that the Chief of the Swedish Defense Staff, Col. C.R.S. Kempff was quoted saying that "he was extremely interested in asking the two generals' advice and, if possible, would place all available reports before them." Based on what Kempff told his SSU contact, this would amount to a whole lot of nothing – a single aviator report from a suspect witness and two alleged radar tracks.

Winston believed that the two radar tracks Kempff mentioned were the same that he was provided in his meeting with Ahlgren but he then pointed out a major inconsistency in the

provided radar data - their counter-clockwise trajectories did not match the clockwise trajectories that were provided by NA Paris Hillenkoetter on August 13, 1946.

If you are confused by all of these contradicting Swedish Defense Staff statements, so were Winston and Connelly. Winston's pointed skepticism is summarized in his statement that:

Copies of reports from European military and naval attaches available to this office indicate that without exception they are of the opinion that the Russians are launching guided missiles from Peenemünde which pass over Sweden.

M.A. Moscow Macon received his information from a Swedish intelligence officer in Moscow (Wennerström). NA Paris Hillenkoetter quotes French military attachés as saying that it is impossible to doubt the evidence of these projectiles, and forwards a chart of their trajectories from Peenemünde over Sweden.

This office wishes to call attention to the fact that all of these reports are based on conjecture and are not substantiated by any evidence whatsoever.”

To make sense of this hall of mirrors it is important that you understand that not all of the attachés on the frontlines of the Ghost Rockets were in on the deception. Bissell in London and Hillenkoetter in Paris were, whereas Macon in Moscow as well as Winston, Wright and Connelly in Stockholm were definitely not based on their documented sincere desire to get at the truth. However their lengthy memorandums provided General Chamberlin with important feedback data on how well the deception was progressing. Like the directors of a play, Chamberlin and his Rosetta cohorts could make necessary adjustments behind the scenes, out of the view of their audience, and the show would go on unaffected.

The deception planners did not worry too much that their zealous attachés were documenting the deception as it was all done through classified correspondence that would not see the public light of day until many decades later. What is astounding to me however, is how historians have glossed over this comprehensive documentation that is so relevant to the inception of the Cold War.

---

<sup>1</sup> FO 371/56951 C659365. British military attaché Moscow to Roberts. (August 29, 1946).

## CHAPTER 28

### A Spy Steps into the Cold

It is beyond doubt that the Swedes were deeply involved in the Ghost Rocket deception, but for what purpose? The Stockholm attachés asked themselves the same question and even advanced a number of their own theories for the strange Swedish behavior - from pitting East against West, to preventing the British from demobilizing, to hiding their own rocket experiments.

Regardless of reason, just based on Winston's three detailed memorandums we could easily blame the Swedish Defense Staff for initiating and promoting the rocket disinformation campaign. But one puzzle piece doesn't fit this explanation - Major Stig Wennerström, the Swedish Intelligence officer that was planting rocket disinformation in Moscow.

Some seventeen years later, in 1963, as the now Colonel Stig Wennerström sat in police custody, accused of being a Soviet spy, Wennerström revealed that he had been working on behalf of the Soviets for 15 years after being recruited by the GRU in 1948. During this time he had leaked not only Swedish air defense plans but the entire Saab Draken fighter jet project to the Soviet Union. It was during his lengthy interrogation that the details of his earlier 1946 visit to the Tushino Air Show in Moscow spilled out. What was shocking about his revelation was who Wennerström received his first spying mission from:<sup>1</sup>

In 1946, the (Swedish) Air Force received an invitation-the first of its kind-to send its own representative to a Russian air display outside Moscow at which the new Russian jet aircraft would be demonstrated. Wennerström had had something to do with this business in its initial stages-it was his good friend, Lieutenant Colonel Rybachenkov of the Soviet Embassy who arranged the invitation-and it was he who was picked to attend on behalf of the Air Force.

It was at the August 19, 1946 Soviet Air Show at Tushino that the first Soviet jet fighter, the Mig-9 made its debut. Also making his debut was Wennerström, not as a pilot but as a spy, and not on behalf of the Russians:

Sometime in the summer of 1946, before he attended the air display in Moscow, Wennerström was invited to his friend's the American air attaché. Among the guests was someone in civilian clothes whom Wennerström did not know, but this was soon put right when the man in civilian clothes introduced himself as an American intelligence service man and started telling Wennerström what the Gehlen's organizational papers said about him.

The Gehlen organization was comprised of remnants of German intelligence, led by General Reinhardt Gehlen, former head of German intelligence on the Eastern Front. After the war, Gehlen's people were put to work by the Americans against the Soviet Union under Operation Rusty.

Gehlen, his documents, and his personnel were moved to the United States for a time and placed under General Chamberlin's control.<sup>2</sup> On July 3, 1946, Chamberlin sent a Top Secret Eyes Only message to General Sibert informing him that "being prepared for air dispatch are approximately 20 cases of Gehlen's Order of Battle and personalities files".<sup>3</sup> It would be from this cache of documents that the Americans would identify Wennerström as their man for the job.

Back to Wennerström's account of his mission to Moscow and the mysterious American intelligence agent who approached him: "the American gave it as his opinion that anyone who had helped Germany might as well help the United States, since in both cases it was the Soviet Union the whole thing was about":<sup>4</sup>

The end of the conversation was that Wennerström was given a mission to carry out, of what nature does not appear from the published records. When he went to Moscow to attend the air display, he travelled via Leningrad and there attended to whatever it was the American intelligence service man wanted.

This was a solitary episode; Wennerström says he did not meet the man except on this single occasion at the air attaché's party and that he had no further contact with the American intelligence for the next two years. But when it began to get about in 1948 that he was to be posted permanently to Moscow, he half expected that he would hear more from the American intelligence services.

Another documented source tells the same spy recruitment tale but with some additional detail:<sup>5</sup>

In 1946, after the Swedes had shown the Russian air attaché and others some of the first Swedish jet planes, the Russians reciprocated by agreeing to invite a Swedish officer to attend a Soviet air show outside Moscow at which the Russians would display some of their first jets. Wennerström received the assignment.

Wennerström told his interrogators after his arrest in 1963 that shortly before he left for the Soviet Union he was approached in Stockholm by a man dressed in civilian clothes, whom he took to be a member of American Intelligence, and who told him that his name had been turned up by the Americans in captured files of the so-called Gehlen organization... in which he was listed as a valuable contact.

Next, the agent, by Wennerström's account obviously aware of his coming trip to the Soviet Union, remarked on the opportunity he would have, as a neutral, to move about with comparative freedom, and proposed that he agree to mail a certain parcel in Leningrad on his way to Moscow. Wennerström told his interrogators that he accepted the assignment and mailed the parcel – which he understood to contain radio tubes, or some sort of equipment that might be used in a clandestine radio transmitter – without difficulty. On his return to Stockholm, he said, he had no further contact with the presumed American agent, and his close relations with both the American and the Soviet embassies continued pretty much as before.

Was mailing a simple parcel in Leningrad all that Wennerström's mission entailed? This explanation seemed improbable enough that the author of *An Agent in Place*, Thomas Whiteside, commented:<sup>6</sup>

In any case, most sources, inside and outside the Pentagon, agree that, whether or not Wennerström actually was approached by an American agent in Stockholm in 1946, his story of his American Intelligence mission to Leningrad is, at best, a dubious one, and may very well have been part of an attempt to throw dust in the eyes of his interrogators. Such a mission, these sources say, would have been

contrary to every security practice of American Intelligence. ‘If you wanted to get a parcel of, say, radio tubes to an agent in the Soviet Union in 1946, or at any other time, the last thing you would ever do was to use a neutral as a courier’, a man in this business said a while ago. ‘You would never expose an agent to the dangers involved in such an operation, and you certainly wouldn’t use a neutral like Wennerström, because you would have no control over him. In this business, enough thought goes into just the mailing of a single letter to one of your assets [contacts] abroad to make the kind of cowboy approach suggested by Wennerström’s account highly improbable. And there are other circumstances to consider. Wennerström said he mailed the parcel in Leningrad to the person to whom it was addressed. There couldn’t be a more effective way of exposing an operation. To mail a parcel in any of the major cities in the Soviet Union, including Leningrad, in 1946, you had to take it to a post office and identify yourself to a postal clerk before it would be accepted. The security police would have had agents at the Leningrad post office, and such agents were always on the lookout for foreigners. In those days, there were still anti-Soviet partisans in the Baltic woods. In Leningrad then you would probably also have to open up any parcel you wanted to mail, and show the postal people the contents. And even if you did somehow succeed in mailing your parcel, the chances were that it would never arrive. People everywhere in the Soviet Union were extremely poor then, and the pilferage in the mails were terrible. In short, sending a Wennerström into the Soviet Union on such a mission at that time would only make sense only if the recipient of the parcel were someone you wanted to get rid of.

Whiteside astutely observed that Wennerström’s account of his mission to Leningrad didn’t add up, confirmed by Whiteside’s American intelligence contacts in the Pentagon. Although Wennerström as a secret parcel courier did not make any sense, what if his mission was to courier information instead? This would obviate the dangerousness just described. It is far more plausible that Wennerström’s assignment on behalf of the Americans was to plant disinformation on the Ghost Rockets, as documented by the naval attachés.

In addition, Wennerström could on play both sides of the intelligence fence, telling the American, Italian, and British legations in Moscow that the Ghost Rockets were of Russian origin and telling the Russians, who were just as eager for fresh rocket intelligence, that the Ghost Rockets were of British origin. The rationale for his double play will become clearer later in this story.

Wennerström did not have to seek out the unsuspecting foreign legations in Moscow, they would find him, desperate for first hand intelligence on what was going on in Sweden. It is not clear whether Wennerström passed his information to his target audience at the Tushino Air Show itself or at a party at the American or some other embassy.

Wennerström was always a highly sought after guest whether he had intelligence to share or not as he was “very much at ease in diplomatic circles especially those that carried on late into the night at social events where his gift of small talk made him a desired invitee, and he had an open door policy at both the German and the Russian embassies in Stockholm”. It was this close contact with the Russians that secured his 1946 Moscow air show invitation to begin with.<sup>7</sup>

Regardless of the transfer setting, it is a documented fact that Wennerström passed on disinformation on the Ghost Rockets as an “insider” of the Swedish military – information that would soon become suspect – a layer of deception peeled away by those close to the deception but not publicly revealed until these once secret memorandum had been declassified.

Wennerström’s disinformation mission to Moscow was on behalf of Rosetta and not the Swedish Defense staff who were also being controlled in the same deception operation. The mission was ultimately successful as in Washington, Generals Chamberlin and Vandenberg filtered out the doubts advanced by the U.S. attachés and cherry picked just what they wanted President Truman to hear – that a key Swedish Intelligence officer in Moscow claimed that rockets were being launched by the Russians from Peenemünde.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ronblöm, H. K. (1965). *The Spy without a Country*. New York: Coward McCann. p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Finnegan, J. P. & Danysh, R. (1998). *Military Intelligence*. Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army. p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> From Chamberlin to Sibert. (July 3, 1946).

<sup>4</sup> Ronblöm, H. K. (1965). *The Spy without a Country*. New York: Coward McCann. pp. 64-66.

<sup>5</sup> Ronblöm, H. K. (1965). *The Spy without a Country*. New York: Coward McCann. p. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Whiteside, T. (1966). *An Agent in Place*. New York: Viking. p. 109.

---

<sup>7</sup> Whiteside, T. (1966). *An Agent in Place*. New York: Viking. p. 61.

## CHAPTER 29

### Just White Lies

President Truman was brought up-to-date on the Scandinavian situation in late August 1946. A memo dated August 22<sup>1</sup>, but not delivered until August 23, from DCI Hoyt Vandenberg to President Truman reported that the CIG has now concluded that the weight of evidence pointed to Peenemünde as the originating launch site:

Although it was believed Peenemünde had been disassembled and sent to the USSR, General McNarney reported that it was still operational. U.S. Military Attaché Moscow, Robert C. Macon had been told by a 'key Swedish Air Officer' that radar course-plotting had led to the conclusion that Peenemünde was the launch site. The CIG speculated that the missiles were extended-range developments of the V-1 being aimed for the Gulf of Bothnia for test purposes and did not overfly Swedish territory specifically for intimidation; but self-destructed by small demolition charge or burning.

SSU source informed that a Soviet ship is reporting to a shore station the passage of these missiles from Peenemünde over the Baltic. The Leopodville radio reported in July that the Soviets warned ships to not pass certain parts of the Baltic and the death penalty to sailors who disclosed any phenomenon seen.

This SSU source is detailed in an August 13, 1946 message from MA Oslo Rayens to General Chamberlin:<sup>2</sup>

Ship in the North Baltic has been transmitting messages in Russian code to a Russian shore station indicating that the mission of the ship was to report on flight of rocket bombers being launched from Peenemünde and aimed over north Baltic and north Finland. Foregoing from very reliable source who would not disclose individuals or nation that had broken the code. The coded message also said that the rockets seen over Norway and Sweden were only those not on course.

A follow up message from MA Oslo Rayens to Chamberlain indicated that it was Denmark that had broken the Russian code.<sup>3</sup> But given that Peenemünde was inactive at the time and the Russians already under order to execute Operation Osoaviakhim, it simply doesn't make sense the Russians would be transmitting any encoded messages related to rocket launches from Peenemünde.

A more likely explanation is that the alleged ship message was part of Rosetta's deception plan – with the goal of validating the Russian origin theory by placing smoking gun evidence inside of a coded message. Vandenberg's memo pushed this theory exclusively:

Large scale testing with missiles launched from Peenemünde over Sweden to the Gulf of Bothnia with scientific experimentation the primary purpose, and political reasons secondary. In view of the transportation difficulties (alluding to the rail gauge differences between the German and Russian railroads) Peenemünde made sense. Foreign estimates indicated that only those with mechanical difficulties landed off course in Sweden.

Rather than assign the off-course missiles theory to Rayens' more reliable source- the alleged decrypted message, the less reliable foreign estimates were cited instead. Rosetta can be seen here employing the old BSC method of multi-source confirmation to make the contrived story sound more plausible.

Finally, Truman was also told that scientific experimentation was Uncle Joe's primary motive while political considerations were secondary, a marked contrast from the "war of nerves" that Truman was originally briefed on. On August 23, 1946, the same day that William Leahy delivered Vandenberg's memo to the President, an incoming message from MA Stockholm Kessler to General Chamberlin must have created a furor among the deception planners. Kessler revealed that he was convinced that the statements made by Swedish Air Officer Wennerström, the "key Swedish officer" mentioned in Vandenberg's memo to the President, "could not be validated and indeed were being denied by Swedish officials". Kessler promised to send the corroborating details by diplomatic pouch.<sup>4</sup>

Kessler also pointed out that Wennerström was an advisor to the Swedish Air Force Staff, a prominent aviation writer and radio commentator with a tendency to exaggerate. Wennerström

had worked for several years as the military correspondent on air affairs for one of the large Stockholm newspapers. He was also a published author, by this time having written two books, *Morgendagens Flyg* (The Air Force of Tomorrow) in 1945, and *Roda Vingar* (Red Wings) in 1946, an account of the Russian Air Force that was translated into English.

So what did General Chamberlin who supplied the supporting details for the Presidential memo do after an update from the field showed those details to be highly dubious? As a member of Joint Security Control, he did nothing. The President was none the wiser and the deception mission was not compromised. Vandenberg's first Presidential briefing in early August included the same dubious information that was elaborated on in the second briefing, while any contrary information that questioned the Russian origin theory was discarded.

It is not known when Chamberlin or Vandenberg received a copy of NA Stockholm Winston's August 16, 23, and 30, 1946 memorandums detailing the even more damning evidence that the Swedes were playing a dangerous Cold War game (both MID and CIG were on the distribution list), but it does not appear from the declassified record that Vandenberg updated the President with this very valuable information. If this holds true, then President Truman was not told that natural phenomenon and public hysteria were the most likely culprits nor was he informed that the Swedes were the prime suspects for hyping this into Russian aggression. Instead, Rosetta manipulated the data to point the finger of blame directly at Uncle Joe.

It would not be the first time Truman had been kept in the dark by his subordinates on important matters of National Security. Truman while Vice President under Roosevelt was never told of the Manhattan Project, only learning about the massive effort when he assumed the Presidency.<sup>5</sup> But Vandenberg did not simply omit data, he outright mislead the President of the United States. The President simply did not have a need to know that strategic deception was taking place. Had Truman found out that he was being taken for a ride on the Rosetta rollercoaster, the yet-to-be-born Central Intelligence Agency may have never survived its birth.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Hoyt Vandenberg, Memorandum for the President. \(August 22, 1946\).](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Nr. 451 from U.S. military attaché Oslo, Norway to War Department for MILID. \(August 13, 1946\).](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Nr. 453 from U.S. military attaché Oslo, Norway sgd Lahlum to War Department for MILID. \(August 16, 1946\).](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Nr. 1082 from U.S. military attaché Stockholm to War Department for MILID. \(August 23, 1946\).](#)

<sup>5</sup> [National Archives, Truman Library, Letter from Truman to Mr. Stimson. \(December 31, 1946\).](#)

## CHAPTER 30

### The Three Stooges

What can we make of Sweden's role in the Rosetta deception? To answer this question, we need to examine in detail the Swedes who were closest to the deception. There were three official spokesmen for the Swedish government on the Ghost Rocket intrusions: Colonel Bengt Jacobsson of the Swedish Air Force; Major Nihls Ahlgren of the Swedish Defense Staff; and Colonel Curt Kempff of Swedish Intelligence. NA Stockholm Winston stated that "it has been possible to trace the welter of conflicting statements on the rocket question that have been published, handed out, or 'planted' to (these) three Swedish spokesmen".<sup>1</sup>

Much to Winston's chagrin, he found that the three Swedish military officers "were evasive in their replies and were holding back information on orders from higher authority. Their contradictory and confusing communiques were not typical of those which an alarmed and alert military staff would issue in the event of any enemy threat." In other words, it was apparent to Winston that the three were but puppets on a string and were being forced to play a part by someone higher up in the Swedish hierarchy.

Colonel Bengt Jacobsson had spent considerable time in the United States where he was the resident inspector for Swedish aircraft contracts at the Republic aircraft plant on Long Island. He spoke excellent English, often attended the U.S. legation parties in Stockholm, and among the senior Swedish Air Force officers he was considered the best authority on the United States.

It would be the same Colonel Jacobsson who separately refused to allow either MA Stockholm Connelly or NA Stockholm Winston to talk to his officers about Swedish rockets, only "English rockets", then changed his mind at the same time the Swedish press did on August 22, 1946, when he telephoned Winston to make an appointment to discuss the once forbidden subject.

Jacobsson was the Air Force spokesman at an August 21, 1946 luncheon for General James Doolittle "where the rocket reports were shown to Doolittle and his advice informally requested". It was also Colonel Jacobsson who on August 22, 1946 officially requested

expedited shipment of six SCR-615 radar sets that had been purchased from the Americans, also asking that the U.S. War Department send one or two civilian radar technicians, indicating that the radar sets would definitely be used to track down the reported rockets.<sup>2</sup>

Most importantly, Jacobsson was the head of a sham “Ghost Rocket Committee” set up by the Swedes on July 10, 1946 as an internal investigation to analyze the rocket reports. Over a series of twelve meetings the only theory seriously considered by the committee besides meteors or airplane sightings was the possibility that they were Russian rockets.

Also on this sham committee was fellow stooge Major Nihls Ahlgren. Major Ahlgren as the official spokesman for the Swedish Defense Staff had issued all the press statements on the rockets and unofficial handouts to the attachés. It was Ahlgren who provided bogus radar information to the press on August 7, 1946 by saying that it “was possible to determine the course of these objects in some cases as far as 1,000 kilometers” when he was fully aware that the longest radar track was just three miles. On August 26, 1946, Ahlgren agreed to be interviewed by Winston and Connelly and his ridiculous evasive and contradictory answers have already been discussed in depth.

The third of the Swedish stooges, Colonel Kempff was the Senior Army Intelligence Officer at Stockholm. Already in his late fifties, Kempff was very anti-Russian. He not only had close contact with the SSU in Stockholm but also very close Anglo intelligence connections that stemmed from WW2:<sup>3</sup>

When the war was drawing to a close, there was a marked increase in the amount of intelligence and military cooperation between Sweden and the Allies.

Particularly noteworthy was the ‘blind eye’ turned to the establishment of a radio beacon manned by RAF personnel in Malmö to guide Allied bombers on raids to Germany, Swedish permission in August 1944 to establish an RAF observation post on Öland to monitor German rocket testing from Peenemünde, and the handing over of V-2 rocket wreckage to Britain following its landing in Sweden in June 1944. To these should be added the extraordinary behavior of Curt Kempff when he met British military attaché (Stockholm), Sutton-Pratt in November 1944. The Swedish Chief of Staff Ehrensvärd had given him the signal for full-cooperation with the Allies.

The human deception and manipulation game that the three Swedish stooges found themselves in during the Ghost Rocket deception was further documented in an August 30, 1946 letter that Colonel Kempff wrote to the Swedish Military attaché in Washington, Colonel Arvid Eriksson where he related that:

Around the time that General Doolittle arrived in Stockholm, Kempff received a telephone call from an alleged Washington Post Reporter named Axelson that told him that Doolittle was interested in lending his rocket expertise to Sweden. Coincidentally (or not), the Commander in Chief of the Swedish Air Force, Colonel Bengt Nordenskiöld was already scheduled to have lunch with Doolittle the next day and Kempff told Nordenskiöld that the lunch would provide an opportune time for the two to discuss Doolittle's alleged proposition. The same reporter called back and Kempff informed him of the scheduled lunch date. When Kempff caught up with Nordenskiöld a few days later, Kempff was surprised to find out that the lunch with Doolittle did not go as expected. When Nordenskiöld asked Doolittle what he could offer as assistance, Doolittle said he had absolutely nothing to say on the subject.

The human manipulation of the interaction between the Swedes and Doolittle can be seen in the New York Times article of August 21, 1946 that made it appear that it was Kempff who initiated contact with Doolittle.<sup>4</sup> “The Chief of the Swedish Defense Staff, Col. C. R. S. Kempff, said tonight he was extremely interested in asking the two general's advice and, if possible, would place all available reports before them.”

This press quote was completely false as revealed by an August 26, 1946 letter from the British Assistant Military Attaché to the Northern Department where the attaché discussed the NY Times article with Colonel Kempff:<sup>5</sup>

I mentioned the article in the New York Times of 21<sup>st</sup> August to Colonel Kempff, who was highly amused and stated that it was complete fabrication. Colonel Kempff then gave his account of the event.

An American journalist, name not given, and who spoke Swedish, rang him up and asked for information on the rocket bombs, or alternatively to be put in touch

with the competent Swedish authorities. Colonel Kempff said he required a little time before giving an answer.

Presumably during a further conversation, the journalist suggested that Colonel Kempff should meet General Doolittle and General Sarnoff, as they were both experts on the subject. Colonel Kempff agreed and said he would like to meet them very much, as he had not done so before.

During the subsequent luncheon, both the American generals told Colonel Kempff that they had no knowledge of the rockets. No mention was made of assistance being either asked for or offered.

Owing to Colonel Kempff's rather tortuous English I was not quite clear how the subject was raised, but I presume in the general conversations during the luncheon.

The British attaché apparently misunderstood Colonel Kempff as it was General Nordenskiöld who had the lunchtime conversations with the American Generals that resulted in the zero net gain of rocket information.

Kempff was manipulated into the very public meeting with Doolittle and Sarnoff. It was the Washington Post Reporter Axelson who planted the idea in Kempff's mind that the Swedes ought to talk to Doolittle by stating "that he knew General Doolittle very much would like to put his experience concerning rocket missiles at the disposal of Swedish authorities, especially in view of the current ghost bomb affair."

Kempff's fellow stooge Bengt Jacobsson was at the same August 21 luncheon attended by Nordenskiöld, where Doolittle, contrary to what reporter Axelson told Kempff, had nothing to offer the Swedes. But this was not what was being reported publicly. The Time Magazine's Stockholm correspondent, Patrik E. Nieburg stated that at this luncheon "the rocket reports were shown to Doolittle and his advice informally requested."

Nieburg later telephoned Winston to tell him that it was Colonels Kempff and Jacobsson who issued the press release that Doolittle and Sarnoff were shown all of the rocket reports by the Swedes. Nieburg's statement contradicts Kempff's private classified correspondence where

Kempff expressed his bewilderment at the sequence of events that transpired during the luncheon with Doolittle, a meeting that he had not initiated nor had control over.

Just like the bogus radar data, yet another major inconsistency has been uncovered between what the press was telling the public about the rockets and what the classified correspondence reveals as the real truth of the matter. The Swedish military officers Kempff, Jacobsson and Ahlgren were each playing a bit part in a deception performance orchestrated by a higher authority - Rosetta. Sarnoff and Doolittle were doing the same, acting in a public charade for effect, overtly showing interest in the Ghost Rockets for the benefit of the reporter's pen and the cameraman's flash, but when the spotlight was removed, the acting ceased, just like an actor in a play who after exiting the stage no longer needs to be in character.

In addition, the media manipulation was happening on both sides of the Atlantic, but whereas in Sweden it was the official Swedish sources directed by higher authority that were feeding bogus data to the press, on the American side it was the newspaper and magazine editors that were hyping the rocket stories. The New York Times and Time Magazine complicity in this will be understood later on in this story.

This twisted deception operation premised in "trust no one", and steeped in the well-honed deception practice of event orchestration with minimal players who don't understand the overall deception, was coming to fruition.

Wennerström's mission for Rosetta was to plant data in Moscow while his three colleagues did the same in Stockholm. In the process, the American attachés and SSU personnel who were not privy to the deception were caught up in its web of entanglement. The most telling proof of this would be the declassified attaché memorandum as well as Wennerström's own admissions while on trial as a Soviet spy.

The true nature of Wennerström's 1946 "American Mission to Moscow" as well as the twisted antics by the Swedish three stooges has been laid bare, courteous of the very astute and observant attachés and their SSU counterparts who could sense the deception but did not know that a highly compartmented joint British and American covert operation was being perpetrated. The attachés in Stockholm and Moscow were not privy to the deception, but their collective experience told them that something foul was going on.

Even within the CIG itself, only select personnel knew of Rosetta's operation. This was documented at an August, 1946 SSU conference in Heidelberg, Germany where SSU-X2 (counterintelligence) representatives from the various European missions expressed concern about Washington initiating covert operations that they were not privy to. "Similar differences of opinion were heard on the subject of Washington conducting an occasional completely covert operation in the field without informing the local station."<sup>6</sup> The collective wartime experience of these former OSS and now SSU veterans also gave them insight that "something" was afoot and that they were not in the know.

---

<sup>1</sup> Report 39-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston. (August 30, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> Report 38-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston. (August 23, 1946).

<sup>3</sup> Gilmour, J. (2010). *Sweden, the Swastika and Stalin: The Swedish experience in the Second World War*. Edinburgh University Press.

<sup>4</sup> (1946, August 21). Doolittle, Sarnoff Stir Swedish Talk. *New York Times*. p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from the British Assistant Military Attaché to the Northern Department. (August 26, 1946).

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum. OIC to FBL, Subject: Miscellaneous Comments and Observations during European Trip. (August 30, 1946).

## CHAPTER 31

### Deception by Sea

On August 24, 1946, a message sent from the Commander U.S. Naval Forces in Europe, Henry Kent Hewitt to NA Oslo Bergesen, inquired about recent newspaper stories that two rockets fell in a lake near Oslo. Hewitt wanted to know whether the U.S. Navy was participating in the recovery and while the Navy was very interested in those reports, the British were even more so.<sup>1</sup> Hewitt then stated that the lake retrieval was not warranted as with so many missiles reported, sooner or later one would be recovered intact:

There have been persistent reports that the material is nonferrous which if true, means they could not be detected by metallic means and would be necessary to find one in a more accessible area. The U.S. Navy has no equipment available in this area but if invited by a foreign government, the Navy would lend a hand, however such a request would have to come from a very high political level.

Hewitt ordered Bergesen to work with the U.S. naval and military attachés in Stockholm and Oslo as well as with the British attachés to try and solve the rocket mystery.

It seems odd that Hewitt discouraged Bergesen from investigating the crash locations which could yield significance physical evidence, until we consider that Hewitt was a card carrying member of Rosetta.

Admiral Henry Kent Hewitt began his career in the deception arts during World War 2 when he was put in command of the Beach Jumpers, a highly secret naval tactical deception unit that could simulate large scale landings on enemy shores using sonic devices and other deception paraphernalia. The Beach Jumpers concept was first pitched to Hewitt by actor Douglas Fairbanks Jr. and the unit was authorized by Admiral Ernest J. King in 1943.<sup>2</sup>

Hewitt, who resided at 20 Grosvenor Square, the traditional home of the official American presence in London also just happened to take a grand tour of Scandinavia two months prior to inquiring about the Ghost Rockets, indeed at the same time Scandinavia was under the heaviest missile bombardment. He recounts the trip in detail in his memoirs: “the end of June found me en

route to Oslo in the (USS) Houston, accompanied by the Little Rock and four destroyers, for a courtesy visit to Norway”.<sup>3</sup>

Hewitt’s next stop was Copenhagen which he reached on July 4, 1946, spending five days before setting sail for Stockholm where his ship docked on July 10. During his stay in Stockholm, Hewitt attended a reception and dance at the U.S. legation, hosted by NA Stockholm Wright.<sup>4</sup> It was Wright who closed the door on the Ghost Rocket saga with his April 1947 statement that the Ghost Rockets were allowed to die a silent death by both Swedish officials and the press.

Not once did Hewitt mention in his memoirs the Cold War turmoil Scandinavia was in during his visit and also absent was any mention of his wartime relationship to Douglas Fairbanks and the Top Secret Beach Jumpers. Evidently, Hewitt was a man who knew how to keep his mouth shut when it came to classified matters.

Hewitt’s Scandinavian tour was conceived in late 1945 when Hewitt convinced Admiral Nimitz that flying the U.S. flag in northern European waters would show American interest in the region at a time when the Soviet Bear was bearing its teeth. Nimitz agreed and authorized an increase in the number of Navy ships assigned to the 12<sup>th</sup> fleet.<sup>5</sup> Two destroyers, the USS Glennon and USS Cone were initially deployed in February 1946 to Portsmouth, England followed by the heavy cruiser the USS Helena which left Boston on February 12, 1946 for England.<sup>6</sup>

Admiral Hewitt made Helena his flagship and during the following three months the Helena conducted training exercises in northern European waters. The Helena was replaced by the USS Houston as Hewitt’s flagship just after Hewitt took both ships on a Mediterranean cruise in April 1946.

On this cruise, Hewitt on the Helena rendezvoused with the USS Missouri<sup>7</sup> under the command of Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter, who would soon serve as NA Paris in his Rosetta feedback role just prior to replacing Vandenberg as DCI in 1947. Hewitt took over the command of the Missouri for the remainder of the cruise, returning back to London by the end of May before the first Ghost Rocket reports hit the media.<sup>8</sup>

One of the other ships in Hewitt’s flotilla was the cruiser USS Little Rock, under the command of Captain Henri H. Smith-Hutton. Like Admiral Hewitt, Captain Smith-Hutton also had an interesting military career in the deception arts. In 1943, Captain Smith-Hutton was a

deception planner for the Navy in Washington, working with Joint Security Control.<sup>9</sup> In 1946, he was specifically called to duty in Scandinavia for phase one of the Rosetta deception, the deception plans drawn up well in advance of his arrival.

Smith-Hutton was also a naval codebreaker, serving in 1944 on the Army-Navy Radio Intelligence Coordinating Committee (ANICC). Take note as the extremely important role that codebreaking will play in Rosetta's deception will be detailed later in this story.<sup>10</sup> Jane Smith-Hutton, Henri's wife was with the OSS in China during the war.<sup>11</sup>

In a 1974 oral history interview, Captain Smith-Hutton describes that after returning to Washington from Japan on May 31, 1946, and after reporting to the Bureau of Personnel, he was ordered to duty as the Commanding Officer of the Little Rock that was already in European waters.<sup>12</sup> Smith-Hutton proceeded by air to Europe on June 26, 1946 to join the Little Rock in Copenhagen, Denmark on July 8th. This almost two week journey included stops in New York, Paris, London, and finally Copenhagen. Setting sail for Stockholm, the formal change of command was made on July 11, 1946.<sup>13</sup>

At that time the ship was operating with the Houston, a sister ship, under the direct command of Admiral H.K. Hewitt, Commander U.S. Naval Forces in Europe and Commander 12th Fleet. Normally, Admiral Hewitt was in London, but for this cruise he was flying his flag on the Houston.

The Admiral was anxious to have Europeans see modern American naval vessels, so diplomatic arrangements were made for two cruisers and four modern destroyers to visit Copenhagen, Stockholm, go through the Kiel Canal to Amsterdam, and visit Rotterdam, Antwerp, Plymouth and finally Lisbon, averaging a week's stay in each port.<sup>14</sup>

That was Smith-Hutton's ostensible reason for the Scandinavian tour extravaganza, but the real mission for Hewitt's flotilla was in support of Rosetta's deception.

As the Ghost Rockets had been reported flying over Scandinavia since May 23, 1946, over a month and a half before the US Navy arrived, this was a purposeful move on the part of the deception planners who did not want Hewitt's armada to be blamed for the rockets soaring overhead. In fact, before Hewitt's flotilla arrived, there were only a grand total of 30 reported

rocket events from May 23 – July 8, 1946, but these were so heavily bantered around in the press, they were sufficient to prime the rocket frenzy that would follow.<sup>15</sup>

The Ghost Rocket reports peaked from July 9 – 12, 1946 when some 300 reports were filed,<sup>16</sup> during which period Hewitt's naval armada was making the rounds of Scandinavia. Promoted as a U.S. "good-will" tour, instead the deception planners were framing Uncle Joe for a crime he didn't commit.

Hewitt's visit to Stockholm lasted till July 17, 1946 when he flew home on Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal's plane back to London. Forrestal was on a whirlwind round-the-world tour which included observing the first atomic bomb test at Bikini atoll on July 1, 1946 and visits with General MacArthur in Tokyo, General Marshall in Chungking, General Clay in Berlin before meeting up with Admiral Hewitt in Stockholm on July 16, 1946.<sup>17</sup> Forrestal's presence in Scandinavia at this time is also important to note. Before Hewitt and Forrestal returned to London they were wined and dined by Swedish upper society, Hewitt revealing in his memoirs that:

Our farewell reception on the Houston was attended by Prince Bertil and all the leading dignitaries in Stockholm, including most of the diplomats. Notably absent were the Russians, who had boycotted all the official affairs in our honor. I learned later that they had expressed great displeasure at our presence in the Baltic.<sup>18</sup>

The Russians abstained from the festivities in solidarity with Uncle Joe who was hopping mad because the weapons he wanted but didn't have, were being flown by someone else in his own backyard, and even worse blaming him for the grand public display. There was indeed a war of nerves going on in the summer of 1946, but it was Uncle Joe's nerves who the Rosetta deception planners were rattling.

Observing all of this taking place on his borders, Uncle Joe must have experienced a flare up of his ulcers. He knew the rockets were not Soviet, but he also knew that *something* was flying over his Swedish neighbor based on all of the news stories. What probably worried him the most were press reports that the British were also working on German weapons in the British zone. This was the clincher for Uncle Joe as he mused that if the rockets were not Soviet, then they must be British. The scientific intelligence game that Dennis Wheatley had dreamed up in 1945 for peacetime deception was literally taking flight.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> [Serial 00270 from Commander, U.S. Naval Forces in Europe to U.S. naval attaché, Oslo, subject: Rocket Bombs or Guided Missiles over Norway and Sweden. \(August 24, 1947\).](#)
- <sup>2</sup> Shapiro, S. and Forrester, T. (2004). *Hoodwinked: Outwitting the Enemy: Stories From The Second World War*. Annick Press Ltd. p. 29.
- <sup>3</sup> [Cherpak, E. M., ed. \(2004\). The Memoirs of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt. Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press. p. 249. \(1946, June 30\). U.S. Fleet to Visit Scandinavia. \*New York Times\*. p. 13.](#)
- <sup>4</sup> [Cherpak, E. M., ed. \(2004\). The Memoirs of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt. Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press. p. 249.](#)
- <sup>5</sup> Barlow, J. G., & ebrary Academic Complete. (2009). *From hot war to cold: The U.S. Navy and national security affairs, 1945-1955*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- <sup>6</sup> Barlow, J. G., & ebrary Academic Complete. (2009). *From hot war to cold: The U.S. Navy and national security affairs, 1945-1955*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- <sup>7</sup> [\(1946, March 29\). Turks To Fete U.S. Ship, Elaborate Ceremonies Planned to Welcome the Missouri. \*New York Times\*. p. 12. \(1946, March 31\). Missouri Meeting the Helena Today. \*New York Times\*. p. 10. \(1946, April 11\). Missouri is Hailed on Visit to Greece. \*New York Times\*. p. 7.](#)
- <sup>8</sup> [Cherpak, E. M., ed. \(2004\). The Memoirs of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt. Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press. p. 235. \(1946, April 3\). U.S. War Vessels to Visit in Europe, Hewitt Announces Ambitious Program of Courteous Calls That Will Start Soon. \*New York Times\*. p. 3. \(1946, April 25\). Hewitt Flying to Paris, Curtails Tour With Missouri to Attend the Big Four Session. \*New York Times\*. p. 3. \(Hewitt was on his way back to London\)](#)
- <sup>9</sup> Holt, T. (2004). *The deceivers: Allied military deception in the Second World War*. New York: Scribner. p. 317.
- <sup>10</sup> [Burns, T. L. \(2005\). \*The Quest for Cryptologic Centralization and the Establishment of the NSA: 1940-1952. United States Cryptologic History, Series V, The Early Postwar Period, 1945-1952, Volume VI. Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency.\*](#)
- <sup>11</sup> McIntosh, E. P. (1998). *Sisterhood of spies: The women of the OSS*. Naval Institute Press. p. 54.
- <sup>12</sup> [Retrieved from http://www.uslittlerock.org/Oral%20Histories/OralHistorySmithHutton.html](http://www.uslittlerock.org/Oral%20Histories/OralHistorySmithHutton.html).
- <sup>13</sup> [Retrieved from http://www.uslittlerock.org/Oral%20Histories/OralHistorySmithHutton.html](http://www.uslittlerock.org/Oral%20Histories/OralHistorySmithHutton.html).
- <sup>14</sup> [Retrieved from http://www.uslittlerock.org/Oral%20Histories/OralHistorySmithHutton.html](http://www.uslittlerock.org/Oral%20Histories/OralHistorySmithHutton.html).
- <sup>15</sup> R334-46 from U.S. military attaché Stockholm. (August 16, 1946). p. 3.
- <sup>16</sup> [\(1946, August 12\). Rocket Haunted Sweden Ready to Rip Veil from Flying Ghosts. \*The Amarillo Daily News\*. \(1946, August 12\). Swedes See Mystery Rockets. \*The Galveston Daily News\*. \(1946, August 12\). Ghost Rockets over Sweden. \*Mason City Globe Gazette\*. \(1946, August 12\). Rockets Common Sight in Sweden. \*The Times Record \[Troy N.Y.\]\*. \(1946, August 12\). Rockets. \*The Troy Record \[Troy N.Y.\]\*. p. 1. \(1946, August 12\). Shower of Missiles Over Sweden Investigated. \*Wichita Daily Times \[Wichita Falls, Texas\]\*. \(1946, August 12\). Sweden Checks Rocket Shower: Plans Showdown. \*Chester Times\*. p. 1.](#)
- <sup>17</sup> [\(1946, July 15\). Forrestal in Cairo on Way Home. \*New York Times\*. p. 11. \(1946, July 16\). Forrestal Lands in Rome. \*New York Times\*. p. 6. \(1946, July 18\). U.S. Ships Leave Sweden; Forrestal Arrives in Time to Bid Hewitt Farewell. \*New York Times\*. p. 10.](#)
- <sup>18</sup> [Cherpak, E. M., ed. \(2004\). \*The Memoirs of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt\*. Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press. p. 252.](#)

## CHAPTER 32

### The Wasserfall

To understand which Nazi rockets Uncle Joe thought the British rocketeers were playing with over Sweden, another WW2 history lesson is in order. Although the history books focus on the two most notorious V-weapons that the Germans used during the war, the V-1 and the V-2, there were many others. As NA Paris Hillenkoetter stated in his August 13, 1946 rocket report:<sup>1</sup>

The V-2 rocket was just a toy compared to what the Germans had up their sleeve. At the war's end they had 138 types of guided missile in production or development using every known kind of remote control or fuse, radio, radar, infra-red, light-beamed, magnetic, pre-programmed, and then some. Of these 138 types of rocket or guided missile, there is no information on eighty of these.

Towards the end of the war, the Germans were hard at work trying to perfect even more efficient, longer range, and better controlled weapons than the V-1s and V-2s that devastated London. One of these advanced missiles was known as the Wasserfall.

On June 13, 1944, a German A-4 (later renamed to V-2) missile launched from Peenemünde crashed over Bäckebo, Sweden some three months before the first V-2 was fired at London. But this stray missile, labeled as test flight V89 (serial number 4089 - launch number 103), was no standard test of the ballistic V-2, instead it was testing the manual-control guidance system designed for another missile - an anti-aircraft surface to air missile known as the Wasserfall:<sup>2</sup>

An A-4/V-2 test vehicle was prepared for launch at Heersprufanstalt Peenemünde (HAP) on June 13, 1944. This particular vehicle (V89) was taken out of the regular row of test vehicles for modification of the guidance system. In addition to the two gyros, radio guidance equipment was also installed in the equipment bay directly beneath the war head compartment. The purpose of this additional equipment was to test the guidance system of the Wasserfall anti-aircraft missile also under development at Peenemünde. Wasserfall was guided by sight with a

joystick. The A-4/V-2 No V89 was for the initial part of the flight to be guided in a zig-zag course around the normal 70° E direction, which would take the rocket out over the Baltic and south of the island Bornholm.

Striking in this description is the zig-zag course that the joystick controlled V-2 was to take, echoing the disinformation on the 1946 Ghost Rockets that Major Stig Wennerström was planting in Moscow:

Wennerström revealed that 200 flying bombs had passed over Swedish territory traveling south to north, some on a zig-zag course. Radar plotting indicated that most came from Peenemünde, but some from the Soviet Baltic coastal area.

Test vehicle number V89 broke apart 1500 to 2000 meters above the ground showering two tons of twisted metal and parts over a four kilometer area of the Swedish landscape. According to local farmer Robert Gustavson on whose lands the bulk of the debris was located, the airburst was so strong that Gustavson was half stunned and brought his horses to their knees. After recovering from the initial shock, Gustavson was able to observe a number of silver objects raining down from the sky.

The fact that the Bäckebo V-2 exploded mid-air and that the radio controlled guidance system was located close to the warhead, led investigators to believe that the missile was designed to explode above the ground and disintegrate, true of the Wasserfall, but not of the ballistic V-2 which was designed to explode on impact. The Wasserfall was designed by the Germans to bring down enemy bombers by means of a large blast area effect.

The Bäckebo V-2 parts were collected and transported to Stockholm where they were examined by the Swedish Flygtekniska Forsöksanstalten, FFA (Military Aeronautical Research Institute) who put together an investigation team headed by Air Force Colonel Henry Kjellson. Kjellson's report described the V-2 as an "air torpedo". It was also this same Colonel Kjellson of the Swedish Air Ministry who was coordinating all investigations into the Ghost Rockets.<sup>3</sup>

After the V-2 crashed over Bäckebo, two Air Technical Intelligence Officers, Squadron Leaders Burder and Wilkinson, arrived from London<sup>4</sup> with a request to the Swedish General Staff for permission to inspect the debris, mirroring the August 1946 visit of Squadron Leader

Heath and Captain Malone of the British War Department who were asked to investigate the Ghost Rockets.

The Bäckebo V-2 debris was then transported to England for study by the British Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) at Farnborough and Sweden ignoring her own neutrality allowed the British to set up two radio intercept stations in August 1944 on Öland island in southern Sweden to track any future radio guided A-4/V-2s launched from Peenemünde.<sup>5</sup>

In 1944, the town of Bleicherode near the Harz Mountains became a very important part of the German rocket program after all technicians were moved there from Peenemünde. Bleicherode would become the production center for both the A-4/V-2 rocket, like the one that crashed at Bäckebo, and the testing site for the anti-aircraft Wasserfall.

The first successful guided flight of the Wasserfall was not made until February 5, 1944 and by the end of the year it was clear to the Germans that the Wasserfall could not be operational until May of 1946, the same timeframe that the Ghost Rockets began to fly over Sweden. The Wasserfall was the most advanced surface-to-air missile developed in Germany and of all the remote controlled surface-to-air rocket projects, only the Wasserfall and the HS 117 Schmetterling almost reached production status.

The Americans were able to get all of the technical information on the Wasserfall at the end of the war from the top secret Hermann Göring Institute (Luftfahrtforschungsanstalt, LFA), at Völkenrode. The British were not far behind but the Americans stripped the Institute clean before it was handed over to Russian control.<sup>6</sup>

Interestingly, the September 3, 1946 edition of the London, England Daily Mail published an article that implicated the Wasserfall in the Ghost Rocket reports:

The Daily Mail has sent its most famous war correspondent, Alexander Clifford, to investigate these reports. In his dispatch he examines all the evidence and concludes that the missiles have been fired by the Russians 'beyond reasonable doubt'. They are, in his opinion, not merely super V-2s but something quite new - maybe developments of the mysterious 'butterfly' [Schmetterling which is German for butterfly] or the 'waterfall' [Wasserfall] which were two of the more fantastic German projects. That is the eeriness of it all. The Russians, with tightly sealed

lips, are experimenting publicly with a machine that leaves no trace whatever and apparently defies several scientific laws. So the Swedes look uneasily into their skies and guess. But all the time the Russians know. The mystery is no mystery to them. And how they must laugh when they read articles like this.

For the Soviets this was no laughing matter as they were not the rocketeers. Instead, the disinformation planted by Wennerström and his fellow stooges was Rosetta's attempt to convince the Russians that the Ghost Rockets were some form of an adapted Wasserfall missile, with a size approximating the V-1, but with a much longer range, that was radio controlled in flight – a description similar to that of a modern day cruise missile.

To make the reports believable, the deception planners weaved in elements that were unique to the Wasserfall in its Bäckebo A-4/V-2 crash incarnation, including originating in the Harz Mountains, launching from Peenemünde, radio controlled zig-zag flight and the ability to self-destruct. The Russians who were in control of Peenemünde in 1946 knew they were not the ones launching these missiles but the familiar characteristics of these “Ghost Rockets” would lend credibility that they were real.

Finally, a confirmation that the Russians could not have been launching large numbers of German sourced anti-aircraft missiles in 1946 is revealed in a declassified CIG report that “the U.S.S.R. is considered capable of putting into production by 1950 anti-aircraft missiles of the German Wasserfall or Smetterling type”.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> [Serial 39-S-46 from naval attaché Paris, France, Hillenkoetter. \(August 13, 1946\).](#)

<sup>2</sup> Skoog, A. I. (2013). *Can a pile of scrap unmask a new high technology? The A4/V-2 No V89 Bäckebo-torpeden.* *Acta Astronautica* 85. pp. 156–157.

<sup>3</sup> July 19, 1946 British memorandum from Stockholm to the British Foreign Office

<sup>4</sup> Skoog, A. I. (2013). *Can a pile of scrap unmask a new high technology? The A4/V-2 No V89 Bäckebo-torpeden.* *Acta Astronautica* 85. pp. 155–168.

<sup>5</sup> Skoog, A. I. (2013). *Can a pile of scrap unmask a new high technology? The A4/V-2 No V89 Bäckebo-torpeden.* *Acta Astronautica* 85. p. 166.

<sup>6</sup> Reuter, C. (May 2002). *The V2, and the Russian and American Rocket Program.* S.R. Research & Publishing. p. 163.

<sup>7</sup> [Soviet Capabilities for the Development and Production of Certain Types of Weapons and Equipment, CIG, ORE 3/1 \(October 31, 1946\).](#)

## CHAPTER 33

### What Goes Up, Doesn't Necessarily Come Down

With over a thousand Ghost Rockets reported, many of alleged crashes, you would think that the Swedes would be up to their armpits in rocket parts, yet that was not the case. In stark contrast from the single V-2 that crashed at Bäckebo just two years earlier which dropped two tons of twisted metal over a four kilometer area of the Swedish landscape, not even one tiny metal fragment from the more numerous Ghost Rockets was ever found in Sweden, nor in any other Scandinavian country.

It is this lack of physical evidence that led to the speculation that the rockets self-destructed, but to achieve the level of self-destruction that would leave no recognizable machined parts or even metal shrapnel, simply was not possible in 1946 or for that matter in 2016. When a technological object goes up, something must come down, even if only a bolt or a screw, especially when these objects, as the majority of reports described, were at low altitude and in horizontal flight.

This skeptical viewpoint was raised on September 16, 1946 in a message from the British Cabinet Office to the U.K. Liaison Mission Tokyo: "We find it impossible to believe that all observations are genuinely of missiles, when there is as yet no confirmed case of missiles crashing on land. This would imply an unheard of reliability or missiles or of self-destructive process."<sup>1</sup>

Examining the historical record, we can see that any physical evidence in the form of rocket fragments followed the same confusing and contradictory pattern as the radar data did with the press publishing the sensational and classified sources proclaiming the mundane.

Let's begin with the press. On July 11, 1946, a message from the American legation counselor, Christian M. Ravndal, relayed a press report that a rocket landed on a beach near Stockholm without causing any damage. Fragments were allegedly collected and were being studied by military authorities and a local scientist stated that these contained an organic substance resembling carbide.<sup>2</sup>

This was echoed in the August 12, 1946 edition of the New York Times where the “fragments examined by scientists have little in the way of clues except to indicate the presence of coke and other common materials”.<sup>3</sup>

Just three days later however, the first metal fragments were allegedly discovered, the August 15, 1946 edition of the New York Times reporting that the “Swedes Find Rocket Clue: Lettered Metal Fragment Is Now Under Close Study”.<sup>4</sup>

Swedish Army investigators have recovered a fragment of metal containing imprinted letters that may solve the mystery of rockets that have been flashing over Sweden and other Scandinavian countries since last May. The fragment was reported to be a 2.75 inch section of metal. It has been placed in the hands of the Defense Research Institute for investigation.

Other metallic fragments were also reported found around the same time, another newspaper article revealing that:<sup>5</sup>

The searching for the bomb which had been seen to alight in a small lake in Norrland, has now been stopped without result. Some objects were found and sent to the military authorities on Wednesday, two small copper plates and a screw about 11 cm long. None of the objects could possibly have anything to do with the projectiles, as they must have been lying in the earth for a long time.

A person near Sundsvall observed a noise of something that came rushing through the air. The noise became louder and suddenly he heard a bump of something falling down. It was some slag-like stuff, the quantity was about 10 cm square. It was raining at the time, so that a projectile at great height would have been impossible to observe. The ‘slag’ has been sent to the nearest military research station for examination.

Meanwhile, an August 22, 1946 message from MA London Bissell cited a London newspaper that “fragments of bombs so far found in Sweden bear no markings”.<sup>6</sup>

If we examine the classified correspondence however, a different story emerges. A July 16, 1946 message from MA Stockholm Kessler relayed information from the Swedish Army staff that six rockets had been observed to explode in the air and up to 50 points of impact were

observed. No large fragments were found and the small fragments recovered appeared to be nonferrous.<sup>7</sup> This echoed the initial press reports.

What does nonferrous mean? A nonferrous metal contains little to no iron which gives it unique characteristics that are highly desired in the aircraft industry. These include high strength, malleability, light-weight and high resistance to rust and corrosion, all characteristics of an ideal material that a high performance, long range, flying secret weapon would be made of.

Additional details were provided by the British rocket investigators Heath and Malone in a July 19, 1946 message from the Stockholm British Air Attaché to the Foreign Office which also echoed the peculiar nature of the fragments:<sup>8</sup>

The sole remains so far recovered in Sweden are pieces no longer than an egg of porous yellow combustible material, porous black carboniferous material, porous grey ash or slag material and black slate like material. Representative samples are being sent separately.

Meanwhile back in the U.S., the August 1, 1946 briefing for President Truman indicated that “although ten such missiles have fallen within Sweden, the Swedish General Staff has as yet been unable to reach firm conclusions on the basis of the fragments recovered”.<sup>9</sup>

But then a British report on August 8, 1946 clearly stated that the fragments were nonmetallic:<sup>10</sup>

Up to the present no fragments of metal have been found, such as was the case with the V-1 and V-2. Discovery of slaggy appearance has, however, been sent in from ten places where it is believed ground impacts have been observed. Analysis is carried out at the Defense Research Station. Up to the present the analyses have, however, only resulted in showing that the discoveries have been identified as well-known products without connection with the phenomenon of the nature in question.

Meanwhile on August 16, 1946, NA Stockholm Winston reported that “to date no U.S. military or naval personnel in Sweden have seen any fragments, photographs, radar tracks, points

of impact, or other evidence of any kind to prove that guided missiles have actually been seen over Swedish territory”.<sup>11</sup>

And yet another British report from August 16, 1946 stated that “the ‘spook’ rockets continue to be seen over Sweden and new points of impact continue to be reported but Swedish officials insist that no fragments other than bits of non-metallic slag have yet been found.”

Just like the non-existent radar data, the press reports were at odds with the classified sources; the press reporting by August 15 the discovery of metal fragments in more than one location; the classified American and British correspondence denying that any such metal had been recovered, and any suspect material found was not related to the rockets to begin with.

The non-existent fragments were corroborated on August 30, 1946 when NA Stockholm Winston interviewed Swedish Defense spokesperson Major Nihls Ahlgren who said that “no projectiles have exploded in or near the ground. No damage has been done either to lives or property. The projectiles may have exploded in the air, but no fragments have been found anywhere”<sup>12</sup>. And a September 4, 1946 message from Mr. Lyon to Mr. Morgan stated that “while over 800 reports have been received and new reports come daily, Swedes still have no tangible evidence”<sup>13</sup>

So whereas the press was pushing the bogus metal fragments stories, the Swedish Defense Staff eventually confessed that just like the non-existent radar data, no metal fragments were recovered, a fact known only to those copied on the classified correspondence but not to the general public and not to Uncle Joe.

The press vs. classified correspondence tug-of-war was the same in Denmark where “according to the Danish paper Nationaltidene, metal parts of projectiles have been found and are now being investigated by the military authorities”,<sup>14</sup> this contradicted by an August 30, 1946 classified message from the Copenhagen British Air Attaché to Mr. Randall stating that the “peculiar feature of all of these explosions is that no material trace whatsoever has been found”<sup>15</sup> and a September 26, 1946 classified message from MA Copenhagen Evert that a “highly evaluated source indicates no positive confirmed rockets over Denmark, with no fragments found”.<sup>16</sup>

Even as late as January 9, 1947, the Intelligence Division, War Department General Staff, in an internal classified publication *Intelligence Review Number 47*, published the article “Ghost Rockets Over Scandinavia” that stated that “in no case have fragments been found other than bits of material described as ‘nonmetallic slag’”.<sup>17</sup>

So what exactly was this nonmetallic material anyway? This is answered in a classified report from NA London Shelley to the Chief of Naval Intelligence, Thomas Inglis, revealing that:<sup>18</sup>

The (British) Air Ministry did receive from the Swedish Air Force bits of material which had been subjected to high temperatures, and which the Swedes thought might possibly have been a part of a guided missile. These bits of material were given thorough tests and sent back to Sweden with the report that they in themselves did not afford sufficient evidence to show that they were part of a guided missile.

Shelley’s report is probably referring to the incident recounted by British scientist R.V. Jones in his book *Most Secret War*. Jones was a scientist at British Air Technical Intelligence where the general interpretation was that the rockets were Russian long-range flying bombs flown over Sweden as an act of intimidation - the Air Technical Intelligence officers and scientists caught up in the same media frenzy and rampant speculation as the general public. Jones however looked at the Ghost Rocket mystery with the keen eyes of reason and deduction and ruled against the rocket theory.<sup>19</sup>

First, what conceivable purpose could serve the Russians, if they indeed had a controllable flying bomb, to fly it in great numbers over Sweden, without doing any more harm than to alert the West to the fact that they had such an impressive weapon?

My second question followed from the first: how had the Russian succeeded in making a flying bomb of such fantastic reliability? The Germans had achieved no better than 90 per cent reliability in their flying bomb trials of 1944, at very much shorter range. Even if the Russians had achieved a reliability as high as 99 per cent over their much longer ranges, this meant that 1 per cent of all sorties should

have resulted in a bomb crashing on Swedish territory. Since there had been allegedly hundreds of sorties, there ought to be at least several crashed bombs already in Sweden, and yet nobody had ever picked up a fragment. I therefore said that I would not accept the theory that the apparitions were flying bombs from Russia until someone brought a piece into my office.

Jones' well-reasoned rationale can be reframed into Dennis Wheatley's envisioned post war deception. The Russians would *not* want to alert the West if they indeed had a new exotic weapon of war, but Rosetta was hoping that the reverse would be true – that it would be the Russians who would become alarmed knowing that this alleged weapon was not theirs to boast.

Soon after, fragments from Sweden, alleged to have fallen off one of the rockets were deposited in Jones' lap, courtesy of Director of Intelligence, Air Commodore Vintras. The assortment of four or five lumps did not impress Jones who described them as “none of which looked as it had ever been associated with a mechanical device.” But being a good scientist, Jones sent the fragments to the Chemical Analysis Section at Farnborough.

Farnborough submitted the analysis to Vintras who called Jones excitedly because the report showed that 98 percent of the fragments were made of an unknown element. Jones recounts how “excitement on the Air Staff was mounting – not only had the Russians a flying bomb of fantastic performance, but they were driving it with a fuel made from an element that was new to the world of chemistry”.

Jones thinking he was being played a practical joke, called the head of chemistry at Farnborough who confirmed the analysis. When Jones asked if the chemists had not found the fragments to look mysteriously like ordinary coke (fuel made from coal), there was an audible gasp followed by silence on the other end of the line. The Farnborough scientists had failed to test the fragments for carbon, subsequent testing showed that the fragments were indeed just plain old coke. Cognitive dissonance did not just affect Soviet dictators, even the seasoned Farnborough scientists could be bitten by their own prejudiced beliefs.

Despite the reports where eyewitnesses claim to have seen objects crash to earth or into a lake or other body of water, a November 1946 British Air Intelligence report quoted the Swedish Defense Staff as saying that:<sup>20</sup>

In cases of impact, nothing has been forthcoming to indicate that the material originated from any kinds of space projectile. A very thorough search has been made in certain lakes, because projectiles were supposed to have come down there. So far, however, nothing has been found which can be thought to have originated from weapons of the V-Type.

The report author thought it important to clarify what the Swede's meant by "cases of impact":<sup>21</sup>

What is meant is that, on a number of occasions, observers have reported seeing a ball of fire or even a cylindrical object falling to the ground. On investigation at these supposed points of impact, various fragments have been picked up.

Analysis of most of these has been completed. Any of an unusual nature have now been satisfactorily explained, either as by-products from local factories, slag from thermite welding, or of those of other innocent origin. The rest are common materials. Of the latter, those which occur with any frequency have been found to be either coke, cinders and like products, or refractories of alumina and silica type.

While it would be possible to design propulsion systems which could give rise to such fragments, the fact that these are such common materials has not yet made it possible in any way to prove their connection with missiles. Some indeed, have had the appearance of having lain outside for considerable periods. Meteorite experts have examined the samples and ruled out their origin from this source.

By the end of 1946, despite the press articles to the contrary, absolutely no metal fragments had been collected, despite over a thousand rocket reports. The fragments that were recovered were composed of common materials that simply didn't make sense as part of an exotic new weapon of war. Instead of sophisticated Nazi missiles the Ghost Rockets appeared to have more in common with a 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks show. As it turned out, the aerial display over Scandinavia was a show, a colorful performance put on by the master magicians of Rosetta.

---

<sup>1</sup> Message from the British Cabinet Offices to the U.K. Liaison Mission Tokyo. (September 16, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> Message from the American legation counselor, Christian M. Ravndal. (July 11, 1946).

- 
- <sup>3</sup> (1946, August 12). Swarm of Mysterious Rockets Is Seen Over Capital of Sweden. *New York Times*. p. 1.
- <sup>4</sup> (1946, August 15). Swedes Find Rocket Clue, Lettered Metal Fragment Is Now Under Close Study. *New York Times*. p. 3.
- <sup>5</sup> August 15, 1946 report from UK Archives
- <sup>6</sup> [Nr. 70930 from U.S. military attaché London, England, sgd. Bissell to War Department for MILID. \(August 22, 1946\).](#)
- <sup>7</sup> Message from U.S. military attaché Stockholm Kessler. (July 16, 1946).
- <sup>8</sup> Message from the Stockholm British air attaché to the Foreign Office. (July 19, 1946).
- <sup>9</sup> [Memorandum for the President \(August 1, 1946\), National Archives, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chairman's File, Admiral Leahy, 1942-48, Box 21.](#)
- <sup>10</sup> August 8, 1946 message from UK Archives
- <sup>11</sup> [Report 35-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston. \(August 16, 1946\).](#)
- <sup>12</sup> Report 39-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston. (August 30, 1946).
- <sup>13</sup> Message from Mr. Lyon to Mr. Morgan. (September 4, 1946).
- <sup>14</sup> Report 38-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston. (August 23, 1946).
- <sup>15</sup> From the Copenhagen British air attaché to Mr. Randall. (August 30, 1946). UK Archives.
- <sup>16</sup> Message from the military attaché Copenhagen, Evert. (September 26, 1946).
- <sup>17</sup> Intelligence Division, War Department General Staff, Intelligence Review Number 47. (January 9, 1947).
- <sup>18</sup> Report from the naval attaché London Shelley to the Chief of Naval Intelligence.
- <sup>19</sup> Jones, R. V. (1978). *Most secret war*. London: Hamilton. pp. 510 – 512.
- <sup>20</sup> British Air Intelligence report. (November 1946). UK archives.
- <sup>21</sup> APR40/2842 A.I.2 Paper 272/46. Second Report of Investigation of Missile Activity over Scandinavia. (November 1946). p. 3.

## CHAPTER 34

### Rockets Falling into Fall

As the summer of 1946 came to an end, the controversy over the rockets did not abate. On September 4, 1946 a Department of State memo from Mr. Frederick Lyon to Mr. Jack Morgan quoted verbatim an August 29, 1946 telegram from the Stockholm Legation:<sup>1</sup>

While over 800 reports have been received and new reports come daily, Swedes still have no tangible evidence. Full details of reports this far received have been forwarded to Washington by our military and naval attachés. My own source personally convinced some foreign power is actually experimenting over Sweden and he guesses it is Russia. He has promised to notify me before anyone else if anything tangible should be discovered.

Meanwhile, also on September 4, 1946, NA Stockholm Wright requested that his counterpart in Moscow, MA Macon, forward translated Russian press reports on the rockets.<sup>2</sup> A message on the same date from Wright to OPNAV stated there was still no tangible evidence of rockets in Sweden or Norway and no press reports since August 24, 1946.<sup>3</sup>

Wright stated that all four big newspapers reprinted an AP and Reuters story from Moscow that Novoe Vremya accused Sweden of “war agitation to spread suspicion and distrust of Russia” as there was no evidence of missiles. Novoe Vremya, the Soviet newspaper known for toeing the communist party line and spreading propaganda of its own was this time telling the truth.

On September 12, 1946, a message sent from NA Stockholm Winston to NA London Shelley stated that there were indications that the British-Swedish collaboration on the guided missile problem may possibly be designed to prevent U.S. intelligence from getting the facts. He then requested that the admiralty keep him informed of any information passed on to the naval attaché in London so that it could be checked against information in his office.<sup>4</sup>

This is interesting from two perspectives, first because it shows that there was indeed a Swedish and British partnership and secondly the American attaché could sense that these partners were trying to hide something. A July 27, 1947 message from the British Air Attaché, Stockholm

to the Air Ministry Assistant Chief Air Staff, Sir Thomas Elmhirst confirmed Winston's suspicion:<sup>5</sup>

I have been requested by Swedish Air Staff to take all possible measures to prevent the Americans finding out about Swedish full co-operation with us in investigating mysterious missiles. Italian Air Attaché has been making enquiries of Swedish Air and General Staffs and has been given evasive replies. Leakage of information about our cooperation would seriously embarrass Swedish authorities.

A letter dated September 16, 1946 from the British Cabinet Office to the U.K. Liaison Mission Tokyo reiterated that the Americans should not be told about the British-Swedish partnership.<sup>6</sup>

However, documents in the U.S. National Archives show that the Air Ministry Assistant Chief of Air Staff Intelligence, Air Vice Marshal Sir Thomas Elmhirst was secretly passing all intelligence on the Ghost Rockets to Rosetta member General George C. McDonald in Washington.<sup>7</sup> So in effect, Rosetta was manipulating the Ghost Rocket channels of information, ensuring a directed flow of information to only where they wanted it to go.

The attaché's suspicion that the British were withholding information was addressed by Rosetta member Clayton Bissell in an October 1, 1946 message to General Chamberlin, relaying that the Military and naval Attaché Sweden as well as some of his own staff felt that the British may not have given the Americans all available information on the rockets.<sup>8</sup>

Bissell then stated that it was his understanding that the War Department Intelligence Division was securing everything available to the British through the British Staff Mission and if the British did not provide the data in the mailed report, did Chamberlin want Bissell to secure this information?

From one Joint Security Control member to another, what was Bissell conveying? It appears this message was an attempt to deflect the suspicions of those in the Stockholm and London legations who were asking too many questions because they were not in on the deception. Bissell himself did not question the British intentions but instead disingenuously asserted that the British surely were supplying the Americans all the information they had, only it was going through Washington instead of the field offices.

---

<sup>1</sup> To Mr. Morgan from Mr. Lyon. (September 4, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> Airmailogram from William D. Wright to ALUSNA Moscow. (September 4, 1946).

<sup>3</sup> Airmailogram from William D. Wright to OPNAV. (September 4, 1946).

<sup>4</sup> Airmailogram from R. A. Winston to ALUSNA London. (September 12, 1946).

<sup>5</sup> Message from the British air attaché, Stockholm to the Air Ministry Assistant Chief Air Staff, Sir Thomas Elmhirst. (July 27, 1947). UK Archives.

<sup>6</sup> From the British Cabinet Office to the U.K. Liaison Mission Tokyo. (September 16, 1946). UK Archives.

<sup>7</sup> Aldrich, R. J. (2001). *The hidden hand: Britain, America, and Cold War secret intelligence*. London: John Murray.

<sup>8</sup> Nr. 71085 from U.S. military attaché London, England sgd. Bissell to War Department for MILID for Chamberlin. (October 1, 1946).

## CHAPTER 35

### The British Rocketeers

It is documented fact that the British and the Swedish had been closely cooperating on the Ghost Rocket saga since the missiles starting their journey across Swedish skies in May of 1946. But just like on the American side, there were only select British personnel that were in on the deception and everyone else was simply along for the ride. The bits and pieces that have leaked out of the normally ultra-secretive and tight-lipped British secret services shed some light on this double dealing.

British complicity in the Ghost Rocket deception was provided to NA Stockholm Winston by the British Assistant RAF Attaché who stated that “he believed the reported objects were rockets, and has made a financial wager that tangible evidence will be found. He also stated that he would like to ‘plant’ a false clue to worry the Russians, giving a purported course indicating that rockets had been launched from Denmark or British-occupied territory.”<sup>1</sup>

Given the high levels of anxiety about the rockets and the general consensus at that time that the Russians were to blame, why would the British attaché even venture this deception? And if the Russians were behind the rockets and therefore unequivocally knew who was launching them, what purpose would it serve to plant a false clue indicating that the rockets were of British origin? The answer to these questions is self-evident, it would serve only one purpose - the British members of Rosetta already knew that Uncle Joe was not on the sending end of the rockets – but wanted him to believe the British were.

How this clue would be planted is not clear – perhaps through a double agent – or maybe through a coded message that the British knew the Russians were decrypting or perhaps through the rumor mill at an embassy cocktail party. As the British attaché made his comment prior to Stig Wennerström’s visit to Moscow, he could have simply been alluding to Wennerström’s upcoming mission. The transmission media is not important, but what is important is that the American attaché documented for posterity in his classified report, British involvement in the deception.

Meanwhile, MA Moscow Macon reported in an August 26, 1946 memorandum, confidential information relayed from the British Foreign Office through the Moscow British Charge D' Affaires:<sup>2</sup>

Bombs were launched from the Russian zone in Germany and passed over Sweden. Bombs believed originating in the Harz Mountain Area. Radar had been furnished to Sweden. British were going to leak the bomb information from London.

The classified record unequivocally documents the British interest in “leaking” information on the rockets. The planted information alluded to by the British attaché would be for Russian ears only, portraying the source of the rockets as British. The leak from London would be for public consumption that promoted a completely opposite view, that the British were lending radar equipment to the Swedes to track down Russian rocketeers. Both leaks would be for effect – part and parcel of a deception operation that the British Rosetta members were intimately involved in.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Report 35-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston \(August 16, 1946\).](#)

<sup>2</sup> Nr. MAX 50709 from military attaché Moscow Macon for Chamberlin. (August 26, 1946).

## CHAPTER 36

### Reverse Direction

Uncle Joe was not just blamed for unleashing his missile arsenal over his adjacent neighbors in the north, but also for violating the air space of the Mediterranean countries in the south. In September 1946, Greece, Turkey and Portugal all reported rocket intrusions.<sup>1</sup>

The USS Little Rock under the command of Smith-Hutton, not by coincidence, was present in the region escorting the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt while the rockets flew overhead.<sup>2</sup> It was not Uncle Joe but Rosetta that had decided to take their aerial display south. A year prior to President Truman making his famous speech that became known as the Truman Doctrine, Rosetta's covert war was already underway.

Similar to the occurrences over Scandinavia, the rockets were flying in advance of the U.S. naval flotilla arriving on the scene. This timing again was intentional as Rosetta did not want Uncle Joe blaming the Ghost Rockets on the presence of U.S. military might in the region. More than likely it was Rosetta's British assets who were to thank for the early September rocket display.

In support of this operation, Rear Admiral John Cassady announced in advance that the USS Roosevelt would put on an air show for the Greeks with 123 planes sent aloft to spell out the initials FDR in the sky.<sup>3</sup> However, this aerial display was cancelled five days later citing technical difficulties and again making it difficult for Uncle Joe to blame American air power in the region.

Meanwhile it was alleged that both Greek and British forces were reporting Ghost Rockets flying over Salonika:

Acting Foreign Minister Stephanos Stephanopolous supported a statement in London by Premier Constantin Tsaldaris that flying rockets had been seen in northern Greece. He said that Greek divisional commanders and British officers had seen them both east and west of Salonika.

He said that rockets, estimated to be flying at a height of 5,000 to 10,000 yards, had been seen specifically at Drama, 130 miles northeast of Salonika and just below the Bulgarian border. He added that an investigation was under way.<sup>4</sup>

The British however denied their forces had observed any rockets at all, the British Embassy issuing a news release discounting reports that flying rockets had been seen over northern Greece. The release, emphasizing that no British officer had reported such missiles, said the rockets could have been a type of flare, such as a Very pistol, a number of which have been reported in the same area.<sup>5</sup>

The conflicting press stories were designed to keep Uncle Joe guessing and fraying his nerves even further. After putting on a show for the world, Rosetta's assets withdrew to the shadows from where they had emerged. By October 2, 1946 both the north and south Rosetta flotillas rendezvoused in New York for Navy day where the public could tour the USS Roosevelt, USS Missouri, USS Little Rock, USS Glennon and the USS Cone.<sup>6</sup>

After his duty on the USS Little Rock was up in March 1947, Smith-Hutton was sent to Paris as the naval attaché, replacing Rosetta member Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter who returned to Washington after being named as Vandenberg's replacement as the Director of the Central Intelligence Group. Later that year, Hillenkoetter became the very first director of the newly born CIA.

---

<sup>1</sup> (1946, September 16). Another Rocket Seen Portugal. *The Lethbridge Herald*. p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> (1946, September 5). No Jingoism is Found on Ships off Greece. *New York Times*. p. 4.

(1946, September 6). Carrier Cancels Athens Air Show. *New York Times*. p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> (1946, September 6). Carrier Cancels Athens Air Show. *New York Times*. p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> (1946, September 6). Carrier Cancels Athens Air Show. *New York Times*. p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> (1946, September 7). Air Show in Athens Called Unfeasible. *New York Times*. p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> (1946, October 25). Public Can View Fleet on Navy Day, Ships in New York Area to Be Open to Visitors. *New York Times*. p. 20.

## CHAPTER 37

### Hillenkoetter

Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter served as the U.S. naval attaché in Paris during the 1946 Ghost Rocket deception, passing on to Washington bogus radar data, indirectly sourced from the French but which originated with the Swedes. During WW2, Hillenkoetter also served as the naval attaché in Vichy France under Ambassador Admiral William D. Leahy and it was Leahy who would ensure that Hillenkoetter replaced Hoyt Vandenberg as the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) of the newly founded CIA.

Hillenkoetter's lengthy naval career was documented in detail in a February 26, 1947 FBI memorandum at the request of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover who wanted to know more about the man designated to replace Vandenberg as the DCI.<sup>1</sup> Let's examine Hillenkoetter's interesting resume.

Hillenkoetter who was wounded at the Pearl Harbor attack while serving as Executive Officer on the USS West Virginia, returned to Pearl Harbor as the Officer in Charge of Intelligence on the Staff of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area, Admiral Chester Nimitz, from September 1942, until March 1943.

In May of 1942, Hillenkoetter established the Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area (ICPOA) at Pearl Harbor<sup>2</sup>, remaining its director until September of 1943 at which time he was transferred to the South Pacific. One of ICPOA's intelligence divisions, the Fleet Unit, was also known as Station Hypo. It was at Station Hypo that naval cryptographers decoded the Japanese JN-25 naval code that helped the Americans win the battle of Midway earlier that year, an event that will have great significance to this story.

Hillenkoetter was then transferred to the command of the USS Dixie, where he served until February 1944, with additional duty during that period as Representative, Commander, Destroyers, Pacific Fleet, in the South Pacific Area (RepComDesPac SoPac). For his services in the command of the Dixie during the Solomon Islands campaign he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

The USS Dixie, a destroyer tender, alternated between Noumea and Espiritu Santo in support of the operations in the Solomons from November 1942 to March 1944. Manned by almost a thousand men and as the flag ship for the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> fleets, the major battles of the Pacific were planned aboard the Dixie.

Noumea is also where James Marion Snodgrass' involvement with Project Seal began and ended during the initial trials there in early 1944. In his autobiography, Snodgrass placed himself on Hillenkoetter's ship the Dixie while it was anchored off of Espiritu Santo in December 1943, but it is not clear whether they actually met or were acquainted.<sup>3</sup>

Hillenkoetter was also in command of the U.S.S. Missouri when in March of 1946 he was tasked with returning the body of the Turkish ambassador Münir Ertegün who died in office in the United States. Just before Gibraltar, the Missouri rendezvoused with the U.S.S. Helena under the command of Admiral Kent Hewitt. Hewitt boarded the Missouri at this time and assumed command for the remainder of the Mediterranean cruise.

Of interest is that Hillenkoetter left the Missouri sometime before June 1, 1946 for temporary duty in Washington.<sup>4</sup> What this temporary duty entailed or if it was related to his work on behalf of Rosetta is unknown but it places him in Washington at the same time as Henri Smith-Hutton, just prior to Smith-Hutton's trip to Scandinavia to assume command of the U.S.S. Little Rock in Stockholm.

By July 31, 1946, Hillenkoetter was back in Paris as naval attaché where he relieved Admiral Hewett Thebaud. Thebaud, who was a wartime member of Joint Security Control as well as the Director of Naval Intelligence in 1945 was also actively involved in codebreaking. Thebaud brokered the postwar 1945 COMINT agreement that extended the codebreaking cooperation between the UK and the U.S. into the Cold War period.<sup>5</sup> After being relieved by Hillenkoetter, Thebaud then assumed the role of naval attaché in Brussels, Belgium, where he would also serve in a feedback role for Rosetta.

---

<sup>1</sup> FBI memorandum on Hillenkoetter. (February 26, 1947).

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/1700319/1952-12-02b.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1700319/1952-12-02b.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Snodgrass Papers. Scripps Institute Library.

---

<sup>4</sup> [\(1946, June 1\). A New Commander Takes Over the Missouri. \*New York Times\*. p. 7.](#)

Missouri ship Logs.

<sup>5</sup> NSA. *The Soviet Problem*. DOCID: 3188691. p. 159.

Memorandum from Thebaud to Admiral King. Subject: Rattan Project, Present Status of. (June 4, 1945).

## CHAPTER 38

### Central Intelligence Indeed

The CIA often bemoans that in 1946 when they absorbed via CIG the former OSS assets, the SSU, that they inherited OSS' dismal security reputation as well. After grafting those assets on to the CIA family tree and some hefty in-house cleaning, this security perception was reversed.

The CIA also inherited the Rosetta Deception as DCIs Vandenberg and Hillenkoetter and potentially even Richard Helms, were knee-deep members of the magician's guild. Will the CIA now lay proud claim to their Rosetta legacy or prefer that this branch be pruned from their genealogical record? As the old saying goes, you can't choose your family, you are born into it, and that holds true for the CIA as well.

In 1946, CIG's involvement in Rosetta was limited to Hoyt Vandenberg at the top and very select personnel in the Office of Special Operations. Even then, in true LCS/JCS style, those in the know only knew enough about their own small role in the operation. Very few knew the overall goals and modus operandi.

This extreme compartmentalization can be seen in a November 5, 1946 memo from the CIG's Office of Research and Estimates (ORE) to the Interdepartmental Coordination and Planning Staff (ICAPS) that listed ORE's contacts with other U.S. agencies and more importantly the major projects the CIG was working on at that time.<sup>1</sup> The number one project on the list was the "Defense Project" which was focused on the USSR<sup>2</sup>, the second priority project was "Guided Missiles over Sweden" and the third was the "USSR Guided Missile Program".

What is revealing from this memo is how the missiles over Sweden were treated independently of the Russian guided missile project. So despite Vandenberg having briefed President Truman on two different occasions that the Ghost Rockets over Sweden were of Russian origin, by CIG categorizing them under distinct and separate projects meant they were not one and the same.

CIG's responsibility was to evaluate anything of foreign intelligence interest to the United States and alleged Soviet rockets over Sweden would definitely fall in that category. By

Vandenberg tasking his ORE department to investigate the missiles over Sweden, he could keep up the appearance that CIG was an uninvolved party. The ORE itself knew nothing of the deception and didn't have a clue as to what their colleagues at the Office of Special Operations (OSO) were up to.

In fact, all CIG departments other than OSO, were in the dark about what was really happening in Sweden. This is illustrated by a September 18, 1946 CIG Memorandum for the Record by Executive to the Director, E. K. Wright, who wrote that there had been a notable decrease in intelligence on rockets over Sweden and was not only a concern to CIG but also to the Joint Research and Development Board:<sup>3</sup>

Captain Olsen, Office of Collection and Dissemination (OCD), suggested sending JRDB consultant Dr. Hafstad under CIG cover to Sweden to gain more up-to-date information. Wright indicated this would be difficult as Dr. Hafstad was well known. Wright consulted with Vandenberg who agreed that the plan had merit, but just not with Dr. Hafstad. Vandenberg felt that due to the special arrangement CIG had with the State Department, CIG agents should only assume State Department cover when posted abroad. Wright then called Captain Olsen and told him to refrain from any direct action for the time being.

In a September 19, 1946 memo for the Acting Chief, ICAPS, Donald Edgar, OCD's former Acting Assistant Director, Harry F. Cunningham also advises against sending Dr. Hafstad or anyone else to Sweden, and that Vandenberg so concurred.<sup>4</sup> Vandenberg didn't want another department's scientist sticking their nose into Rosetta's deception operation. Using the deference to State Department cover as an excuse, he carefully vetoed Olsen's suggestion.

OCD's ignorance was further illustrated when Cunningham mentioned that the rockets over Sweden had a very high classification and that:

FYI, all sources (including the highest) have been fully exploited and copies of all reports, from all sources, have been furnished as they come in to ORE. A photo-Interpretation study of the three possible launching sites have been promised for September 27, 1946 and will be promptly forwarded to the CIG Office of Research and Estimates.

Here we see both ORE and OCD off chasing the same wild geese that Soviet agents were. ORE and OCD were spinning their wheels lining up experts and ordering up photo-interpretation studies, all the while not knowing that they were chasing after their own colleagues in OSO.

This compartmentalization extended out to all CIG liaisons. For example, Byron M. Sites, the War Department Intelligence Division's liaison to the ORE, was also working on the number two CIG project – *Guided Missiles Over Sweden*. Sites was not in the know although his boss General Chamberlin certainly was.

It is important for the reader to understand that the reason for Rosetta's compartmented dealings, restricting very carefully who was in on the deception even among their own departmental staffs, was to maintain operational security and integrity. It also makes it extremely difficult for scholars to make sense of this convoluted story and it is no wonder that Cold War historians prefer to ignore the Ghost Rocket history altogether.

There is no organization homogeneity in intelligence operations – especially one of this nature. The same compartmented operational security practices that LCS/JCS employed in their now legendary WW2 deception operations like Mincemeat and Bodyguard, had to be even more closely followed in Rosetta's exponentially greater deception.

But as I found throughout the period of writing this story, it is amazing how many clues, patiently uncovered one at a time and from many different sources, eventually yield a glimpse of the overall picture, with each discovered clue breathing new life into the research effort.

---

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum for Chief, ICAPS, Subject: *Interdepartmental Liaison, Annex No. 2 to Tab 'A', Planning and Coordinating Contacts*. (November 5, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> Proposed by Colonel J.R. Lovell, Military Intelligence Service on March 4, 1946. CIA Chronology 1940-1950. RG263, CIA History Review Program, HRP 89-2/01034 Box 2 Folder 4.

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum for the Record by E. K. Wright. (September 18, 1946).

<sup>4</sup> Memorandum for Acting Chief, ICAPS, Subject: *Intelligence Relating to Rockets over Sweden*. (September 19, 1946).

## CHAPTER 39

### Seeing is Not Always Believing

The preceding chapters have laid bare the behind the scenes manipulation of the press and Swedish officials that created the rocket hysteria in Sweden. But peddling false stories in the press about alleged rockets flying overhead was not sufficient. The rocket stories also needed a dose of realism added to them, otherwise Russian assets on the ground in Scandinavia would quickly ascertain that there was no substance to the reports. Spreading rumors around news media water coolers was not sufficient for Rosetta to paint the strategic deception picture it intended for Uncle Joe. Just like with all WW2 deception operations, the enemy had to be convinced that there was something of a substantive nature involved.

In other words, Rosetta had to launch real objects over the heads of the Swedish people. To pull this off without causing harm to people or property, Rosetta assets had to draw upon the deception methods that had been perfected during World War 2, providing us yet another fascinating look at the history of deception.

To kick off the deception, eyewitnesses were shown a real aerial rocket display courtesy of select British elements and Hewitt's Beach Jumpers who were reactivated for the task. Admiral Hewitt's good-will trip to Scandinavia from July 3 – 20, 1946 followed up by Smith-Hutton's tour of the Mediterranean in September were used as cover for the operations.

Simulating actual rocket launches either from aircraft or naval vessels, with appropriate light and sonic effects, the dummy rockets would self-destruct leaving little to no trace behind. It didn't require a massive bombardment, just a few well-placed launchings that would get the media wheel turning.

Ghost Rocket sightings had two common characteristics, the general direction of flight from south to north, and a propensity for the objects to self-destruct, leaving little to no debris. World War 2 deception planners were very familiar with self-destruct mechanisms, having employed them extensively in their deception paraphernalia. Dummy paratroopers were dropped from planes and equipped to self-destruct upon hitting the ground. An improved model of this self-

destruct parachute was designed by Douglas Fairbanks himself during his stint with the Beach Jumpers. By the end of the war these dummy paratroopers called PD Packs would be even more sophisticated, weighing 40 pounds, and constructed not only to self-inflate and self-destruct but also with sound effects simulating gun fire.<sup>1</sup>

If the objects were real, as the myriad of alleged observers attested to, then the self-destruct warhead could have been timed to explode mid-air on a timer or possibly by means of a proximity fuse. An August 1950 CIA memorandum on Soviet proximity fuses indicated that in 1946, the Soviets were still scrambling to assemble the manufacturing resources needed to create the fuses.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. and Britain however not only mass produced proximity fuses by this time but had effectively used them in the war. In Britain, the proximity fuse was used against the V-1 rocket and the U.S. used proximity fuses in the Battle of the Bulge, decimating German troops in the open with artillery shells that air burst.<sup>3</sup>

The exact deception paraphernalia used is not known, but the rocket reports themselves provide some interesting details. A British report described the very first Ghost Rocket to make the news:

The first and fullest story is that of Landskrona (reported in Dagens Nyheter on May 25, 1946). The remarkable characteristics of this object are that it is wingless and sparks come out of its tail. After this, the newspapers kept the story alive with relatively trivial observations from other places.<sup>4</sup>

The British report concluded that: “some sort of an aircraft emitting flames flew low over Landskrona at 1420 hours on May 24, 1946; this may have been some common type of aircraft or possibly a V-1.”

The Landskrona object sounded more like a spaceship prop from the 1939 Buck Rogers series produced by Universal Pictures, complete with sparks shooting out its rear, than it did an exotic weapon of war. It was also the most sensational of the earlier reports, launching a flurry of news stories from May through June, however less interesting these others proved to be, keeping the stories alive in the press until Hewitt’s armada could arrive in early July and unleash the larger firework display. This priming and milking of the press is a deception practice that can be traced back to WW2 and William Stephenson’s British Security Coordination (BSC).

This prime and milk routine was reflected in a letter from Stockholm British Air Attaché, Group Captain Simpson who asked General Bengt Nordenskiöld, Commander in Chief of the Swedish Air Force his views on the May 1946 reports. Simpson stated that “to my surprise, he (Nordenskiöld) had not seen, or alternatively, had not considered any such reports seriously. He was convinced that they were not true and merely imagination, or observations of ordinary meteorites.”<sup>5</sup>

Simpson then relates the difficulty he had getting any concrete information from the Swedes and that “although the Swedish Air Force wished to be helpful they were not receiving the degree of co-operation from the Swedish Defense Staff that had been outwardly promised”, but which changed dramatically in July.

The barrier was broken down on July 7<sup>th</sup>, when an abnormally large number of projectiles was observed all over Sweden. The following day, Nordenskiöld offered us reciprocal co-operation, provided that if necessary we were prepared to supply certain radar equipment and send out experts.

In summary, the very first Ghost Rocket report was the most dramatic at least until Hewitt’s forces were positioned to up the ante. The Swedish Defense staff paid no attention to the earlier press reports until the July 7 - 9 fireworks display and it at this point the British-Swedish partnership began.

Meanwhile, in an August 16, 1946 report from NA Stockholm Winston, the possibility of deception paraphernalia is hinted at:

The observations made can be characterized as fire phenomena, either ‘vividly shining balls of fire with tails’, blue-white or blue-green in color, or ‘silver sparkling oblong items shaped like torpedoes.’ A number of reports describe the objects as a thermos flash. It is remarkable that the observations of ‘balls of fire with tail’ are mainly concentrated to 9 – 10 July, while the former and later reports chiefly mention the torpedo shape.”

The attaché’s observations are interesting and especially intriguing are the cluster of reports of “balls of fire” described as a thermos flash reported the day before and of Hewitt’s forces

arriving in Stockholm, sounding more like a fireworks pyrotechnic display than the test of an exotic new weapon.

In addition to mixing in deception paraphernalia, the deception planners could have launched real rockets for effect. The JB-2 missile also known as the Loon was a V-1 knockoff created at Wright Field. Republic Aviation was sub-contracted to build 75,000 of the JB-2s to be used in the invasion of Japan but production halted in September 1945 after 1,385 JB-2s were delivered to the War Department:<sup>6</sup>

The U.S. Navy also involved itself with the V-1. In September 1944, the Bureau of Aeronautics suggested firing the JB-2 from an escort carrier. The next month, the Chief of naval Operations endorsed the idea and requested 51 of the flying bombs from the AAF for carrier trials. By April 1945, the Navy had named their version [the KVW-1] or the V-1 Loon, and extended their study of launch platforms to include landing craft (LSTs), PB4Y-Is (the Navy's B-24), and off the beach. But a May 1945 study indicated that a reasonable date to expect operations from either ship or shore was not until August or September 1946.<sup>7</sup>

A KVW-1 was test launched successfully at the naval Air Facility, Point Mugu, California on January 7, 1946 but the historical record shows that subsequent submarine or ship launchings did not occur until 1947.

The U.S. planned to use the Loon in Operation Downfall, the proposed invasion of Japan, but the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki negated the need. Prior to Japan's surrender, Joint Security Control had already drawn up deception plans Operation Pastel and Coronet Deception in support of the invasion. Similar to the D-Day deception operations, the JSC plans were designed to obscure where the real invasion landings would take place.<sup>8</sup>

Both Clayton Bissell of Joint Security Control and Douglas Fairbanks of the Beach Jumpers were heavily involved in Operation Downfall's deception planning.<sup>9</sup> The plan called for fake landings preceded by heavy aerial bombardment where the KVW-1 as a terror weapon would probably have been used.

Although it is possible that some of the over 1,300 Loons built were transported to key points in both northern and southern Europe and used in support of Rosetta's deception, this is

purely speculative and perhaps the deception planners relied exclusively on less sophisticated deception paraphernalia, especially since the Loons would have left some physical evidence unless they were launched inland with an expected trajectory out to the sea.

How the deception could have been effectuated was limited only by the imagination of the deceivers. Conceivably a lightweight airframe made out of easily combustible organic material with an added thermal incendiary device could have been air dropped to simulate a rocket, before it self-destructed. This would create both the illusion of a missile in flight and also explain the lack of engine parts and noise characteristic of the Ghost Rockets. A variety of special effects from standard pyrotechnics to flares to jerry-rigged devices could have all been used in concert.

If disciplined military men can be deceived in the heat of battle to believe that a non-existent enemy force is bearing down upon them, a civilian population during peacetime could be more easily deceived by the same skilled group of illusionists. With the proper priming of the audience's fear response, it wouldn't take much to convince them that what they were witnessing was a confirmation of those fears.

Whatever was flying over Scandinavia and Southern Europe in 1946 did not bear the Soviet Red Star but instead the insignia of the Dancing Faun – the mark of Rosetta. The deception had two major goals in mind – creating cold war propaganda that portrayed the Russian Bear on the rampage in Europe and secondly breaking the Soviet diplomatic code.

---

<sup>1</sup> Holt, T. (2004). *The deceivers: Allied military deception in the Second World War*. New York: Scribner. p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Intelligence Memorandum No. 39, Subject: *Soviet Capacity to Produce Proximity Fuses*. (August 8, 1950).

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from [http://langmuir.nmt.edu/Storms\\_Above/StormsAboveCh2.html](http://langmuir.nmt.edu/Storms_Above/StormsAboveCh2.html).

<sup>4</sup> Report of Suspected V-Weapons over the Baltic. FO 371/56951. (July 6, 1946). UK Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Simpson to H.M. Charge d'Affaires. FO 371/56951. (August 22, 1946). UK Archives.

<sup>6</sup> Werrell, Kenneth P. & Air University (U.S.). Press. (1997). *The evolution of the cruise missile*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala: Air University, Air University Press. p. 62. Retrieved from <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a162646.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Werrell, Kenneth P. & Air University (U.S.). Press. (1997). *The evolution of the cruise missile*. Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala: Air University, Air University Press. p. 67. Retrieved from <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a162646.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Huber, T. M., & Combat Studies Institute (U.S.). (1988). *Pastel: Deception in the invasion of Japan*. Fort Leavenworth, Kan: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Combat Studies Institute. Foreword.

<sup>9</sup> Huber, T. M., & Combat Studies Institute (U.S.). (1988). *Pastel: Deception in the invasion of Japan*. Fort Leavenworth, Kan: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Combat Studies Institute. p. 30.

## CHAPTER 40

### Forrestal, the Ultimate Cold Warrior

Another American celebrity who visited Stockholm during the Ghost Rocket deception was U.S. Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, arriving one week after Admiral Hewitt's fleet.

Forrestal departed Washington on June 24, 1946, with his naval aide, Captain William Smedberg III, and two special assistants, Captain John A. Kennedy and Frank Nash. Their round the world tour took them to San Francisco, Pearl Harbor, Kwajalein and then to Bikini Atoll where Forrestal witnessed the Able atomic bomb test. From there he traveled to Guam, Manila and then to Tokyo to confer with General MacArthur. Then it was on to Chungking for talks with General Marshall before moving on to Okinawa, Bangkok, India, Karachi, Cairo, Rome and to Berlin where he would visit with General Clay to discuss Soviet aggression.<sup>1</sup>

The second to the last leg of his whirlwind tour was to Stockholm where he arrived on July 16, 1946 at the same time that Admiral Kent Hewitt's flotilla lay anchored in Swedish waters. Forrestal, according to a NY Times article, was scheduled to talk to the Swedish Defense Secretary during his two day visit to Stockholm.<sup>2</sup>

Forrestal's visit to Stockholm was not happenstance, but like ex-Generals Doolittle and Sarnoff, was for effect. Forrestal was also playing a role in the Rosetta orchestrated performance, one that had the Russians wondering if the U.S. Secretary of the Navy was paying the Swedish Defense Minister a visit to discuss the Ghost Rockets.

Although Hewitt's fleet would sail from Stockholm, Hewitt himself boarded Forrestal's plane for the trip back to London on July 18.<sup>3</sup> The next day Forrestal had lunch with the King and Queen and also received a report from the Director of naval Intelligence and Joint Security Control member<sup>4</sup>, Thomas B. Inglis who had just completed his own inspection trip through Europe.<sup>5</sup>

What motivated Forrestal's actions on behalf of Rosetta was not only a deep sense of patriotism, but also a sincere desire to avoid war at all costs. It was on the blood stained sands of Iwo Jima, where Forrestal observed firsthand the brutality of war that resulted in so many

American casualties and changed his outlook on the nature of warfare forever. “We cannot go from Iwo to Iwo” he told Rear Admiral Ellis Zacharias. “We must find a formula to sustain peace without this endless, frightful bloodshed”.<sup>6</sup>

As it turned out, Admiral Ellis Zacharias, already had part of the formula that Forrestal was seeking. During WW2, Zacharias of Naval Intelligence, played an important role in the use of psychological warfare against Japan while with the Navy’s OP-16-W unit, and he personally briefed Forrestal on these psychological operation plans. In the epilogue of his book *Secret Missions*, published in 1946, he wrote:<sup>7</sup>

Among our great skills in war were those with which I have dealt in this book – the two intellectual forces of intelligence and psychological action. As we face the future, with man’s universal hopes focused on peace, we shall be willfully blinding ourselves if we shut our eyes to the fact that these twin skills, so instrumental in effecting victory in war, can be equally instrumental in assuring peace.”

The force of ideas, proven by the success of our psychological warfare in the Mediterranean against the Italians, in the Atlantic against the Germans, and in the Pacific against the Japanese, is now undeniable. And psychological action, like intelligence, and springing from intelligence, far from being solely a weapon of warfare, is a natural means of implementing peace. It is the surest, in fact the only, means of orienting the peoples of conquered nations to the acceptance and understanding of the principles of human existence and government for which we fought.

Forrestal would take these words to heart after WW2 ended and the dark clouds of another war began to gather on the horizon after a belligerent Uncle Joe said publically on February 9, 1946 that war with the West was inevitable.<sup>8</sup>

This time Forrestal was determined that humanity was not going to endure another world conflict, if he could help it. But Forrestal was not just interested in psychological operations to influence the Soviet mood, he also wanted more concrete steps taken. After being promoted to the Secretary of Defense in 1947, he became the Truman’s administration “champion cold

warrior, one of the first to have recognized the Soviet threat. In that role he was a major force in favor of covert action.”<sup>9</sup>

Forrestal, already a staunch anti-communist in 1945 “argued forcefully in Cabinet meetings and in testimony before the House naval Affairs Committee that Soviet communism was implacably dedicated to the destruction of the capitalist system.”<sup>10</sup> Forrestal had concluded that Soviet ideology was “as incompatible with democracy as was Nazism or Fascism”.<sup>11</sup> In addition, Forrestal sent memos to the White House arguing that communists were up to no good inside the U.S. government.”<sup>12</sup>

When George Kennan sent his now famous long telegram on February 22, 1946 that alerted the U.S. to the danger posed by Soviet Russia:

To Forrestal, the Kennan essay was exactly the authoritarian explanation he had been seeking... and he immediately became the principal promoter of both document and author. Forrestal sent copies to the President and the Cabinet, to newspaper publishers and columnists throughout the country, to senators and congressmen, to bankers and businessmen. He made it required reading for thousands of officers in the Navy.”<sup>13</sup> Forrestal even “clipped a copy of the diplomatic dispatch to his personal journal, and ignoring its Secret classification, passed it around the government.”<sup>14</sup>

Forrestal became Kennan’s patron, “a fact that was to have a significant bearing on the writing and publication a year later of the Kennan’s famous ‘X’ article, which crystallized U. S. policy toward the Soviet Union into a one-word description – “containment”.<sup>15</sup>

Forrestal was not interested in just tough talk against Russian aggression, he wanted tough action and soon he got his chance. As a principal member of Rosetta, the U.S. Navy under Forrestal’s command contributed more than its fair share of human and material resources to accomplishing Rosetta’s deception goals, as we will see later on in this story.

Forrestal arrived in Stockholm just at the height of the Ghost Rockets being bantered around in the world press, a visit planned for its publicity effect as “national political leaders, high level diplomats, civil servants, businessmen, and news reporters often play starring roles in strategic deceptions.”<sup>16</sup>

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Forrestal, J., Millis, W., & Duffield, E. S. (1951). *The Forrestal diaries*. New York: Viking Press.
- <sup>2</sup> (1946, July 18). [U.S. Ships Leave Sweden; Forrestal Arrives in Time to Bid Hewitt Farewell. \*New York Times\*. p. 10.](#)
- <sup>3</sup> [Cherpak, E. M., ed. \(2004\). \*The Memoirs of Admiral H. Kent Hewitt\*. Newport, Rhode Island: Naval War College Press. p. 249.](#)
- <sup>4</sup> Inglis replaced Hewlett Thebaud on Joint Security Control on September 15, 1945
- <sup>5</sup> Hoopes, T., & Brinkley, D. (1992). *Driven patriot: The life and times of James Forrestal* (First edition.). Knopf. p. 296.
- <sup>6</sup> Hoopes, T., & Brinkley, D. (1992). *Driven patriot: The life and times of James Forrestal* (First edition.). Knopf. p. 201.
- <sup>7</sup> Zacharias, E. M. (1946). *Secret missions: The story of an intelligence officer*. G. P. Putnam's Sons. Epilogue.
- <sup>8</sup> Stalin Speech on coexistence, Feb 1946
- <sup>9</sup> Morgan, T. (1999). *A covert life: Jay Lovestone : communist, anti-communist, and spymaster* (First edition.). Random House.
- <sup>10</sup> Hoopes, T., & Brinkley, D. (1992). *Driven patriot: The life and times of James Forrestal* (First edition.). Knopf. p. 250.
- <sup>11</sup> Gaddis, J.L. (2011). *George F. Kennan: An American Life*. New York, Penguin.
- <sup>12</sup> Grose, P. (2000). *Operation rollback: America's secret war behind the Iron Curtain*. Houghton Mifflin. P. 81.
- <sup>13</sup> Hoopes, T., & Brinkley, D. (1992). *Driven patriot: The life and times of James Forrestal* (First edition.). Knopf. p. 272.
- <sup>14</sup> Grose, P. (2000). *Operation rollback: America's secret war behind the Iron Curtain*. Houghton Mifflin. p. 4.
- <sup>15</sup> Hoopes, T., & Brinkley, D. (1992). *Driven patriot: The life and times of James Forrestal* (First edition.). Knopf. pp. 273 – 273.
- <sup>16</sup> [Herbig, K. L. & Daniel, D. C. \(January 1981\). \*Battle of Wits: Synthesizing and Extrapolating from NPS Research on Strategic Military Deception\*. p. 18.](#)

## CHAPTER 41

### CEO Cold Warrior

David Sarnoff, the President of RCA whose presence in Stockholm along with General James Doolittle made the world news during the 1946 Ghost Rocket hysteria, was like Forrestal a staunch anti-communist.

Sarnoff was Russian by birth and moved from Minsk to New York City with his family when he was 4 years old, eventually settling in to Manhattan's Lower East Side. Joining the Marconi Company as an office boy in 1906, he rose up through the ranks of Marconi until it was absorbed by RCA Corporation in 1919. Sarnoff rose equally fast through the ranks of RCA from manager to Vice President to eventually being designated RCA President in 1930.

Sarnoff had entered the U. S. Army Signal Corps reserve as a lieutenant colonel in 1924 and was promoted to colonel in 1931. During WW2, he was assigned to the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) in England and oversaw press communications and broadcasting for the invasion of France and was promoted to Brigadier General in November 1944 and from then on was referred to as "The General" by RCA staff.<sup>1</sup> During this time, Sarnoff also established a close friendship with the Supreme Allied Commander and future U.S. President, Dwight Eisenhower.

In 1955, he wrote a bestselling pamphlet on behalf of the Eisenhower administration titled *Program for a Political Offensive against World Communism* where he outlined his plan for winning the Cold War. His opening statement sums up his views: "Our best and surest way to prevent a Hot War is to win the Cold War."

Sarnoff then outlines the weapons that Communists use in their pursuit of world domination: media propaganda, infiltration and subversion, fifth columns and false fronts, sabotage and terror, and treacherous diplomacy allowing Moscow to bring:

One-third of the human race under its iron control by means short of a Hot-War. These political and psychological methods – the Cold War – have paid off, at smaller risk and infinitely lower cost than a Hot War would entail.

Accordingly they are being applied without stint to the conquest of the rest of mankind. For world Communism, with its high command in the Kremlin in Moscow, the Cold War is not a temporary or holding operation, nor a prelude to a Hot War. It is the main bout, the decisive offensive, conducted on an unlimited scale, with total victory as its goal.

We dare not lose the cold war. If we ignore these facts, or do not counteract them effectively in good time, we shall lose the Cold War by default. For the United States and other free nations, defeat of this sort would be as catastrophic and as final as defeat in a shooting war. Whether we freeze to death or burn to death, our civilization would be equally finished.

Sarnoff's prescribed strategy for fighting the cold war was to "turn Moscow's favorite weapons against world Communism":

Our counter-measures and methods must be novel, unconventional, daring and flexible. They must, moreover, be released from the inhibitions of peace-time, since it is peace only in outer forms. Our duty and our best chance for salvation, in the final analysis, is to prosecute the Cold-War-to the point of victory. To survive in freedom we must win.

Nine years before Sarnoff wrote his prescription for winning the Cold War, the deception methodologies he believed should be turned against the Soviets were being actively used in the 1946 Ghost Rocket deception and Sarnoff himself was an active participant in what can be described as one of the first major Cold War operations. But his Stockholm visit in August 1946 was not the only part he played in the Rosetta Deception but an even more important role that would bring the Ghost Rocket deception full circle, one that involved reading the mind of Uncle Joe.

---

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.hagley.org/sarnoff/who-was-david-sarnoff-part-ii-1930-1971>.

## **Part 3 – The Mind of Uncle Joe**

## CHAPTER 42

### Deception's End

The previous chapters have documented two major anachronisms in world history – the 1946 Ghost Rockets and the 1947 Leech-Snodgrass super-weapon – but for what end were these elaborate forgeries of history perpetrated? As I pointed out earlier, there is a difference between psychological operations and deception operations, the former's purpose is to change your mood while the latter's is to convince you to take an action. As two of the earliest Cold War operations, they had both a psychological warfare and deception element to them. But giving Uncle Joe an ulcer by changing his mood was not guaranteed to keep him from marching his vast army across the European landscape.

I began this story by telling you that the Rosetta magicians only had one audience member in mind – Uncle Joe. What Rosetta really desired was to read his thoughts and to know what his next moves would be. Would he initiate World War 3? Would he coexist with the West despite his belligerent talk? Would he listen to reason or only to force? As Churchill so succinctly put it in October, 1939, "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma". Rosetta couldn't either, so they settled for the next best thing to clairvoyance, reading Uncle Joe's mail.

During WW2, the Axis military leadership must have believed that the Allies could psychically predict their every move, especially after those battles where the Germans or Japanese or Italians suffered their heaviest losses. In a sense the Allies were reading minds, because by deciphering their enemies' encrypted communications in almost real time, they knew the order of battle in advance of the fight. The breaking of the German Enigma and the Japanese Purple ciphers provided the Allies the edge they needed to achieve victory.

After the war, the Soviet Union emerged as the new threat to world peace and the British and Americans mindful of the crucial role codebreaking played in WW2 victory, renewed their efforts to use their codebreaking skills against the Russians. In addition, having worked cooperatively to pull off their extensive wartime deceptions, the London Controlling Section (LCS) which later changed its name to the Directorate of Plans and the U.S. Joint Security Control

(JCS) which operated under the Combined Chiefs of Staff, having kept the best of their WW2 deception techniques from the Soviets, pledged to use their exceptionally well-honed skills against their former ally in the now Cold War.

The post-war LCS/JSC successors – the magician’s guild I call Rosetta – would stage a peacetime performance that would rival their greatest successes of WW2 by combining the two greatest weapons in their arsenals – strategic deception and codebreaking. To unravel the twisted tale Rosetta wove from 1946 - 1947, it is important to focus on three major themes - motive, means and precedent.

Showing motive explains why such an elaborate deception was kicked off to begin with; listing means, details who was involved and what resources were at hand, and most importantly, pointing out precedent will illustrate that truly there was nothing new under the sun for Rosetta who recycled every play from their WW2 playbook to pull off what is undoubtedly the greatest deception operation in human history

Fasten your seatbelt as this story is about to take incredible twists and turns through the murky waters of scientific intelligence, codebreaking, espionage and strategic deception. It would be wholly unbelievable if not for the official sources that document it and wholly unattainable if not for the timely release of declassified documents, official and unofficial written and oral histories, and original media articles that have taken a cumulative timespan of almost 70 years to come to light.

## CHAPTER 43

### From the Horse's Mouth

Nations at war strive to maximize the use of intelligence to gain the upper hand in the conflict and high on each party's intelligence priority list is knowing what their opponent's leadership is thinking – the enemy's strategic mindset.

Is the enemy leadership interested in negotiating a truce or is their resolve the pursuit of total victory? Does the enemy have internal dissention or a weakness that can be exploited? This reading of the enemy's strategic mind could make the difference between a prolonged, costly and bloody campaign or a quick end to hostilities and perhaps even a favorable outcome for the party that knows the hand dealt to their adversary.

Having a spy in the enemy's inner circle is the ideal intelligence source, but in the absence of this rarity, the next best thing is intercepting the communications between the enemy's leadership and their remote embassies and diplomats around the world. It is these strategic diplomatic communications that are the prime targets of Communication Intelligence (COMINT) intercept, decryption and analysis.

Equally important is the intercept, decryption and analysis of military communications that afford insight at the tactical level as to where the enemy will attack next and with what force. Being able to read both diplomatic and military communications provides a holistic view of the enemy's intentions and plans, and during times of war, both should receive equal attention as failing to do so could be detrimental. For example, although the U.S. was successfully intercepting and decrypting Japanese diplomatic communications in 1941, they were not having equal success against Japanese naval codes, a shortcoming that directly contributed to the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>1</sup>

But in 1946, when the world was no longer at war and the importance of decrypting military communications was not as urgent, the focus was shifted towards decrypting diplomatic communications. During WW2, "the coverage of diplomatic links always ranked as a top priority

for both the Army and Navy, as it represented the only intelligence of real interest to nonmilitary consumers, namely, the Department of State and the White House”.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the birth of the NSA, it was the military services that held the codebreaking reins, and in the timeframe of this story, that meant the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy as the Air Force did not achieve independence until after these events took place. The deciphering of diplomatic communication created highly valuable raw intelligence that would afford the Army or the Navy the direct ear of the President.

During the 1930s, both services worked on diplomatic targets as “each service’s COMINT organization viewed its survival as being contingent upon the production of diplomatic intelligence”.<sup>3</sup> So fierce was this fight for the Presidential ear that:

Neither wanted to relinquish control, and by 1940 had agreed to an odd-even day division of responsibilities for diplomatic COMINT – the Navy would decode diplomatic traffic on the odd days of the month and the Army on the even days, thereby allowing both to maintain White House visibility.<sup>4</sup>

This petty and inefficient odd-even day relationship continued up until the disaster at Pearl Harbor and it was this inter-service intelligence rivalry that received a fair share of the blame for the intelligence failures that led to the December 1941 Japanese attack.

The Navy, shortly after Pearl Harbor, wisely made the decision to defer all work on diplomatic traffic to the Army until the end of the war and directed all of its effort to naval traffic.<sup>5</sup> This was more than just an expedient decision, it was one of self-preservation that came out of the barrage of criticism from the various official committees that investigated the Pearl Harbor intelligence failure.

During WW2, It was not only the Axis mindset that needed to be probed, but the mindset of the Soviet Union as well, as the UK and the U.S. both mistrusted the intentions of their restive and uneasy Soviet ally. Codebreaking was instrumental in this regard.

The allied wartime conferences attended by the UK, the U.S. and the Soviet Union included Tehran in 1943, Yalta in 1945 and Potsdam in 1945. Although there was already much

suspicion of Soviet intentions, it was at the Potsdam Conference that these doubts were crystallized with help of the Anglo codebreakers.<sup>6</sup>

Both Truman and Churchill were aware of the Japanese overtures at that time to the Soviet Union as these were nicely summarized in MAGIC Diplomatic Summaries. Had Stalin known that the Americans and British were reading Japanese diplomatic communications, he may have played a more straightforward tune with his partners at the Potsdam Conference.<sup>7</sup>

Even before Potsdam, Secretary of State Cordell Hull, on January 3, 1944, proclaimed that:<sup>8</sup>

Regarding the value of COMINT in diplomacy, the State Department has found this material valuable at all times, and vital in a number of highly important situations. It would appear that information of this kind, and its analysis, will be even more vital in the future than in the past, both during the period of actual hostilities, and after hostilities may be concluded. This material is of great value in determining the facts on which policy must be formulated or action taken.

Post World War 2 U.S. codebreaking efforts in support of Department of State diplomatic negotiations is a largely un-researched historical subject. Hints of COMINT's postwar use as a tool of diplomacy still exist but many historians are deterred by the few records that have been declassified. The same could be said about the postwar use of strategic deception.

Although during WW2, codebreaking and deception operations were effectively used in concert in some of the largest campaigns of the war, this formula could not be applied in the same way during times of peace, requiring both the UK and the U.S. to revise their strategy from 1946 onwards.

London Controlling Section member Dennis Wheatley understood the peacetime challenges that deception planners would face and offered an alternative strategy that employed scientific intelligence. The codebreakers faced a similar peacetime challenge outside the urgency of wartime communications.

To overcome these challenges required not only creative thinking but a whole new set of methods to achieve national security priorities. Rosetta would be the creative force behind these

new strategies and one of its members would lead the charge; an American war hero who knew firsthand the important roles that both deception and codebreaking played in the Allied victory over the Axis powers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Parker, F. D., & United States. National Security Agency/Central Security Service. Center for Cryptologic History. (1994). *Pearl Harbor revisited: United States Navy communications intelligence, 1924-1941*. National Security Agency, Center for Cryptologic History. p. 7. Retrieved from

[https://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic\\_heritage/publications/wwii/pearl\\_harbor\\_revisited.pdf](https://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/wwii/pearl_harbor_revisited.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Burns, T. (1990). *The Origins of the National Security Agency 1940 – 1952, Series V Early Postwar Period, Volume 1*. p. 6. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/cryptologic\\_histories/origins\\_of\\_nsa.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_histories/origins_of_nsa.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Burns, T. (1990). *The Origins of the National Security Agency 1940 – 1952, Series V Early Postwar Period, Volume 1*. p. 8. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/cryptologic\\_histories/origins\\_of\\_nsa.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_histories/origins_of_nsa.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Burns, T. (1990). *The Origins of the National Security Agency 1940 – 1952, Series V Early Postwar Period, Volume 1*. p. 8. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/cryptologic\\_histories/origins\\_of\\_nsa.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_histories/origins_of_nsa.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Rowlett, F. (February 11, 1964). *Recollections of Work on Russian*. DOCID: 3421019. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/06.PDF>.

<sup>6</sup> Peterson, M. L. *Before BOURBON: American and British COMINT Efforts against Russia and the Soviet Union before 1945*. NSA. DOCID: 3853634. p. 8. Retrieved from

[https://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/cryptologic\\_quarterly/Before\\_Bourbon.pdf](https://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_quarterly/Before_Bourbon.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> *On Watch. Profiles from the National Security Agency's Past 40 Years*. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/05.PDF>. p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from Secretary of State Cordell Hull to OP-20-G. (January 3, 1944).

## CHAPTER 44

### Military Jocks and Crypto Nerds

Hoyt S. Vandenberg was a man of his time – literally – his boyish handsome face gracing the January 19, 1945 cover of Time Magazine and seven years later the May 12, 1952 cover. A true war hero, Vandenberg led the dashing life of commanding general in WW2 and in June of 1946 the title of spy chief as the second Director of the Central Intelligence Group-the predecessor of the CIA, before returning to the newly minted United States Air Force in May 1947 where soon after he succeeded General Carl A. Spaatz as the Air Force Chief of Staff.

Before joining CIG, Vandenberg was the Director of Intelligence of the War Department General Staff and officially joined Rosetta on January 26, 1946 when he replaced General Clayton Bissell on Joint Security Control (JSC).<sup>1</sup> Bissell had been the G2 and JSC Army representative since February 7, 1944, his arrival considered a turning point in American deception.<sup>2</sup> Bissell went on to duty as the military attaché to Great Britain from May, 1946 till 1948, placing him in a very important liaison role on behalf of Rosetta.<sup>3</sup>

It is not clear what other deception plans besides the Rosetta Deception, Vandenberg promoted during his stint on Joint Security Control as there are no declassified postwar JSC operations in the public archival record. But one thing is clear, Vandenberg helped develop Rosetta's plans and played a continuing part in the operation as it unfolded during his tenure at CIG and even after his return to the Air Force.

Vandenberg was replaced on JSC by Major General S. J. Chamberlain on June 19, 1946 after Vandenberg moved to the role of Director of the Central Intelligence Group.<sup>4</sup> Despite holding the JSC title for a short period of time, Vandenberg as DCI would maintain close ties to Joint Security Control through his Assistant Chief of Air Staff, General George C. McDonald. The Army Air Forces representative of JSC since February 21, 1946, McDonald remained on the JSC personnel roster into 1947.<sup>5</sup>

What was Joint Security Control's (JSC's) post war mission? To answer that we only need examine the revised JSC charter of May 8, 1947.<sup>6</sup> JSC was charged with two tasks:

- a. Preventing information of military value from falling into the hands of the enemy
- b. Timing the implementation of those portions of cover and deception plans which must be performed by military and non-military agencies in the United States.

As regards subparagraph a., Joint Security Control believes that the prevention of information of military value falling into the hands of the enemy is a continuing function during the interim period until the war is officially over and during peace time as regards potential enemies and as regards subparagraph b., Joint Security Control believes that these functions should continue in relation to proposed mobilization and operational joint plans both in the interim period and during peace.

What the JSC charter conveyed was that deception operations were no longer just a wartime tool but could also be employed in peace time against potential enemies of the U.S., namely the Soviets. JSC would draft the deception plans and coordinate the timing of the deception with all necessary agencies.

During WW2, JSC coordinated with select agencies of the Government and the Military that would be called upon to play a role in a deception operation. These agencies were provided limited information – just enough instruction to play their assigned role - and the execution orders were communicated to only one or two top people in each organization.<sup>7</sup>

This compartmentalization ensured operational secrecy and security as only a handful of non-JSC personnel were in on the deception and even then they were not privy to what the overall strategy was. In essence JSC orchestrated the deception like the director of a play, assigning each role, and coaching each participant in a grand coordinated performance.

But unlike wartime deceptions where JSC played just the coordinator role, in the Rosetta deception the JSC members played active parts in their own production. When the theater curtain was raised, JSC members were no longer in the director's chair but directly facing the spotlights. Standing arm in arm with JSC on the stage, were the leaders of the Anglo codebreaking organizations ASA and GC&CS. And it was only after the military jocks of Joint Security Control got together with the nerds of American and British cryptography that the grand production could begin.

JSC members were no strangers to COMINT. Bissell was an original member of ANCIB<sup>8</sup> which evolved into STANCIB and then USCIB, playing a central role in reorganizing COMINT functions during and immediately after the war. During the war, Bissell and his subordinates including Colonel Newman Smith were the first JSC members to be cleared for Ultra access.<sup>9</sup> Smith routinely sent a list of special means (double agent) items to ASA's Colonel Carter Clarke.<sup>10</sup>

Vandenberg played an even greater role as the STANCIB Chairman, brokering and then signing on behalf of the United States the March 5, 1946 UK-USA agreement that postwar locked the two countries arm in arm in the COMINT business. This joint effort carries on to this day between the National Security Agency (NSA) and the UK's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ).

It was both Bissell's and Vandenberg's penchant for combining codebreaking with strategic deception along with their close ties to the British - masters of the black arts and of the double cross and triple cross intelligence game – that made it possible for Rosetta to be conceived.

When Vandenberg left the Central Intelligence Group in May of 1947, his inside man on Joint Security Control, Assistant Chief of Air Staff, General George C. McDonald, became the Army Air Forces representative to the USCIB on May 27, 1947.<sup>11</sup>

General C. McDonald, strategic deceiver and code breaker, was also now in a position to play a crucial role in the Rosetta deception. It was General McDonald's intelligence officers who found a copy of Eugen Sänger's report: *A Rocket Drive for Long Range Bombers* at DFS-Ainring in 1944<sup>12</sup>, (the superweapon that Uncle Joe craved so much that he called for Eugen to be kidnapped), and it was McDonald who ordered it to be translated into English.<sup>13</sup> It was McDonald who received all Ghost Rocket intelligence from his British counterpart Sir Thomas Elmhirst despite the British charade of not disclosing their partnership with the Swedes.<sup>14</sup> Finally, McDonald was also a member of the Intelligence Advisory Board (IAB) which served as an advisory capacity to the Director of Central Intelligence (CIG).

When President Truman created the National Intelligence Authority on January 22, 1946, he also created the IAB, consisting of representatives of the intelligence arms of the military services and the Department of State. IAB's initial membership included Lieutenant General Hoyt Vandenberg, Army (later becoming DCI), Rear Admiral Thomas B. Inglis, Navy (who met up in

London with Forrestal during the Ghost Rocket deception); and Brigadier General George C. McDonald, Army Air Force. Representing the State Department was Colonel Alfred McCormack.<sup>15</sup>

All but McCormack were both Joint Security Control and STANCIB/USCIB members – deceivers and codebreakers. Rosetta was in the majority. As Joint Security Control was subordinate to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, McCormack with the State Department could not be a JSC member. McCormack was however the State Representative on STANCIB and had been the deputy to ASA leader Colonel Carter Clarke.<sup>16</sup> The IAB was one hundred percent represented on COMINT matters reflecting the primary role codebreaking would have in future intelligence operations, including Rosetta's.

---

<sup>1</sup> National Archives College Park, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Entry Central Decimal File 1942-45, Box 214.

<sup>2</sup> Holt, T. (2004). *The deceivers: Allied military deception in the Second World War*. New York: Scribner. p. 434.

<sup>3</sup> *Foreign Service List: July 1, 1946*. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/foreignserviceli1946unit> ;  
*Foreign Service List: July 1, 1947*. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/foreignserviceli1947unit>.

<sup>4</sup> National Archives College Park, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Entry Central Decimal File 1942-45, Box 214.

<sup>5</sup> National Archives College Park, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Entry Central Decimal File 1942-45, Box 214.

<sup>6</sup> National Archives College Park, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Entry Central Decimal File 1942-45, Box 214.

<sup>7</sup> National Archives College Park, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Entry Central Decimal File 1942-45, Box 214.

<sup>8</sup> [Benson, R. L. \(1997\). \*A history of U.S. communications intelligence during World War II : policy and administration\*. Fort George G. Meade, Maryland: Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency. p. 138.](#)

<sup>9</sup> Holt, T. (2004). *The deceivers: Allied military deception in the Second World War*. New York: Scribner. p. 435.

<sup>10</sup> Holt, T. (2004). *The deceivers: Allied military deception in the Second World War*. New York: Scribner. p. 458.

<sup>11</sup> Burns, T. (1990). *The Origins of the National Security Agency 1940 – 1952, Series V Early Postwar Period, Volume 1*. p. 47. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/cryptologic\\_histories/origins\\_of\\_nsa.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_histories/origins_of_nsa.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Sanger, E. & Bredt, J. (August 1944). *A Rocket Drive for Long Range Bombers (Uber Einen Raketenantrieb fur Fernbomber)*, *Ainring, Deutsche Luftfahrtforschung* UM 3538.

<sup>13</sup> Myhra, D. (2002). *Sanger: Germany's orbital rocket bomber in World War II*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Pub. p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Aldrich, R. J. (2001). *The hidden hand: Britain, America, and Cold War secret intelligence*. London: John Murray.

<sup>15</sup> Burns, T. (1990). *The Origins of the National Security Agency 1940 – 1952, Series V Early Postwar Period, Volume 1*. p. 49. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/cryptologic\\_histories/origins\\_of\\_nsa.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_histories/origins_of_nsa.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Gilbert, J. L. & Finnegan, J. P. (editors). (1993). *U.S. Army Signals Intelligence in World War II: A Documentary History*. Center of Military History, United States Army. p. 4.

## CHAPTER 45

### Screenplay

With LCS/JSC strategic deception, BSC media manipulation and ASA/GC&CS codebreaking precedents established and Rosetta's two pronged motivation of reading Uncle Joe's mail and hunting his spies in mind, it is time to examine the means that Rosetta had at its disposal to pull off this grand orchestration. This was no trivial operation, but one that called for intense discipline and absolute secrecy.

Although the counter-intelligence revelations of 1945 hinted at widespread Soviet espionage, spy hunting would have to take a back seat to first ascertaining Uncle Joe's motives in early 1946. The post war geopolitical brinkmanship that Russia was playing in Europe and beyond was creating great angst among the Anglo allies.

With the looming Paris Peace Conference that involved the victorious WW2 powers of the U.S., UK, France and the Soviet Union negotiating war reparations and the redrawn borders of Italy, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Finland, the U.S. and the UK did not want to be blindsided by Uncle Joe during the negotiations. It was time for the Anglo mind readers to get back to work.

The Russians used encrypted messages for both civilian and military communications but Rosetta was interested in one specific traffic channel – the Soviet diplomatic code that was used between Moscow Center and all of the Soviet embassies abroad. It was the same channel that the ASA/GC&CS had already been hard at work breaking because the intelligence it yielded was of the highest value.

Reading Uncle Joe's mail by breaking the Soviet diplomatic code, would kill two birds with one stone – it would allow Rosetta to determine what the Soviet leadership was strategically communicating to its representatives abroad, but as an added benefit, that was not even apparent to the codebreakers until the end of 1946, it would help uncover the network of spies that communicated over the same diplomatic channels.

But first a little history lesson on ASA/GC&CS efforts. In 1943, even before the war in Europe was over, Uncle Joe's belligerency alarmed the Anglo allies enough that they began to

collect Soviet diplomatic traffic under wartime censorship laws and began their codebreaking effort to decipher these messages – an effort that would only come to public light in 1990, known as the Venona Project.

The Venona Project, described as the greatest counterintelligence secret in the Western world, was the U.S. Army's decipherment of the 1943 - 1948 Soviet diplomatic code which was not only used for routine consular communications but also for espionage related messages. What the broken code revealed was that a massive Soviet spy network had infiltrated every corner of the United States.

The primary goal of the Venona project was to catch Russian spies. Both the British and the Americans contributed to the massive effort, but the British role is downplayed in most of the official literature and the Americans given most of the credit for Venona breakthroughs and successes. The British were briefed in 1945 on Venona and although the popular belief is that they did not actively participate in the project until 1948, it is now certain that British cryptanalysts were actively working with the Americans on Venona since 1946.<sup>1</sup>

The spy-hunting role that Rosetta played will not be covered in this story but will be left for a future work that can do it justice, the events too complex to muddy the deception waters that have already been stirred. The reason Venona is introduced here is because it offers us a window into a broader effort against Soviet diplomatic codes that has not been declassified or even acknowledged in NSA literature, for good reason as we shall see. Now back to our history lesson.

The British and Americans were close allies in codebreaking during the war with the Germans and Japanese codes their primary targets but secondary targets including Russian codes were added to the effort at war's end:<sup>2</sup>

In June 1945, with the war coming to an end, the Navy proposed formal collaboration with the Army on the Soviet problem, which was then referred to as the RATTAN project. The Army wanted a more integrated effort, but they eventually agreed to organize under the more decentralized Navy scheme.

At the same time, the Army Navy Communications Intelligence Board (ANCIB) proposed to the London Signals Intelligence Board (LSIB) that their cooperation against Germany, Italy, and Japan now be extended to include the USSR. The

Americans proposed that the cooperation be fully as close as it had been during the war. This included sharing all details, including the status and method of cryptanalytic attack, and the exchange of raw traffic and code/cipher recoveries.

The British agreed, and in August the two sides arrived at an unwritten agreement predicated on an understanding arrived at in June (1945) between Rear Admiral Hewlett Thebaud, chairman of ANCIB, and Group Captain Eric Jones<sup>3</sup> for LSIB. This historic agreement extended bilateral cooperation into the Cold War and established the basis for what became known as the BRUSA Agreement. The two sides agreed to call the new project BOURBON.

Before BOURBON, Russia's diplomatic ciphers were relatively difficult to break; its military ciphers were relatively easy to read, a pattern that would continue well into the BOURBON period.<sup>4</sup>

The BOURBON project became operational early in August 1945, and continued functioning until it was merged in a much broader Anglo-American collaboration under the BRUSA agreement of 5 March 1946 (signed by Vandenberg).<sup>5</sup>

BOURBON collaboration soon resulted in a broad exchange of operational materials between the COMINT centers of both nations, and in the establishment of reciprocal Joint Liaison Units stationed in London and Washington.<sup>6</sup>

In June of 1946, ASA's Cecil Philips worked for six months on Venona with the British cryptanalyst Philip Howse at Eastcote outside of London.<sup>7</sup> The British Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) had moved from Bletchley Park to Eastcote on April 1, 1946 and simultaneously changed its name to Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ).<sup>8</sup> The British reciprocated by sending an unnamed British analyst to work with the Americans in early 1947.<sup>9</sup>

But it was an ASA analyst at Arlington Hall, Meredith Gardner who beat Cecil Philips to the punch by making initial breaks into KGB messages in the summer of 1946. On December 20, 1946, Gardner decrypted a December 2, 1944 message from New York to Moscow that contained a list of Atomic scientists. These were the first indications from decoded messages that Soviet espionage was at play in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

- 
- <sup>1</sup> West, N. (2012). *Historical Dictionary of Signals Intelligence*. The Scarecrow Press, Inc. p. 41.
- <sup>2</sup> Johnson, T. R. (1995). *American Cryptology during the Cold War; 1945-1989, Book I: The Struggle for Centralization 1945-1960, Series VI: The NSA Period*. Washington, DC: National Security Agency Center for Cryptologic History. NSA DOCID 3188691. p. 159.
- <sup>3</sup> Rowlett, F. (February 11, 1964). *Recollections of Work on Russian*. DOCID: 3421019. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/06.PDF>.
- <sup>4</sup> Peterson, M. L. *Before BOURBON: American and British COMINT Efforts against Russia and the Soviet Union before 1945*. NSA DOCID: 3853634. Retrieved from <https://cryptome.org/2015/12/nsa-before-bourbon.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> Rowlett, F. (February 11, 1964). *Recollections of Work on Russian*. DOCID: 3421019. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/06.PDF>.
- <sup>6</sup> Burns, T. L. (2005). *The Quest for Cryptologic Centralization and the Establishment of the NSA: 1940-1952. United States Cryptologic History, Series V, The Early Postwar Period, 1945-1952, Volume VI. Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency*. p. 25.
- <sup>7</sup> West, N. (2012). *Historical Dictionary of Signals Intelligence*. The Scarecrow Press, Inc. p. 41.
- <sup>8</sup> *Government Communications Headquarters and its Predecessors, Operational Selection Policy OSP28* (January 2006). p. 4. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/osp28.pdf>.
- <sup>9</sup> *Government Code and Cypher School and Government Communications Headquarters: Venona Project: Records, Administrative / biographical background*. Retrieved from <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/SearchUI/details/C9294-government-code-and-cypher-school-and-government-details>.
- <sup>10</sup> Benson, R. L. (2001). *The Venona story*. Fort George G. Meade, Md.: National Security Agency, Center for Cryptologic History. p. 10. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic\\_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona\\_story.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona_story.pdf).

## CHAPTER 46

### How Venona Worked

Venona cryptanalysts exploited a goof up in Soviet COMINT security practices when under wartime duress the KGB's cryptographic manufacturer duplicated a significant number of one-time crypto pads that were used to encrypt diplomatic messages. Peter Wright, former MI5 counterintelligence officer, revealed the details of the Venona project for the first time in his bestselling book *Spycatcher*:

The Venona code break became possible because during the early years of the war the Russians ran short of cipher material. Such was the pressure on their communications system that they made duplicate sets of their one-time pads and issued them to different embassies in the West. In fact, the chances of compromising their communications were slim. The number of messages being transmitted worldwide was vast, and the Russians operated on five channels - one for Ambassadorial communications, one for the GRU (military intelligence), another for the naval GRU, a fourth for the KGB, and lastly a channel for trade traffic connected with the vast program of military equipment passing from West to East during the war, which on its own comprised about 80 percent of total Russian messages. A set of pads might be issued to the KGB in Washington for their communications with Moscow, and its duplicate might be the trade traffic channel between Mexico and Moscow.<sup>1</sup>

If this sounds confusing, don't worry, it is not as difficult as it sounds. Let me explain. A one-time pad is simply a sheet of paper that has random numbers organized into 5 digit groups that can be used for encrypting a message. A one-time pad pair is that same sheet of paper printed twice. So if I want to use a one-time pad to encrypt a message to send to you, we both need a copy of the exact same pad page. I encrypt the message with my copy and you decrypt the message with your copy, hence the term pad-pair. Individual pad pages were then combined together into what is known as an additive book.

A one-time pad page is supposed to be manufactured as a single pair – with only one copy each for the sender and recipient, but in this case, the KGB manufacturer created a second pair that another sender and recipient could use. According to NSA documents, the manufacturer duplicated 35,000 pad pages.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the manufacturer thought the probability of an adversary discovering this flaw would be minimal. Maybe they rationalized that even if the double manufacturing flaw was discovered, the message was still safe as it was double encrypted – first by a codebook and then by the pad page itself – and the recipient needed both the same codebook and the same additive book to decode the message. If this sounds even more confusing, then another simple explanation is in in order to show how the diplomatic messages were encrypted\decrypted.

Let's say I want to send you an encrypted message. We both are in possession of the same additive book and we also both have a copy of the same codebook, where words have unique code groups assigned to them. The codebook itself is universal to all using that code system and maintained for a long period of time, sometimes many years, and is used to provide the first encryption layer to all messages. Then a disposable one-time pad page from an additive book is used to further encrypt the message as the second or “additive” layer but each pad page is used only once and then destroyed.

The Soviet codebook had organized numeric groupings with each code group representing a Russian word. The KGB codebook that Gardner was trying to recreate was made up of 10,000 code groups representing a vocabulary of some 10,000 Russian words. Each one-time pad page on the other hand contained randomized five digit number groupings that in themselves didn't directly equate to anything and only came in to play when a message needed to be encrypted. To illustrate how the encryption worked in practice, let's look at the following example:

In my hypothetical scenario, if I want to send you the message: “Hello World”, I would first look up in the codebook the numeric code groups for the common words Hello and World as follows:

Hello = 13578 and World = 67543

But I would not send you 13578 67543 as the encrypted message. Instead I would take the next available pad page from my additive book and record the page indicator number, let's say it

is 12345. This page indicator is important as it tells you, the recipient, which matching page of their additive book to use for decoding.

I then take the first two code groups from that pad page, let's say they are 08652 and 75321 and I add these to the codebook code groups for the words "Hello World", but without carrying remainders, which would look something like this:

Codebook Code Group:	Hello 13578	World 67543
One-time Pad Page Group:	+ 08652	+ 75321
<b>Addition result without carry:</b>	<b>= 11120</b>	<b>= 32864</b>

The resulting encrypted message that I then send you is 12345 11120 32864. Then I destroy pad page 12345 so it is not reused for a different message.

To decrypt my message, you would find the correct pad page from the additive book by using the page indicator 12345 and then from that page you would take the first two code groups and subtract them without borrowing, from the encrypted message groups 11120 and 32864, which would look like this:

Encrypted Message:	11120	32864
One-time Pad Page Group:	- 08652	- 75321
<b>Subtraction result without borrow:</b>	<b>Hello = 13578</b>	<b>World = 67543</b>

Finally, you would look each result up in your copy of the codebook to come up with the matching words "Hello World".

Before the advent of computers, this tedious encryption/decryption method was the norm in intelligence work. If we used true one-time pads where no duplicates existed and we used each pad page only one time, then the encrypted message was theoretically unbreakable.

So how did the British and the Americans exploit the Soviet's COMINT blunder? To answer that, let me continue my example. As I pointed out earlier, the Soviets had manufactured each pad-pair twice. Let's say my neighbor and his wife also want to exchange an encrypted message. It just so happened that they received the exact same duplicated pad pages that you and

I are using. Their codebook of course is identical to the one you and I have because it is universal to all who are using the same code system.

If my neighbor wants to send the message “Hello Beautiful” to his wife, he would look up in the codebook and find the same five digit code 13578 for the word Hello that I found in my copy, and a different five digit code 96478 for the word Beautiful. By pure chance he decides to use the same pad page 12345 that I used for my message, not knowing that this page from his additive book is not truly one-time. Here is the resulting encoding:

Codebook Code Group:	Hello 13578	Beautiful 96478
One-time Pad Page Group:	+ 08652	+ 75321
<b>Addition result without carry:</b>	<b>= 11120</b>	<b>= 61799</b>

The resulting encrypted message that my neighbor then sends to his wife is 12345 11120 61799. Now if a code breaker intercepted both encrypted messages, the one I sent you and the one my neighbor sent to his wife, comparing the messages would show that both used the same pad page and also that the first two code groups were identical. This would provide the vein of attack.

Me to you:           12345 11120 32864

Neighbor to wife:   12345 11120 61799

But up to this point, all the code breaker knows is that a one-time pad was reused. How would they know the one-time pad values to subtract and even if they accomplished that, how would they know what the underlying message was without the codebook? Now you can see why the KGB didn’t worry too much about duplicating their pad pairs. Even when ASA analysts explained the process to certain American leaders and that the messages were revealing a vast network of Soviet spies, the poor analysts were kicked out of the office because it sounded farfetched and quite unbelievable.<sup>3</sup>

But if the allied codebreakers let a little thing like minimal chance of success discourage them from trying to break an impossible code, well then we would all be speaking German now, wouldn’t we? In the world of COMINT, where there is a will, there is a way.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Wright, P. (1987). *Spy catcher, the candid autobiography of a senior intelligence officer*. Viking. p. 227.
- <sup>2</sup> *Cryptologic Almanac 50th Anniversary Series, Venona: An Overview* (NSA Document ID: 3575728). p. 2. Retrieved from [https://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/crypto\\_almanac\\_50th/venona\\_an\\_overview.pdf](https://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/crypto_almanac_50th/venona_an_overview.pdf).
- <sup>3</sup> Kirby, O. R. (1991, November 14). *The Origins of the Soviet Problem: A Personal View*. DOCID: 4001116. p. 53. *Oliver Kirby Oral Interview* (June 11, 1993). Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/oral\\_history\\_interviews/nsa\\_oh\\_20\\_92\\_kirby.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/oral_history_interviews/nsa_oh_20_92_kirby.pdf).

## CHAPTER 47

### Impossible Task

Now that the ASA was aware that Uncle Joe's messages were being encrypted with duplicate pads, it began the incredibly tedious process of cryptanalysis to tease out the underlying plain text messages. What would greatly help speed up the process was a copy of the Soviet codebook used in the encryption. The good news was that the ASA had a copy of a Soviet codebook, the bad news was that it was not the exact one they needed.

Even worse, there were multiple consumers that used the Soviet diplomatic channel to communicate back to Moscow, the KGB being just one, and each consumer had their own unique codebook. So if you were a GRU (Soviet Military Intelligence) agent, the message you wished to encrypt would be enciphered from a different codebook than your KGB colleague or the local Amtorg (Soviet Trade organization) purchasing agent would use.

But ASA was not completely in the dark, having learned the basics of Soviet codebooks and crypto practices from defector Igor Gouzenko. The National Security Agency (NSA) designated Gouzenko as one of three primary sources that assisted with the Venona breakthroughs:<sup>1</sup>

After World War II several outside factors speeded up the tortuously slow process of additive key diagnosis and recovery and bookbreaking. The first source was Igor Gouzenko who defected in September 1945. Frank Rowlett of ASA interrogated Gouzenko at Camp X on September 25, 1945 and learned much about the way the KGB codebooks were put together and how the additives were used. This information cut time off ASA's cryptanalysis effort.

It was the legendary head of GC&CS (future GCHQ) and MI6, Sir Stewart Menzies, also simply known by the initial "C", who on September 23, 1945 wired his GC&CS representative in the U.S., Group Captain Jones, informing him of Gouzenko's defection. Menzies said that the Canadians had agreed to Gouzenko being interrogated at once by an American crypto officer.

After the Navy and Army codebreaking organizations OP-20-G and ASA agreed to the proposal, Frank Rowlett of the ASA was asked to contact BSC's William Stephenson in New York who would hand him over to appropriate contacts in Canada to avoid crossing lines with the FBI. Stephenson meanwhile, steered the FBI away from interrogating Gouzenko as it involved crypto matters.<sup>2</sup>

In Rowlett's special report dated October 15, 1945, he summarized his interrogation of "Corby" (Gouzenko's code name):<sup>3</sup>

Gouzenko explained Russian crypto-security doctrine and procedures, and the day to day work of a GRU (military intelligence) code clerk. All code clerks were approved and trained by the KGB. After encoding a message, the clerk would take it to the mission's communications officer who would give it an external serial number and take it to the commercial cable company for transmission to Moscow.

Gouzenko went on to explain the use of codebooks, one-time pads and most importantly the use of a 'spell table' for encoding anglicized names for which no equivalents existed in the codebook. All one-time pads for every agency of the Soviet government, were manufactured by the KGB, Gouzenko informed, further pointing out that during the war, the Russians had considered the German one-time pad Diplomatic system as invulnerable as their own.

Although NSA historians clearly state that Gouzenko did not take any codebooks with him when he defected, the intimate knowledge of Soviet practices like the use of a spell table gave ASA needed clues to achieve their Venona successes. But even armed with this knowledge, the actual decipherment of diplomatic messages proved to be a monumental task requiring a tremendous amount of brain as well as machine power and trial and error analysis:

In order to break into the system successfully, Arlington Hall analysts had to first identify and strip off the layer of additive in order to attack the underlying code. These two levels of encryption caused immense difficulty in exploiting the codebook, and many code groups were, therefore, never recovered. The KGB messages from 1942 through 1943 and into 1944, as well as from earlier years,

were based on one codebook version. The 1944 to 1945 messages were based on a new codebook.

Fortunately the ASA had some brilliant people working for them including a young analyst by the name of Meredith Gardner who went quietly about the task of analytically reconstructing the KGB codebook from July-December 1946:

The knowledge gained earlier about the extra encipherment layer allowed Meredith Gardner to break into the second KGB codebook in late 1946. The majority of KGB messages between the United States and Moscow that were solved, employed this second KGB codebook and were broken between 1947 and 1952. These were based on a KGB codebook which Arlington Hall had never seen.<sup>4</sup>

The KGB messages from 1942 and 1943 employed the earlier and more difficult codebook. These 1942 and 1943 messages were not attacked successfully until 1953 to 1954, when a second major cryptanalytic breakthrough was made through pure analysis by Dr. Samuel P. Chew at NSA, the successor of Arlington Hall. It was only after this second major breakthrough that a partially burned KGB codebook, which had been found in 1945, was able to be identified as the codebook employed in this system and to be put to use in attacking these messages.<sup>5</sup>

The codebreaker's challenge was to first find different messages that were encrypted with the same duplicated pad pages and then through cryptanalysis, tediously remove the first layer of encryption. This would require intercepting a large number of messages and comparing them as I pointed out in my earlier example to see if the messages were "in depth", codebreaker lingo for two messages that were using the same one-time pad page. But even if the first layer could be removed, that still did not reveal intelligible words but another layer of code that required a copy of the 10,000 word codebook to convert to plain text.

Without a shortcut to speed up this process, decoding the messages would take too long for the information to be useful. Fortunately, there were methods ASA could use to speed up the decoding process, including one that had been successfully used in WW2 against the Germans, but it required employing as BSC's William Stephenson would say, "unconventional means".

---

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, T. R. (1995). *American Cryptology during the Cold War; 1945-1989, Book I: The Struggle for Centralization 1945-1960, Series VI: The NSA Period*. Washington, DC: National Security Agency Center for Cryptologic History. NSA DOCID 3188691. p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Venona*. p. 61. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.

<sup>3</sup> *Venona*. p. 62. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.

<sup>4</sup> Benson, R. L. (2001). *The Venona story*. Fort George G. Meade, Md.: National Security Agency, Center for Cryptologic History. p. 27. Retrieved from

[http://www.nsa.gov/about/\\_files/cryptologic\\_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona\\_story.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona_story.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Benson, R. L. (2001). *The Venona story*. Fort George G. Meade, Md.: National Security Agency, Center for Cryptologic History. p. 28. Retrieved from

[http://www.nsa.gov/about/\\_files/cryptologic\\_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona\\_story.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona_story.pdf)

## CHAPTER 48

### Special Cream

By 1948, the ASA's Meredith Gardner had essentially recreated the 10,000 word KGB codebook from scratch and NSA as expected, is vague about how exactly Gardner achieved this incredible feat other than to state that it began with his discovery of the codebook spell table. Gardner knew to look for a spell table having been tipped off by Igor Gouzenko that one existed. The spell table was the part of the codebook that was used to spell out words written in the Latin alphabet as the codebook only had code groups for Russian words.

For example, the codebook could contain individual code groups for the common Russian names like Dmitri or Mikhail, but not for anglicized names like Tom, Bob or Sally. The way to encode these anglicized names was via the spell table where they were literally spelled out. In the spell table, each individual letter of the Latin alphabet would have its own code group, for example: A=07537, B=13249, C=01358, etc.

So to encode the name Tom, the three code groups for the letters T, O, and M would be used. To delimit that the spell table was employed in a message, there were separate code groups for StartSpell and EndSpell. So a three letter name like Tom would be represented in a message with five code groups: StartSpell - T - O - M – EndSpell.

After removing the additive layer encryption from a message, Gardner could quickly isolate the anglicized names that were spelled out and delimited by the StartSpell – EndSpell code groups. In effect the StartSpell – EndSpell sequence acted as a delimiter in the same manner as the cartouche delimited royal names in Egyptian hieroglyphics. But the KGB wouldn't make it that easy:

Not just proper names, but more than 1200 cryptonyms littered the traffic, also delimited by the 'Spell/Endspell' sequences, and were often the easiest things to isolate in the traffic, even if they could not be broken. Of those 1200, more than 800 were assessed as recruited Soviet agents.<sup>1</sup>

It was these cryptonyms or cover names that gave counterintelligence officials fits. Rather than infamous Soviet spy Kim Philby's name showing up in the decrypts, Philby's Moscow provided cover name "Stanley" would instead, making it even more difficult for Venona decrypts to yield actionable counterintelligence. The frantic effort to decrypt these communications and uncover as many cover names as possible - perhaps even directly identifying Soviet espionage assets - is what made Venona a high priority and highly secret codebreaking project.

The spelled out Latin words in an encoded message were essentially the low hanging fruit that could be first decrypted. More difficult would prove the bulk of a message's code groups that equated to Russian words. To analytically decrypt these required a copy of the codebook, which Gardner did not have. Fortunately, Gardner did have some idea of what a Soviet codebook looked like, having received one that was grabbed in a TICOM raid in Germany.<sup>2</sup> TICOM (Target Intelligence Committee) teams were tasked with scouring postwar Germany for German intelligence assets, especially cryptographic material, and were part of the great scientific Easter egg hunt described earlier.

But the TICOM acquired codebook was not the one that Gardner needed. The codebook used in the 1944-45 Soviet diplomatic traffic would have to be re-created from scratch using painstaking cryptanalytic techniques, something Gardner excelled at. NSA clearly states that it was a pure analytical breakthrough and Gardner had never before seen the codebook involved.

Gardner's efforts were truly impressive as by mid-1948 he managed to re-create 90 per cent of the 10,000 different code groups that comprised the KGB codebook.<sup>3</sup> But in February of 1947 when only 3.5 % of the codebook had been broken - to propel the effort forward, collateral was employed. Collateral was any other source intelligence that could provide additional clues to what a partially decoded message could contain. Collateral for example could come in the form of FBI surveillance operations of a suspected agent or as Peter Wright pointed out:

Finding matches among the mass of traffic available took time enough. But even then there was no certainty the messages on each side of the match could be broken. The codebook was incomplete, so the codebreakers used 'collateral' intelligence. If, for instance, they found a match between the Washington-to-Moscow KGB channel and the New York-to-Moscow trade channel, it was possible to attack the trade channel by using 'collateral', information gathered from shipping manifests,

cargo records, departure and arrival times, tide tables, and so forth, for the date of the message. This information enabled the codebreakers to make estimates of what might be in the trade traffic. Once breaks were made in one side of a match, it provided more groups for the codebook, and helped make inroads on the other side.<sup>4</sup>

Another method of securing important collateral was surreptitiously as when the FBI allegedly burglarized an Amtorg office in 1944 and made off with piles of encrypted messages with their plaintext equivalents attached. The FBI's Robert Lamphere who began liaison work with Meredith Gardner in October of 1948 provided Gardner with these allegedly stolen Amtorg messages which helped Gardner to fill in missing codebook values.<sup>5</sup>

But there is in fact a third method of securing collateral, not mentioned by NSA, that doesn't involve breaking into offices or using open sources. It was employed by the British during WW2 and was known as gardening. Rather than acquire 'real' collateral material like FBI surveillance records or shipping manifests, gardening manufactured collateral by planting information that the British knew the Germans would be interested in and would include in their encrypted transmissions. This in effect is what is known in cryptography as a chosen plaintext attack as the British could compare the plaintext they planted with the same data included in the encrypted message. Gardening would play an important part in Rosetta's grand plan.

The Americans also had wartime experience with gardening having used the same technique to entice the Japanese to reveal their ambitions on Midway, allowing the U.S. Navy to take the upper hand in that sea battle and turn the tide of the Pacific war. Take note, as the U.S. Navy codebreakers who contributed to the victory at Midway will turn up later in this story.

All collateral information, regardless of source was considered Communications Intelligence (COMINT) and had to be secured in the same manner as the intercepted codes themselves. In the March 1946 UK-USA Agreement on COMINT, it was agreed that the dissemination and security of COMINT including collateral had to abide by the most secure of protocols:<sup>6</sup>

The value of Communication Intelligence in war time and peace cannot be overestimated; conservation of the source is of supreme importance. It goes on to state that it is essential that all references to its existence either direct or indirect be

avoided except among those to whom the knowledge is necessary for the proper performance of their duties. The timeline for the safeguarding of communication intelligence never expires.

This “born and die classified” rule where information is assigned eternal secrecy is one of the hallmarks of COMINT.

The U.S. and the UK further agreed that “it is recognized that both parties will produce Special Intelligence which by virtue of its source or content will require exceptional safeguards and should therefore be limited strictly to the highest level, only.” This highly sensitive special intelligence had its own specific security classification – Top Secret Special Cream.<sup>7</sup> Rosetta sourced collateral would be of the nature to receive this highly sensitive Special Cream classification.

---

<sup>1</sup> Wright, P. (1987). *Spy catcher, the candid autobiography of a senior intelligence officer*. Viking. p. 230.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, T. R. (1995). *American Cryptology during the Cold War; 1945-1989, Book I: The Struggle for Centralization 1945-1960, Series VI: The NSA Period*. Washington, DC: National Security Agency Center for Cryptologic History. NSA DOCID 3188691. p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> *Oral Interview with Lou Benson*. Retrieved from [http://www.pbs.org/redfiles/kgb/deep/interv/k\\_int\\_robert\\_benson.htm](http://www.pbs.org/redfiles/kgb/deep/interv/k_int_robert_benson.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Wright, P. (1987). *Spy catcher, the candid autobiography of a senior intelligence officer*. Viking. p. 229.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, T. R. (1995). *American Cryptology during the Cold War; 1945-1989, Book I: The Struggle for Centralization 1945-1960, Series VI: The NSA Period*. Washington, DC: National Security Agency Center for Cryptologic History. NSA DOCID 3188691. p. 162.

<sup>6</sup> *Appendix A to British-U.S. C.I. Agreement*. UK National Archives. (February 24, 1946). p. 1. U.S. Version is dated February 26, 1946.

<sup>7</sup> *Final Recommendations of the Technical Conference for the Implementation of the U.S.-British Communication Intelligence Agreement Appendix B* (March 11 – 27, 1946). p. 3. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/\\_files/ukusa/final\\_rec\\_tech\\_conf\\_1mar46.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/_files/ukusa/final_rec_tech_conf_1mar46.pdf).

## CHAPTER 49

### Luck of the Irish

In today's high tech world where electronic information circumnavigates the globe in fractions of a second, it is difficult to understand the basic problems that Soviet diplomats and spies had communicating back to Moscow in the 1940s. The first transatlantic telephone cable was not functional until 1956 leaving the Soviets at the mercy of couriers, telegraph or wireless radio to get messages through. These limited communication choice were detailed in a CIA historical document:<sup>1</sup>

Any foreign intelligence service needs secure communications channels between its headquarters and its officers abroad. Although Soviet intelligence services had clandestine radio transmitters in diplomatic missions located in several American cities, these apparently were to be used only in emergencies. In consequence, KGB and GRU stations cabled their important messages over commercial telegraph lines and sent bulky reports and documents--including most of the information acquired by agents--in diplomatic pouches.

The Soviet's restricted use of clandestine radio to emergencies only probably stemmed from an earlier event in 1943 when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) detected unauthorized transmissions emanating from the Soviet consulates in New York and San Francisco and then confiscated those radios.<sup>2</sup>

As to using the enemy's telegraphic facilities, the Soviets must have been very confident in their two-layer enciphering system that used a codebook in conjunction with an additive book's one-time pad pages. Had their pad pages been truly one-time, their faith would have been well founded.

In the United States, RCA, Western Union and ITT were the primary commercial telegraph providers. Unbeknownst to the Soviets, every encrypted message that was transmitted through these commercial carriers was being copied to the U.S. Army Security Agency (ASA). Knowledge of this legally questionable activity which included telegrams from U.S. citizens, only came under

public scrutiny through the Church Committee's investigation of Intelligence community improprieties.

This indiscriminate capture of telegrams came to ASA first via the Office of Censorship during WW2 and after the war through direct requests to the three companies. Since New York was the terminal for the transatlantic cable, Soviet diplomatic traffic, most of which was believed to be KGB related, was routed through that city as well as traffic from Amtorg.<sup>3</sup>

As the Church Committee revealed, the U.S. commercial telegraph companies supplied copies of Soviet telegraph traffic to the U.S. codebreaking organizations OP-20-G and ASA under Operation Shamrock:<sup>4</sup>

From August 1945 until May 1975, NSA received copies of millions of international telegrams sent to, from, or transiting the United States. Codenamed Operation SHAMROCK, this was the largest governmental interception program affecting Americans, dwarfing CIA's mail opening program by comparison.

NSA states that the original purpose of the program was to obtain the encrypted telegrams of certain foreign targets. Nevertheless, NSA had access to virtually all the international telegrams of Americans carried by RCA Global and ITT World Communications (and later Western Union International).

The SHAMROCK program began in August 1945, when representatives of the Army Signals Security Agency approached the commercial telegraph companies to seek post-war access to foreign governmental traffic passing over the facilities of the companies.

In 1947, representatives of the companies met with Secretary of Defense Forrestal to discuss their continued participation in SHAMROCK. Forrestal told them that the program was in the highest interests of national security' and urged them to continue. The companies were told that President Truman and Attorney General Tom C. Clark approved and that they would not suffer criminal liability, at least while the current Administration was in office.

Of interest here is the role that cold warrior and Rosetta member James Forrestal played at the center of the Shamrock project, reassuring the telegraph company leaders to not worry about the legality of their actions as he and the President had their back.

What the Church Committee doesn't touch upon and NSA itself revealed in its *History of Venona* by insiders Lou Benson and Cecil Philips is that in January, 1940, way before Operation Shamrock and even before the WW2 censorship regulations were adopted on December 7, 1941, at least one of the three cable companies, RCA was supplying Soviet telegrams to the predecessor of the ASA, the Signals Intelligence Service (SIS).

This pre-Shamrock and pre-censorship deal was brokered by RCA CEO and Rosetta member David Sarnoff, himself a Signal Corps reserve officer, when he accepted a proposal from the War Department office to have Signal Corps officer Earle F. Cook assigned to RCA for six months for a "course of study". Cook described this arrangement as cover for what he was really doing at RCA - looking over diplomatic traffic. RCA provided a safe room where the messages were photographed.<sup>5</sup>

This is the more important role that RCA executive David Sarnoff played on Rosetta's behalf - more important than his visit to Stockholm in 1946 when the Ghost Rockets were flying overhead. Sarnoff illegally provided the allied codebreakers copies of Soviet diplomatic traffic transmitted through RCA facilities before and after wartime censorship laws were in effect.

As the Church Committee investigation revealed, although post war Operation Shamrock clearly violated the National Communications Act of 1934, neither Rosetta member James Forrestal nor fellow Rosetta member, RCA President David Sarnoff, let the illegality of their actions get in the way of what they perceived were more important national security priorities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Book Review: *Venona: Soviet Espionage and the American Response 1939-1957*. (March 19, 2007). Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/venona-soviet-espionage-and-the-american-response-1939-1957/preface.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Romerstein, H., & Breindel, E. (2000). *The Venona secrets: Exposing Soviet espionage and America's traitors*. Regnery Pub.. p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, T. R. (1995). *American Cryptology during the Cold War; 1945-1989, Book I: The Struggle for Centralization 1945-1960, Series VI: The NSA Period*. Washington, DC: National Security Agency Center for Cryptologic History. NSA DOCID 3188691. p. 160.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book III, Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations.* (1976). Retrieved from [https://archive.org/details/finalreportofsel03unit\\_](https://archive.org/details/finalreportofsel03unit_)

Rowlett, F. (February 11, 1964). *Recollections of Work on Russian*. DOCID: 3421019. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/06.PDF>.

<sup>5</sup> *Venona*. pp. 10-11. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.

## CHAPTER 50

### Operation Cartouche

After the Venona project was declassified in the 1990s, NSA also released historical monographs on the project that revealed that by February of 1947, only 3.5 % of the KGB codebook containing almost 10,000 different code groups had been broken<sup>1</sup> but just a year later, thanks to Gardner's efforts, 90% of the total codebook values had been solved.

What NSA does not reveal is what degree of progress the U.S. and the UK book-breakers had achieved with the other diplomatic non-KGB codebooks, for example, Soviet Trade, GRU or true Consular. But it is a sure bet that if in 1946, the KGB codebook recovery had hit a rut, the other codebooks were surely not faring much better.

What could the U.S. and UK COMINT organizations do to speed the bookbreaking process up? Fortunately, during WW2 a codebreaking precedent had been set to accomplish just that. When the British at Bletchley Park needed to urgently energize their decoding efforts, they resulted to "gardening":<sup>2</sup>

In cryptanalysis, gardening was a British term applied during World War II to the technique of undertaking operations for the purpose of provoking predictable cipher traffic, in which the content could be guessed, as an aid to breaking an Enigma daily key. The most common practice was the dropping of mines from aircraft in a particular location to prompt enemy mine sweeping, an activity that would inevitably generate radio traffic to identify the map square in which the mines had been located, and then further signals to report the sea safe again. These short messages invariably followed a 'stereotype' formula, which was understood by cryptanalysts at Bletchley Park. These messages therefore provided shortcuts or 'cribs' into the cipher machine's rotor setting for that particular 24-hour period.

In cryptanalysis, the WW2 British gardening technique is what is known as a chosen plaintext attack, because plain text chosen by the British was unknowingly injected by the Germans themselves into their Enigma messages.

The U.S. and British codebreakers faced a slight problem in 1946. The world was at peace and in order to employ gardening techniques outside the urgency of wartime operations they first needed to figure out a way to increase Soviet anxiety enough to get their agents to urgently transmit the source of their anxiety to Moscow via commercial telegraph and not send it by diplomatic pouch or by other communication methods. Enter Operation Cartouche.

Since no declassified records exist of this operation, please understand that Operation Cartouche is not an official name but the one that I have dubbed the operation based on what I perceive was its purpose.

When the scientific world was confounded by Egyptian hieroglyphs, one of the keys to their decipherment came from the Rosetta stone, a stele inscribed with a decree issued at Memphis in 196 BC appearing in three scripts: ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs, Demotic script, and ancient Greek. Because the decree was almost identical in the side by side languages, comparative analysis of the Greek could be used in an attempt to decipher the hieroglyphs.

This proved difficult until the archaeo-linguists realized that those hieroglyphs enclosed in an oval, also known as a cartouche, represented the proper name of a Royal or an Egyptian god. By focusing on these royal names as the starting point for comparison, the hieroglyphic code could finally be broken and read.

Similarly, Rosetta's gardening operations would plant anglicized names in news media stories of intelligence value to the Soviets, which Rosetta hoped the Soviets would encrypt in a diplomatic message and transmit back to Moscow. The U.S. telegraph companies would then provide a copy of the encrypted telegram to the allied codebreakers who would remove the additive layer from those messages if duplicate pad pages had been used, thereby exposing the codebook values underneath.

At that point the planted anglicized names would stick out like a sore thumb in StartSpell and EndSpell sequences and the book-breakers could then guess at what Russian words the surrounding code groups equated to, based on the planted news story. This would be similar to the way the cartouche was used to help decipher the Rosetta stone.

Hopefully the following simplistic example will make all of this clear. Let's say that I am an ASA analyst living in New York City in 1946 and I am certain that my next door neighbor is a

Soviet KGB agent. I also know that every day he receives a copy of the New York Times delivered to his doorstep. So I come up with an ingenious plan to help my ASA colleagues fill in some of the missing Russian words of the 10,000 word KGB codebook they have been struggling with.

We decide to plant a fake news story in the Sunday edition of the Times; just a small blurb that sounds official and plausible:

Special to the New York Times: U.S. scientist claims major breakthrough in hydrodynamics that can be used to render U.S. submarines invisible to SONAR. Doctor Sydney Leonard of the University of Pennsylvania, a SONAR expert, made the claim yesterday while delivering a scientific paper at the Hydrodynamics Society of New York.

We also make sure that the named scientist is a real scientist, really specializes in hydrodynamics and SONAR and is really working on Top Secret government work. It turns out that his real work has nothing to do with SONAR, but no one really knows that except for his close colleagues who are under secrecy oath.

On Sunday morning, I notice my neighbor rush out the door of his apartment soon after the Times is delivered and I decide to follow him. He meets his contact, a Soviet code clerk in Central Park and hands him a piece of paper before they part ways. I then decide to follow the code clerk. A cab ride later, I observe the code clerk enter the local RCA telegraph office and emerge 20 minutes later with a satisfied grin on his face. I make note of the time.

The next day at ASA headquarters, after our normal RCA delivery driver drops off the previous day's encrypted telegrams sent by Soviet personnel, I dig out the one from the approximate time that the code clerk was there.

Using specialized machines that are early type computers, I enter the coded message being careful to record the 5 digit code groups correctly, and then let the machine do a comparison with all other coded messages entered previously to see if my message just happens to be "in-depth" with another message, meaning that duplicate one-time pad pages were used to encrypt both messages. A siren starts blaring and flashing lights suddenly go off, indicating that I was very lucky and my message is "in-depth" with a Soviet Trade message.

Another analysis is done using the KGB and Trade messages that are in-depth to strip off the additive layer, thereby revealing the codebook values beneath. I scan quickly through the codebook values looking for a StartSpell/EndSpell sequence and find one right away, and lo and behold it spells out the name Sydney Leonard. Now the bookbreaking fun begins. Since I planted the text in the Times, I can be certain that the words that are immediately adjacent to the StartSpell/EndSpell sequences are words from my planted article, and I start to fill in the codebook with what I think the Russian word is for each adjacent code group value. That is how a chose plaintext/gardening attack works.

Note that I have not learned anything of intelligence value from my planted news article other than possible values for the incomplete Soviet codebook, but that was the purpose to begin with. The more complete the codebook, the better I will be able to decrypt the messages that are not planted by me but ones that represent real intelligence from Moscow to its agents or vice versa.

The related news stories that included these names had to be juicy enough to raise Soviet anxiety to the point where they tasked their agents to collect the information and to urgently transmit it back to Moscow over commercial telegraph carrier. As pointed out earlier, although clandestine radio was available to Soviet missions abroad, they were only to be used in an emergency.<sup>3</sup>

More importantly, the planted news stories had to take a different communication route than they normally did as this was overt intelligence, not secret plans stolen from a defense contractor. Soviet journalists could just send the news articles “en claire” to Moscow without first encrypting them. How Rosetta manipulated this channel of communication is in my opinion the most ingenious part of the whole story.

But what could raise Soviet anxiety enough to trigger the desired response? The answer was to play Uncle Joe’s greatest fears back to him by making him believe his Anglo enemies had something he did not – a wonder weapon capable of delivering atomic weapons to the Soviet homeland. The allies would use as Dennis Wheatley envisioned in 1945, scientific intelligence as the method to achieve strategic deception. In Phase 1 of the Rosetta Deception, the Ghost Rockets of 1946 would provide those juicy stories, in Phase 2 the Leech-Snodgrass superweapon of 1947 would spice it up even more.

Said more plainly, the U.S. and Britain were going to send their former wartime partner and now arch enemy on a hunt for fake geese and fake golden eggs. To entice them to the chase, the deception planners would occasionally offer up a real golden egg here and there, known in deception tradecraft as chicken scratch or foodstuff.

As the goal of deception is to entice your enemy to perform an action, Operation Cartouche's desired action was a steady stream of encrypted telegraphic messages back to Moscow, messages that contained planted anglicized names that would stick out when the first layer of encryption was removed. Messages that themselves had no intelligence value but would help recover a Soviet codebook out of thin air that could then be used to crack those encrypted messages that were of real intelligence value – those that contained the strategic mindset of Uncle Joe or even the cover names and maybe even real names of Soviet spies.

The conduit for these planted stories was the press who would publish sensational but plausible scientific intelligence news that would prompt Soviet diplomats and agents to run down to their local RCA, ITT or Western Union telegraph offices. Rosetta knew that the Soviets had a habit of subscribing to newspapers from towns close to vital United States military bases and defense plants<sup>4</sup> as well as to major newspapers like the New York Times and the Washington Post.

The Russians of course would not send these planted new stories verbatim through enciphered messages, but Rosetta was betting they would at least include some of the anglicized names for those persons, places and things that their codebook did not have a Russian word for. Then if the first layer of the cipher could be peeled back due to duplicate pad use, these planted names would stick out in StartSpell-EndSpell sequences. The surrounding code groups could then be analyzed for probable context using other data from the planted story as collateral. This would be similar to how the Rosetta stone cartouches that enclosed proper names were used to help decipher other hieroglyphs.

If this sounds confusing, let me use another example to illustrate. Remember the planted May 1947 news story on the Neptune rocket?:

HOW HIGH IS UP? ... An idea of tremendous height to which the navy's new rocket missile 'Neptune' is expected to soar is given by this diagram, comparing its projected flight with altitudes previously attained by various missiles, balloons and

planes. Chart was prepared from data obtained by Glen L. Martin Company, builders of the Neptune, from the naval Research laboratory.

Uncle Joe was seeking his own similar nuclear delivery capability and this would have been of extreme intelligence value to him. Soviet agents were constantly on the lookout for any hints of new scientific intelligence and this news blurb required urgent communication back to Moscow Centre.

Now this may have been condensed by a Russian agent down to: “Newspaper report, naval Research Laboratory rocket Neptune, built by Glen L. Martin Company. Capable of reaching 200 miles in altitude”, then translated into Russian with the exception of the proper name “Glen L. Martin” and possibly the word “Neptune”.

The codebook would be used to substitute the Russian words and the spell table would be used to spell out the anglicized words. A one-time pad page would add the second layer of encryption and then the fully encoded message transmitted by commercial telegraph to Moscow, with the actual newspaper clipping sent later via diplomatic pouch.

After ASA received a copy of the telegram from the commercial carrier, if the message was susceptible to decryption because a duplicate pad page was used, the spell table code groups would stand out in the message after the additive layer was removed. Now the book breaker could guess what the bordering code groups resolved to by context analysis in comparison with the original plain text.

The more planted stories of Soviet extreme interest, the more data that would flow back to Moscow, and the more COMINT items that could be analyzed to help recreate the various diplomatic channel codebooks. The reconstructed codebooks could then be used against other messages that contained real intelligence flowing to and from Moscow Centre.

What a great theory, you are probably thinking? What proof do you have that anything proposed so far has any basis in fact? The proof is in the pudding or perhaps better said in the special cream.

---

<sup>1</sup> Benson, R. L. (2001). *The Venona story*. Fort George G. Meade, Md.: National Security Agency, Center for Cryptologic History. p. 47. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/about/ files/cryptologic\\_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona\\_story.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/ files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona_story.pdf)

---

<sup>2</sup> West, N. (2012). *Historical Dictionary of Signals Intelligence*. The Scarecrow Press, Inc. p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> Book Review: *Venona: Soviet Espionage and the American Response 1939-1957*. (March 19, 2007). Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/venona-soviet-espionage-and-the-american-response-1939-1957/preface.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> *Expose of Soviet Espionage* (May 1960). Federal Bureau of Investigation. p. 11. Retrieved from [http://fas.org/irp/imint/fbi\\_6005.htm](http://fas.org/irp/imint/fbi_6005.htm).

## CHAPTER 51

### Reverse Poison

In order to understand how Rosetta assisted the allied codebreakers in their book-breaking efforts for the various channels of the Soviet diplomatic code, you will have to endure yet another history lesson. This lesson although boring and mundane as history can sometimes be, is of incredible importance. You may not understand its importance at first but please bear with me and it will all make sense.

On August 7, 1946, a strike by 300 Press Wireless, Inc. workers was called in New York, Washington and San Francisco by the American Communications Association (ACA) labor union. Press Wireless supplied newspapers and press associations with news reports from abroad, not obtaining news but transmitting messages by radio between the United States and fourteen countries in Europe, Asia and South America. Press Wireless' business involved relaying news copy for its media constituents but not commercial traffic which was handled by companies like RCA, ITT and Western Union.

Press Wireless was founded in 1929, after a group of publishers who were dissatisfied with the cost and timeliness of news transmission by the international telecommunications companies decided to take matters in their own hands by going into the communications business themselves.

Some of the companies that initially owned stock in Press Wireless included the Chicago Daily News, New York Tribune, Inc., United Press Assoc., Associated Press and the Rocky Mountain News with no one company allowed to own more than 20% of Press Wireless' shares. During the next two decades, Press Wireless grew leaps and bounds, especially during WW2 when in its peak year of 1945, Press Wireless handled 157,000,000 words or an average of over 430,000 daily.

The reason for the strike was Press Wireless' July 25, 1946 decision to lay off 46 employees and reduce the wages of a sizable percentage of those who remained, ostensibly because of decreasing revenues due to a sharp reduction in traffic since the end of the war and the re-employment of military personnel returning from overseas.

From the very beginning, both labor and management accused each other of derailing arbitration, the union asking to delay the layoffs until after arbitration was completed and Press Wireless wanting arbitration to begin after the layoffs went into effect. Press Wireless claimed that the union simply ignored the arbitration option altogether, refuted by ACA President Joseph P. Selly who said that the union had recommended arbitration ten days before the strike to avoid the layoffs but that Press Wireless had rejected the proposal.

The union also denied that the strike was a violation of the no-strike provisions in the contract and asserted that the company's refusal to arbitrate the issue of discharges before they took place nullified the no-strike clause.

A few hours before the walkout, the Federal conciliator, Mr. Thomas A. Knowlton suggested that the company hold off on discharging the employees for a few days in the hopes that arbitration could resolve the issues, but Press Wireless was adamant that the layoffs become effective at 12:01AM on Wednesday, August 7, 1946. The union decided it had no choice but to strike.

On the first day of the strike, Press Wireless reported normal operations when executives and supervisors stepped in for the striking workers, even claiming the company handled a larger volume of copy than normal and that in Washington some of the regular operators had remained on the job. The union turned up the heat by asking its members employed in the New York office of Western Union to refuse relaying any Press Wireless copy to newspapers in the U.S. or Canada but Western Union supervisors also stepped in and moved the copy without delay.

The Union then appealed for help from the local New York Newspapers guild, another C.I.O. affiliate. The guild ordered its members at the newspapers not to handle anything coming from Press Wireless and consider it "Hot Copy". At the same time the union appealed to the telegraph and radio operators of affiliated unions in foreign communication centers to not handle any copy to or from Press Wireless.

The union upped the ante even further when it suggested that it could effectively shut down all radio and cable transmissions from overseas by extending the strike to other communication companies and by doing so, applying "maximum pressure against newspapers and wire services to force a speedy settlement of the strike". An ACA spokesperson said that the union "fully appreciated the seriousness of cutting off all international news transmission,

particularly at the time of the Paris peace conference, and promised that the most careful consideration would be given to questions of public policy involved.”

The executive boards of the union locals representing employees of RCA, Mackay Radio, Commercial Cable and Western Union held a joint meeting at the offices of the New York Newspaper Guild to consider joining the strike. Their participation would effectively shut down all movement by radio and cable with the only alternative commercial facilities those of ATT.

As a point of clarification, in 1946, communication from the U.S. to Europe was sent either through standard radio telephone, radio telegraph or transoceanic telegraph cable. The first voice over transoceanic cable was not functional until 1956.

The ACA strike was honored at the Western Union office in New York, but in Washington and San Francisco, business continued as normal as the workers there were represented by ACA’s competitor, the Commercial Telegraphers Union.

Initially it was reported that the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) was exempted from the strike but this turned out to be incorrect and TASS was also hit by the embargo at 4PM on August 12. TASS meanwhile claimed that since the strike and embargo started, it had sent its American file to another one of its bureaus overseas where other cable or wireless facilities were available to relay its copy to Moscow. How it managed to bypass the strike is not clear as there were no alternative communications methods available and normally TASS transmitted most of its copy through Press Wireless.

Digressing for a moment, TASS was the central news agency for the collection and distribution of internal and international news for all Soviet news media (newspaper, radio and television). It had a monopoly on official state information, most of which was not published in the Soviet Union but issued as information for Soviet officials. The agency was frequently infiltrated by the Soviet intelligence and security agencies and many of its employees also voluntarily served as information sources for the KGB.

The KGB had U.S. Residencies (offices) in New York, Washington and San Francisco, with a Sub-Residency in Los Angeles, all locations where the Press Wireless strike had originally been called. The KGB New York Residency operated under three official institutional cover arrangements--the Soviet Consulate itself, the trade mission (Amtorg/Soviet Government Purchasing Commission), and TASS, the Soviet news agency. Other KGB officers worked at

various locations around the U.S. under Purchasing Commission cover, often as factory inspectors working on Lend-Lease matters.<sup>1</sup>

Getting back to the strike, the United States Conciliation Service then jumped into the fray inviting union and Press Wireless officials to its offices for mediation. Federal Labor Department officials in Washington expressed their concerns and hopes for a quick solution stating that “Government officials were deeply concerned over any possible curtailment of news of the Paris Peace Conference, of developments in Palestine and of other international events”.

After mediation talks with Press Wireless broke down, the ACA called for the global news embargo it had been threatening at 2 PM on August 12, 1946. The embargo was ordered against Western Union, RCA, Mackay Radio and Telegraph, Commercial Cable, Globe Wireless, French Cable Company, Tropical Radio Telegraph, and Commercial Pacific Cable, in addition to Press Wireless. The union exempted certain traffic from the strike including Government traffic, personal messages and ordinary commercial traffic, but news copy was prohibited.

The effect of the news embargo was difficult to measure as there were conflicting reports from the communication companies and the news agencies. While some corporations publically stated that messages to and from foreign countries were being handled without difficulty, officials of the Associated Press reported complete stoppage from New York to London and United Press reported that the embargo had drastically curtailed incoming news. Commercial Cable, Mackay and RCA all reported a sharp reduction in traffic volumes and in Montreal, the Anglo-American Telegraph Company reported that all cable traffic had been stopped.

The London offices of the transatlantic communications companies warned American newspapers that they could not guarantee the delivery in New York of any press messages while London newspapers did not carry late news reports from their American correspondents due to the bi-directional disruption in traffic. With radio-telephone calls the only way to get press messages across the Atlantic, the lines were crowded. The strike effectively curtailed most of the radio and cable transmission of international news to and from the U.S.

Meanwhile RCA commented that “all copy for the State Department from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration conference in Geneva and from the Paris Peace Conference was being processed, but there was difficulty in handling news copy”. In other

words, as per the union's exemptions, official Government traffic was allowed through while standard news reports were not.

Press Wireless attempted to play down the effects of the strike in a public statement from President A. Warren Norton by stating that "Press Wireless has maintained its full complement of services since the hour of the strike" and would "not permit this strike to tie up its business". Based on the negative reports coming in from AP, UP and other news agencies, Norton's statement had a hollow ring to it.

Norton further stated that:

In resorting to an embargo the American Communications Association is striking at the entire reading public. At a time when the Paris Peace Conference and other events of international importance make it especially urgent that there be no interference with the flow of news, the union attempts to draw a curtain separating the United States from the rest of the world.

Norton's comments echoed those of Sir Winston Churchill's iron curtain speech made earlier in 1946. When Press Wireless demanded that mediation should take place behind closed doors rather than with newspaper reporters present, the ACA director of organization, Joseph F. Kehoe said: "This Company which talks about iron curtains, insists upon surrounding these negotiations with an iron curtain".

The news blackout entered its third day and Federal conciliators reported no progress. Press Wireless again reported that it was maintaining near-normal service, another obvious untruth based on the reports on reductions in traffic from the news agencies and newspapers. The New York Times even printed an August 14, 1946 front page apology for the reduction:

The New York Times regrets that because of the embargo on press copy put into effect by the American Communications Association, CIO, against the transmission companies, it will be unable to publish today some of its special foreign dispatches that it otherwise would have printed.

This apology was repeated every day for the next five days until the strike ended on August 19, 1946.

Even the American Civil Liberties Union jumped on the bandwagon sending a telegram to ACA president Joseph P. Selly protesting that the dispute with Press Wireless did not justify the "wholesale blackout" of foreign news. "The ACLU has long championed the rights of labor

to strike, but the rights of Americans to see and read take precedence over ill-advised actions closing the channels of news communication”.

While mediation continued, the union issued further threats to picket newspapers and press associations which had an ownership interest in Press Wireless including the New York Times, New York Herald Tribune, Associated Press, United Press, International News Service, North American Newspaper Alliance and Editor & Publisher.

On August 16, 1945 Press Wireless in a conciliatory move said it would allow arbitration to decide whether the union had violated its contract by calling the strike. The company proposed that if the arbitrator decided that no contract violation had occurred then the company would reinstate the forty-six employees and allow further arbitration to rule on whether the layoffs were merited. If the arbitrator determined that the strike was a contract violation then all workers except for the discharged forty six could return to work. The union flatly rejected the offer.

Long and heated negotiations continued until finally on August 18, 1946, an agreement was reached by the union and the company to submit to arbitration. The three questions to be decided by the assigned arbitrator Mr. Arthur S. Meyer were: (1) could either party take unilateral action under the existing union contract before first attempting arbitration (2) whether the layoffs were legal under the contract and (3) if the layoffs were not legal, from which date would employees who resumed work be retroactively paid.

The agreement brought an official end to the 12 day old strike but it would take another twenty four hours for operations to be restored in the Press Wireless offices in New York, Washington and San Francisco. On August 19, 1946, the strike that halted international news to and from the United States was over.

So what exactly does a news labor strike have to do with Rosetta’s deception? After the Ghost Rocket stories proliferated in the Swedish press in July 1946, the Swedish government imposed strict censorship as early as July 25, 1946<sup>2</sup> that prevented the Swedish news media from publishing the locations that the rockets had been seen, allegedly to prevent the rocketeers from calculating the accuracy of their trajectories.

The Swedish press may have been muzzled but the American press was not. While a few rocket stories were published in late July and early August, 1946, the stories did not explode in the U.S. press until mid-August with the largest number of Ghost Rocket stories published

between August 12 – 19, 1946, the exact timeframe of the Press Wireless strike. Rosetta's gardening operation had begun.

---

<sup>1</sup> *NSA Venona Monograph # 2: The 1942-43 New York-Moscow KGB Messages*. Retrieved from <http://www.theblackvault.com/documents/nsa/venona/monographs/monograph-2.html>

<sup>2</sup> (1946, July 25). Mystery Rockets Worry Sweden. *El Paso Herald Post*.

## CHAPTER 52

### Anatomy of a Deception

To connect the dots between the Press Wireless strike and the Ghost Rocket stories and their relevance to Rosetta's plan for reading the mind of Uncle Joe, we need to revisit the gardening technique used by British codebreakers during WW2. Gardening involves enticing your enemy to send the text of your choice in their encrypted communication without them even knowing they are doing that.

When planning the operation, the wild card that Rosetta was most concerned with was how to force Soviet intelligence in the U.S. to send planted text in the American press via encrypted Soviet diplomatic channels rather than through open non-encrypted channels. Normally there was nothing stopping the Soviet TASS news agency from sending U.S. newspaper stories in the clear via standard wireless radio or telegraphic communication, but the Press Wireless strike closed off this channel.

The Press Wireless strike effectuated Rosetta's gardening operation, creating a bottleneck of information for Soviet agents who would normally send news of intelligence value through overt means, instead forcing them to send the news stories through encrypted channels. The purpose of this gardening operation was to assist the allied book breakers build the Soviet diplomatic codebooks out of thin air.

The strike affected all news agency message traffic, but commercial traffic was exempted. Soviet diplomatic personnel relied on U.S. commercial telegraph companies to transmit encrypted messages to Moscow, a communication channel which was also routinely used by the Soviet intelligence agencies. In light of normal overt communication channels being cut off, the commercial channel could act as the backdoor for transmitting media articles on the Ghost Rockets and the Paris Peace Talks to Moscow - media articles that were planted by the deception planners with the full cooperation of newspapers like the New York Times.

The Rosetta deception planners created a bottleneck of information flow for the Soviet intelligence agencies in the U.S. at a very crucial time – a time when Moscow desperately needed overt information on the Ghost Rockets, what the U.S. media was reporting on the Paris Peace Conference and other stories of potential intelligence value.

That bottleneck forced transmission through the commercial telegraph carriers who were more than happy to transmit encrypted news media stories while rejecting all overt news media; simultaneously feeding these encrypted messages back to the ASA/GCCS where allied book breakers would fill in the missing codebook values with their corresponding Russian words. Ingenious really – and the fact that this story has only come to light some seventy years later – attests to both the thorough detailed planning and execution of the deception and the extreme compartmented secrecy of the operation.

To further understand the deception, we need to examine the labor organizations that called the strike and the motives for Press Wireless initiating the layoffs. The union that Press Wireless workers in New York belonged to, the ACA, was affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) where a majority of the union's members were strongly left-wing while most of the union's leaders were outright members of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA).

Just two years earlier in March, 1944, the ACA, CIO and the New York Newspapers Guild were all accused of being under the direct control and influence of the Communist Party by the Dies Committee. The committee's voluminous congressional report outlined in detail the overt communist control of the three organizations.<sup>1</sup> ACA president, Joseph P. Selly, who called for the Press Wireless Strike was singled out with other top Union leaders.

The C.I.O. executive board which officially launched the C.I.O. Political Action Committee on July 7, 1943, was composed of the C.I.O.'s president, secretary-treasurer, 9 vice presidents, and 38 other leaders of its affiliated unions. Out of these 49 executive board members, 18 of them had notorious Communist records. One of them was Joseph P. Selly whose records indicated "complete subservience to the Communist Party line".

All of the ACA, CIO and the American Newspapers Guild leaders affiliated with the 1946 Press Wireless strike were singled out as prominent communists by the 1944 Dies Committee report - the CIO's Phillip Murray, the ACA's Joseph P Selly and Joseph F. Kehoe, and from the American Newspapers Guild, John F. Ryan.

The Soviets through the Communist Party of the USA had very close contact with the union leaders who called the strike. As socialist ideology champions the rights of the common worker, the Soviets in their blind support of the union did not suspect that the Press Wireless

management had initiated the layoffs at Rosetta's behest so as to induce the strike, and that behind the scenes an even greater battle was being waged.

On the Press Wireless side, A. Warren Norton the President of Press Wireless was on the same wartime Office of Emergency Management, Industry Advisory Committee as David Sarnoff, CEO of RCA, Colonel Sosthenes Behn, the President of ITT and A.N. Williams, President of Western Union.<sup>2</sup> Whether Norton was influenced or outright asked by Rosetta to initiate the strike is not clear.

In early 1946 after a shakeup in personnel at Press Wireless, a new Vice President joined the company, Colonel Fred P. Andrews who recently had retired from the Army after 34 years where he had been in charge of Army communications in Alaska during the war. The Alaska communication system was a branch of the Signal Corp which for years operated the commercial cable, telegraph and radio circuits in Alaska as well as handling Army Administrative traffic.<sup>3</sup>

During the war, the Soviets had been provided telegraphic facilities by the U.S. Signal Corps for communications between its mission in Washington and Ladd Field, Alaska, a key point on the Lend-Lease logistics route. NSA describes this telegraphic channel as the most important source of Russian traffic at that time<sup>4</sup> and to which ASA had surreptitious access.<sup>5</sup>

Anderson was in position at Press Wireless to serve in a Rosetta feedback role or even as an agent of influence. Anderson was recommended for the VP position by Amy Signal Corps General Frank E. Stoner, who was offered the job originally.<sup>6</sup> General Stoner was the Chief of the U.S. Army Communication Service during WW2 and had a very close working relationship with RCA's David Sarnoff. General Stoner was even a guest of honor at RCA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York on December 1, 1944 along with Director of naval Communications, Rear Admiral Joseph R. Redman.<sup>7</sup>

At the RCA anniversary dinner, Admiral Redman discussed pending congressional legislation calling for a merger of all of the commercial telegraph companies in the United States. The government champion for this proposed merger was none other than Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal. On March 19, 1945, Forrestal was quoted in the Chicago Tribune saying that all U.S. overseas communications systems should be merged under one Government supervised, privately owned corporation.

During earlier congressional hearings, the State Department objected to Press Wireless being included in the merger, citing concerns about freedom of the press. David Sarnoff wrote a letter to Assistant Secretary Long, in support of including Press Wireless, arguing that "even today radio telegraph carriers other than Press Wireless supply about one half of the press service to the newspapers and news agencies throughout the United States", implying that Press Wireless was not the only gig in town but was already sharing its role with the commercial telegraph carriers, and excluding Press Wireless from the merger did not make sense.

The implications of a single telecommunications company under government control is obvious from our historical vantage point. Rather than the U.S. COMINT agencies having to deal with and provide legal assurances to multiple independent companies like RCA, ITT, and Western Union to receive copies of Soviet diplomatic traffic or for that matter the traffic of any other country using the same commercial facilities, the traffic could be provided by a single source.

The merger did not occur, but the historical attempt provides us insight into Rosetta's earliest plans. Even before WW2 ended, Forrestal actively had his aim set on gaining control over the telecommunications industry for COMINT purposes and this would have included Press Wireless.

Despite Forrestal's failed efforts at effectuating a telecommunications merger, he did not forget the legal shaky ground on which the telecommunication companies stood by participating in Operation Shamrock. In June 1948, Forrestal quietly tried to have Congress amend section 605 of the Communications Act of 1934 to make the companies' cooperation in Shamrock legal. He met informally with the Chairmen of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees to explain the situation, and an amendment was drafted, an amendment that was never reported by either committee.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> United States, & Dies, M. (1944). Investigation of un-American propaganda activities in the United States: Report of the Special committee on un-American activities, House of representatives, Seventy-eighth Congress, second session, on H. Res. 282, to investigate (1) the extent, character and objects of un-American propaganda activities in the United States, (2) the diffusion within the United States of subversive and un-American propaganda that is instigated from foreign countries or of a domestic origin and attacks the principle of the form of government as guaranteed by our Constitution, and (3) all other questions in relation thereto that would aid Congress in any necessary remedial legislation. Report on the C.I.O. Political action committee. Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off.

<sup>2</sup> *1945 Government Manual on the Emergency War Agencies - Office for Emergency Management*. Retrieved from <https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/ATO/USGM/EWA.html>

---

<sup>3</sup> Radio News. (1946, March). *Arctic Oil Exploration*. p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Rowlett, F. (February 11, 1964). *Recollections of Work on Russian*. DOCID: 3421019. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/06.PDF>.

<sup>5</sup> Peterson, M. L. *Before BOURBON: American and British COMINT Efforts against Russia and the Soviet Union before 1945*. NSA. DOCID: 3853634. p. 8. Retrieved from [https://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/cryptologic\\_quarterly/Before\\_Bourbon.pdf](https://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_quarterly/Before_Bourbon.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> The Billboard. (1946, July 13). *RCA, Mackay, AT&T in Act*. pp. 5, 14.

<sup>7</sup> Radio Age. (1945, January). *Anniversary Dinner*. p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Snider, B. L. (1999, Winter). *Unlucky SHAMROCK. Recollections from the Church Committee's Investigation of NSA. Studies in Intelligence*. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/winter99-00/art4.html>

## CHAPTER 53

### Backdoor

During the Press Wireless strike, U.S. based TASS/KGB agents found themselves in an awkward position as the communication channel they normally used for sending media reports of intelligence value to Moscow had suddenly been cut off.

So what did they do? They found a different channel of communication. For TASS agents that meant dropping off the news articles at the Soviet embassy where the KGB code clerks could then encrypt and send the stories with other diplomatic traffic. The cable company operators had been instructed to reject any plain-text news transmissions in solidarity with the striking Press Wireless workers but commercial traffic, like Soviet diplomatic was exempted.

Many newspapers around the United States were being seeded with Ghost Rockets stories during the Press Wireless strike as part of the gardening operation, but to substantiate this theory, let's examine just some of the new stories that appeared between August 12 and the 19<sup>th</sup> in the New York Times that would have been of potential intelligence value to the Soviets.

On the first day of the expanded Press Wireless strike, as if on cue, the Ghost Rockets flew on to the front page of one of the nation's largest newspapers with the August 12 Times edition describing how "a swarm of rocket bombs passed over Stockholm at 10 o'clock tonight". The same article also revealed some very sensational details:<sup>1</sup>

The strangest report came from central Sweden, where a newly built barn collapsed this afternoon without visible cause. Shortly before the collapse, flying bombs had been seen. Then there was a sharp crack and the barn fell. There was no fire.

The deception planners wanted the Russians to believe that an exploding Ghost Rocket had created a shock wave large enough to implode a newly erected building. And as if to egg on its intended Russian readership it added a critical blurb that:

It is rumored here that officers in the Russian Air Force have been dismissed because they were far behind the Western Powers in atomic bomb work. Their successors are believed to be trying new experiments with unloaded shells.

The article then repeats all of the disinformation that we have uncovered thus far including rockets launching from Peenemunde, apparent rocket crashes and recovered fragments, and a reference to the discredited Stig Wennerström by stating “that these reports have been substantiated by a Swedish officer, a flier, who saw one of the rockets during a recent flight”.

In the same issue was another enticing story that Soviet intelligence agents could not miss titled “Navy Robot Near to Fly A-Bombs”. The article discussed how Navy guided missiles could drop an atomic bomb whenever and wherever it was needed with a veiled association with the Ghost Rockets:

Long distance missiles are reaching the testing stage, being perhaps as far-flying as those which have been seen over Sweden and are thought to have been launched from a former Nazi rocket-experimental area at Peenemünde in the Soviet zone of Germany.

If giving away information on U.S. weaponry was not juicy enough, the August 13, 1946 edition of the Times gave away information on a Soviet weapon – except this one was non-existent at that time. “Soviet Has Atomic Bomb Ready to Test, Russian Scientist Implies” was the blaring headline, the article elaborating how:<sup>2</sup>

Professor Simon Peter Alexandrov of the Moscow Institute of Nonferrous Metals and Gold, one of two official Russian observers at Bikini told interviewers through an interpreter: ‘The Soviet Government is planning some time to have a demonstration of the atomic bomb. I was sent to Bikini to see how it was carried out.’

The August 13, 1946 edition of the Times also carried the Doolittle mission-to-Sweden preannouncement: “Swedes Use Radar in Fight on Missiles: Doolittle Believed Called In as Aide – Stockholm Studies Steps to End Violations”.<sup>3</sup> The article stated that:

There were persistent rumors that Sweden was going to, or already had, borrowed several complete radar outfits from Great Britain to obtain the quickest results. It is also believed that the United States’ foremost long-distance bombing expert, Lieutenant General James H. Doolittle, who is now retired, is coming to Sweden to inspect the radar equipment, although the official explanation is that he is coming as a business man for the Shell Company.

We have already examined in depth the very human manipulation that this article initiated. Doolittle arrived in Sweden a week after this Times article was published, however the British radar units he allegedly was going to inspect never made because the Swedes withdrew their request, after the British themselves leaked it to the press. The Swedish Defense Staff never asked for Doolittle's help to begin with but were manipulated into making public appearances with him at a luncheon the day after he arrived in Stockholm. At this luncheon, Doolittle offered absolutely no assistance to the Swedes neither for tracking down nor knowledge of the rockets. This was pure deception in the classical sense.

The sensational rocket stories continued when on August 14, 1946, the Times published an article titled "Two Swedes Escape a Ghost Rocket" relating how "a couple boating on a lake in central Sweden were nearly hit by a diving bomb which burst into many parts and disappeared beneath the water".<sup>4</sup>

This was followed up in the Times the next day with: "Swedes Find Rocket Clue: Lettered Metal Fragment Is Now Under Close Study".<sup>5</sup> It goes on to say that the:

Swedish Army investigators have recovered a fragment of metal containing imprinted letters that may solve the mystery of rockets that have been flashing over Sweden and other Scandinavian countries since last May. The fragment was reported to be a 2.75 inch section of metal. It has been placed in the hands of the Defense Research Institute for investigation.

This story is a complete lie as the Swedes themselves admitted to the U.S. naval attaché's that no metal fragments were recovered. However, in 1946, neither the public nor the Soviets had the benefit of reviewing the classified naval attaché reports.

The August 16, 1946 edition of the Times carried a front page article "Defense Missile Revealed by the Army" which detailed that:<sup>6</sup>

The Air Forces disclosed that actual tests have started with a hitherto secret guided missile designed as potential protection against high-speed, high flying aircraft. The Air Forces' guided missiles is the 'GAPA', a slim, ten feet long rocket powered projectile. One or more already have been fired, and 60 others are set to be set off at the isolated Wendover (Utah) Proving Ground this year. Without disclosing whether the missile is guided by radio, makes use of a proximity fuse, or other details, the Air Forces announcement said that when

perfected it is ‘expected to be capable of seeking out and destroying possible enemy weapons before they can reach their target’. The name ‘GAPA’ comes from the technical term ‘ground-to-air pilotless aircraft’.

History shows that the U.S. did test the GAPA missile in Utah in the summer of 1946, but it is the timing of the press release that is of interest in our story – coinciding with Rosetta’s gardening operation.

Interestingly, the same edition carried an article on how a V-2 test rocket recently crashed at White Sands. To the Soviets, the message would be clear - if the Americans were test launching GAPA missiles from Wendover, Utah and V-2s from White Sands, it was a sure bet that the Ghost Rockets over Sweden were being launched by the British.

Also in the same edition was a photo of a GAPA missile being launched and immediately below appeared an article whose message was sure to spread fear throughout the Kremlin, “Atomic Bomb’s Scope”:<sup>7</sup>

The stockpile and production rate of atomic bombs – present and projected – are major factors in assessing the potential of atomic warfare, the Bikini atom bomb tests showed. No official information as to the number of production rate of atomic bombs ever has been made public. An anonymous Army general recently estimated in Hawaii that the United States possessed some fifty bombs today and was making atomic bombs at the rate of one a week.

This was complete nonsense however as we now know that the U.S. nuclear stockpile in August 1946 consisted of just one nuke and a bunch of unassembled bomb components.<sup>8</sup>

The August 18, 1946 edition of the Times carried a large map of Europe titled “A Troubled Week in Relations between Russia and the West”. The map had callouts pointing to the different hotspot areas, from the clashes at the Paris peace conference, to the Russians trying to get control of the Dardanelle Straits to mystery rockets alarming Sweden.

These were just the sensational stories to make the Times. It does not even take into consideration any political and economic news stories that would also have been of intelligence interest to the Soviets-communicated via the backdoor channel from TASS/KGB through the Soviet consulate to Moscow Centre.

From August 12 – 19, 1946, just one short week when TASS/KGB was forced to use the encrypted Soviet diplomatic channel to send U.S. news media stories to Moscow, the U.S./UK

deception planners completely controlled the information flow between Soviet Intelligence on American soil and Moscow Centre, a codebreaking feat that even the Anglo codebreakers of the Enigma code and the Japanese Purple cypher could not claim. Rosetta's deception plan had come full circle.

---

<sup>1</sup> (1946, August 12). Navy Robot Near to Fly A-Bombs. *New York Times*. p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> [\(1946, August 13\). Soviet Has Atomic Bomb Ready To Test, Russian Scientist Implies. \*New York Times\*. p. 4.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [\(1946, August 13\). Swedes Use Radar In Fight On Missiles - Doolittle Believed Called In as Aide - Stockholm Studies Steps to End Violations. \*New York Times\*. p. 4.](#)

<sup>4</sup> (1946, August 14). Two Swedes Escape a Ghost Rocket. *New York Times*. p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> (1946, August 15). Swedes Find Rocket Clue, Lettered Metal Fragment Is Now Under Close Study. *New York Times*. p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> (1946, August 16). Defense Missile Revealed by Army. *New York Times*. p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> (1946, August 16). Atomic Bomb's Scope. *New York Times*. p. 6. Reference for the nuclear stockpile in 1946

<sup>8</sup> Ziegler, C. A., & Jacobson, D. (1995). *Spying without spies: Origins of America's secret nuclear surveillance system*. Westport, Conn: Praeger. p. 14.

Keeney, L. Douglas. (2011). *15 minutes : General Curtis LeMay and the countdown to nuclear annihilation*. New York :St. Martin's Press, p. 34.

## CHAPTER 54

### The Grass is Grayer on the Other Side

What made Rosetta's gardening operation first blossom and then flourish can be understood if seen through the eyes of the Soviets themselves. Although most of the quotes I previously attributed to Uncle Joe originated from the wishing well of assumption, let me correct that by examining what we know through documented evidence, the Russian leadership perceived was going on during the deception. Since the end of the cold war, a wealth of official information previously hidden in secret Russian archives has been released and can tell us the Soviet side of the story.

In *The Haunted Wood* by Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev, the authors explained the chaos that ensued after the defection of Igor Gouzenko and the revelations of Elizabeth Bentley in 1945. A blanket instruction was issued to Soviet intelligence personnel in the U.S. to halt all contacts with their sources, with few exceptions.<sup>1</sup>

On March 5, 1946, Moscow Center sent a letter acknowledging that Soviet diplomatic messages had been under attack but not to curtail the quantity of traffic so as not to arouse suspicion.<sup>2</sup> Uncle Joe had a mole in ASA by the name of William Weisband who NSA officially blames for this Venona leak<sup>3</sup>. Apparently the Soviets did not understand the nature of the allied attack on their diplomatic traffic because they did not change their cryptographic practices until 1948, confident that it could not be broken.

Meanwhile after the U.S. realized in late 1945 the scope of the counterintelligence threat on its doorstep, the FBI turned up the heat by shadowing Soviet diplomatic personnel in Washington, New York and San Francisco. With the FBI watching their every move, the KGB began to feel the noose tightening. Eventually it became next to impossible to recruit new U.S. based sources so the KGB resorted to gathering information by overt means:<sup>4</sup>

KGB's 'skillful operatives' were instructed every week to compose summary reports or information on the basis of press and personal connections, to be transferred to the Center by telegraph. Soviet intelligence's once-flourishing American networks, in short, had been transformed almost overnight into a virtual clipping service, now that the KGB had to rely on publicly available information to

provide useful data to Moscow. Considering the impossibility of recruiting new agents after the Gouzenko and Bentley defections, compounded by the Venona revelation, the KGB turned in near-desperation to the most readily accessible, comprehensive, and continuous source of reliable information on major developments in the United States – the media.

This reliance on the U.S. media for intelligence can be seen in a cable from Moscow Center to the newly arrived Washington Station chief Grigory Dolbin in the fall of 1946:<sup>5</sup>

For the six months of your stay in the country (from March to August 1946), only fifteen information cables, have been received from you, among which eleven were reviews of newspapers or short summaries of articles, and only four contained information received from official channels...”

In other words, seventy five percent of Dolbin’s intelligence flowing back to Moscow was sourced from the U.S. media. The KGB had unknowingly placed themselves in Rosetta’s gardening loop.

---

<sup>1</sup> Weinstein, A., & Vassiliev, A. (1999). *The haunted wood: Soviet espionage in America-- the Stalin era* (First edition.). Random House. p. 285.

Gannon, J. (2001). *Stealing Secrets, Telling Lies: How Spies and Codebreakers Helped Shape the Twentieth Century*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Weinstein, A., & Vassiliev, A. (1999). *The haunted wood: Soviet espionage in America-- the Stalin era* (First edition.). Random House. p. 286.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, T. R. (1995). *American Cryptology during the Cold War; 1945-1989, Book I: The Struggle for Centralization 1945-1960, Series VI: The NSA Period*. Washington, DC: National Security Agency Center for Cryptologic History. NSA DOCID 3188691. p. 277.

Jill Frahm, *Cryptologic Almanac 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Series: The Days of BOURBON* (Center for Cryptologic History, NSA DOCID: 3575731).

<sup>4</sup> Weinstein, A., & Vassiliev, A. (1999). *The haunted wood: Soviet espionage in America-- the Stalin era* (First edition.). Random House. p. 286.

<sup>5</sup> Weinstein, A., & Vassiliev, A. (1999). *The haunted wood: Soviet espionage in America-- the Stalin era* (First edition.). Random House. p. 288.

## CHAPTER 55

### Checkmate

Rosetta's timing was exact, with each detail of the deception operation minutely planned out in the tradition of the greatest deception operations of WW2. The Rosetta screenplay had been written in either late 1945 or early 1946, and the actors had rehearsed their roles thoroughly, waiting for their cues to take the stage.

On the U.S. side, these actors included the deception planners of Joint Security Control, the U.S. telegraph companies, the codebreaking organizations of the Navy's OP-20-G and the Army's ASA, select celebrities like General's Doolittle and Sarnoff, government figures like James Forrestal and the American press including major newspapers like the New York Times and the Washington Post. Each actor knew their individual role but did not understand the overall goal of the deception as this was reserved for the JSC directors who orchestrated the grand performance.

Rosetta's gardening operation on U.S. soil is directly correlated to the Press Wireless strike of August 12 –19, 1946, but this was not the end of the entire gardening operation. Rosetta had far more planned up its sleeve.

The Swedish press sensationalized the rocket stories for almost three months before having a sudden change of heart in late August when they began to “soft-pedal the reports and to explain them as natural phenomena, while playing up rocket reports from other countries”.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the British press took up the rocket story where the Swedish press dropped it on August 22, also reporting that the rockets were of Russian origin from Peenemünde. NA Stockholm Winston believed that “this put the onus on the British for contributing to any rocket hysteria, and also for continuing it after the Swedes stopped their own rocket publicity and began to play it down on August 22”.<sup>2</sup>

What Winston did not know was that the British press was not picking up where the Swedish press left off, but rather where the American press had left off when the Press Wireless strike was over on August 19. Coincidentally, the U.S. naval attaché in Helsinki reported in February of 1947 that “since August 20, 1946, no more ‘Ghost Rockets’ have been reported in the

Finnish press”.<sup>3</sup> Even more telling, a London Daily Telegraph article dated August 22, 1946 carried this news blurb:<sup>4</sup>

Rocket ‘Hush-hush’

To prevent technical information from being obtained from the firing of rockets over Denmark, the Danish Government has asked newspapers not to name areas where the missiles have been seen, said A.P. yesterday. Only the words ‘Northern’, ‘Central’, ‘Eastern’ should be used.

Mirroring the Swedish news censorship that made the Soviets look to the U.S. press for answers in mid-August 1946, the subsequent alleged muzzling of the Finnish press, forced the Soviets to look to the UK press for the latest Ghost Rocket information at the end of August.

What kick started the gardening of the UK press were the sensational stories of American ex-Generals appearing in Stockholm on August 20; wined and dined by the Swedish Defense Staff with an apparent partnership being publically forged between the UK and Sweden where radar equipment was requested and then withdrawn. All of these stories were timed to heat up the UK press when the Press Wireless strike was over in the United States.

Communication between Soviet agents in the UK and Moscow Centre was of a different nature than that of their counterparts in the United States. Whereas in the U.S., Soviet agents were forced to use the American telegraph companies to communicate back to Moscow, in the UK, radiotelephone and land line circuits were operational. But these too were restricted before gardening operations got underway. The July 1, 1946 New York Times informed that:<sup>5</sup>

Calls to Moscow Curbed: British Restrict Phone Service to Government Agencies

The British Government has banned telephone service from London to Moscow for all but Government departments, the post office said today. The ban on private calls went into effect Friday, covering both radio-telephone and land-line service.

A spokesman said no reason was known at the moment why the ban had been imposed. The spokesman said he did not know whether the Soviet Union had forbidden private calls from Moscow to London. The official Russian news agency

TASS telephones to its bureau here, he said but TASS calls from here to Moscow are no longer accepted.

Once again, a bottleneck of information was created between TASS/KGB and Moscow forcing Soviet agents to use an alternate channel.

Rosetta's months of planning and execution paid off and the gardening performance was a hit. If the Soviets ever got wind of the deception is unclear but based on the fact that they did not make a major code change until November, 1948, perhaps they were none the wiser. The Soviets did however make a significant change on August 25, 1946 when they began to encrypt the indicator group for 5 digit KGB cypher traffic, whereas previously the indicator was "free code" meaning that it was not super-enciphered but was taken directly from the additive pad. This made it difficult for the U.S. and UK analysts to easily isolate KGB traffic from the other entities that were using Soviet diplomatic.<sup>6</sup> If this change was coincidental or due to Soviet suspicions of gardening is unknown.

The U.S./UK governments have no reason to hide the details of this operation from the world. The events transpired almost 70 years ago and the methods used no longer apply in a world where information flows across the globe in fractions of a second. It is time for the truth to be told and the deception planners acknowledged for their ingenuity and resourcefulness. If the history books on the Cold War have to be revised accordingly, so be it, as it is time for the magicians of Rosetta to take a bow for their incredible performance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Report 39-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston (August 30, 1946).

<sup>2</sup> Report 39-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston (August 30, 1946).

<sup>3</sup> Serial R-5-S-47 from U.S. naval attaché at Helsinki, Finland, F.A. Klaveness. (February 10, 1947)

<sup>4</sup> (1946, August 22). *London Daily Telegraph*.

<sup>5</sup> (1946, July 1). Calls to Moscow Curbed, British Restrict Phone Service to Government Agencies. *New York Times*. p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> *Developments in Soviet Cypher and Signals Security, 1946 – 48*. Translations of Intercepted...Traffic 1942-1946. RG 38, Box 2739. US National Archives. Retrieved from Brill Online.

## CHAPTER 56

### Patriotic News

WW2 security practices promoted vigilance of an enemy thought to be lurking behind every corner, listening for loose lips that would help them sink ships. In reality, Allied war planners had less to worry about the drunken sailor bellied up to the bar babbling about their next port of call than they did from a more worrisome source of leaks – the free press. The enemy actively scoured the news media for any clues that would inform them of allied operations – big or small.

To tackle this problem head on, President Roosevelt appointed Byron Price, the executive news director of the Associated Press, to head up a new agency to manage all wartime censorship – the Office of Censorship. Price soon issued a Voluntary Censorship Code that admonished journalists to exercise their freedom but by being mindful of the impact their stories would have on the war effort.

Price also kept the Office of Censorship separate from the Office of War Information (OWI), the latter which pushed propaganda abroad and beat the patriotic drum domestically. OWI personnel were directly trained in the propaganda black arts by William Stephenson's BSC.

OWI was headed by Elmer Davis, a CBS Newsman. Both Price on behalf of the Office of Censorship (OOC)<sup>1</sup> and Davis on behalf of the Office of War Information (OWI)<sup>2</sup> were intimately familiar with the strategic deception planning charter of Joint Security Control (JCS), pledging their agency's full cooperation in whatever JCS tasked them to do from August of 1942 until both OOC and OWI became defunct in 1945.

But the story doesn't end when these wartime agencies closed their doors – the personal relationships forged between U.S. civilian as well as military leaders and the media leaders and journalists that kept them in the spotlight remained just as it did for BSC. Just how extensive those relationships were tapped for the Rosetta deception is not clear but it is certain that the press was used, voluntarily or unwillingly to push Rosetta's timed messaging in the same way that BSC manipulated the press to its advantage during the war.

Select news publishers, editors and working journalists that churned out the nation's news stories played a central role in the Rosetta deception. Some of them were fed direct information for publication, some acted as agents of influence to their news colleagues and others were part of a feedback loop that provided the planted news stories for analysis. The Rosetta member who would orchestrate this media cooperation was Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal:<sup>3</sup>

Forrestal proposed in 1946 a scheme, in effect, to co-opt the American Press, saying that 'the American press should be an instrument of our foreign policy, just as is the British press. And this doesn't involve government control or telling them what they should write, but rather giving them the opportunity to write on the basis of an informed understanding of our policies and problems.' To this end, he urged Secretary of State Byrnes to arrange regular and frequent briefings for selected 'responsible journalists', including Henry Luce (Time Magazine), Palmer Hoyt (The Oregonian), Cyrus L. Sulzberger (New York Times), Arthur Krock (New York Times), Robert McLean (Associated Press), and Paul Smith (San Francisco Chronicle).

To illustrate how Forrestal's close press relationships were milked, when discussing demobilization with President Truman in January 1946, Forrestal told him that he should:<sup>4</sup>

Get the heads of the important news services and the leading newspapers—particularly Mr. Sulzberger (New York Times), Roy Roberts (Kansas City Star), Palmer Hoyt (The Oregonian), the Cowles brothers (The Chicago Tribune), John Knight (Knight Ridder newspapers), plus Roy Howard (Scripps Howard Newspapers) and Bob McLean of the Associated Press — and state to them the seriousness of the present situation and the need for making the country aware of its implications abroad. I said they were all reasonable and patriotic men and that I was confident that if the facts were presented we would have their support in the presentation of the case. The President agreed to do so.

Forrestal's pre-existing personal relationships with these media leaders would serve Rosetta well for initiating the deception and to see it through with the gardening operation. By Forrestal appealing to the patriotism of his media contacts with an explanation of the pertinent

facts, those like Luce, Krock and Sulzberger who were already staunch anti-communists would accept Forrestal's proposition without question.

On August 23, 1946, Times Magazine reporter Patrik E. Nieburg paid a visit to NA Stockholm Winston at the American embassy, seeking more information on the Ghost Rockets. When Nieburg was asked what evidence he had which prompted him to inform his magazine that there was no doubt that Russian rockets were flying over Sweden, as reported in TIME on August 19, 1946, he replied that he had no evidence whatsoever, and had merely forwarded on Swedish press reports. He assumed that the editors of TIME had jumped at conclusions on the basis of these press reports.<sup>5</sup>

Henry Luce's magazine was not jumping at conclusions, it was participating in one of the greatest deceptions in human history. Whether blinded by his anti-communist views or altruistic patriotism, Luce's complicity has been revealed.

By carefully analyzing the news media stories churned out in support of the Rosetta deception from 1946-47, we can readily see the application of the same techniques of shuttling and multi-source confirmation that BSC used during WW2. But whereas BSC would promote real stories that were of public interest, Rosetta would intermingle half-truths and deception in utterly nonsense stories like those found in today's tabloids that litter the grocery store checkout aisle. There was a method to this madness however, and much more than met the eye of someone living in that time.

For example, when the Ghost Rockets became the talk of the town in the summer of 1946, the stories coming out of Sweden sounded like utter nonsense to British scientist R.V. Jones who knew that there was no rocket in the world capable of 1,000 overflights without experiencing a single crash. But that was not important to the Rosetta deception planners as Jones was not their intended audience. Instead it would be Uncle Joe who already suffering from a major case of cognitive dissonance, whose prejudice would be milked for all it was worth. Ignoring the "nonsense" red flags, Uncle Joe would have tasked his vast intelligence network to report back anything they could find on the Ghost Rockets.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Letter from Office of Censorship, Byron Price to Admiral Leahy, Chief of Staff.* (September 23, 1942). National Archives College Park, RG 218, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Entry Central Decimal Files, Box 41.

- 
- <sup>2</sup> *Letter from Office of War Information, Elmer Davis to Admiral Leahy, Chief of Staff.* (August 29, 1942). National Archives College Park, RG 218, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Entry Central Decimal Files, Box 41.
- <sup>3</sup> Hoopes, T., & Brinkley, D. (1992). *Driven patriot: The life and times of James Forrestal* (First edition.). Knopf.
- <sup>4</sup> Forrestal, J., Millis, W., & Duffield, E. S. (1951). *The Forrestal diaries*. New York: Viking Press. p. 129
- <sup>5</sup> Report 39-S-46 from U.S. naval attaché at Stockholm, Sweden, R.A. Winston (August 30, 1946).

## Part 4: The Navy Mind Readers

## CHAPTER 57

### A New Era

Rosetta's gardening operation was an attempt to assist the Anglo codebreakers read the mind of Uncle Joe at a very crucial time in world history. Not only were they interested in knowing Uncle Joe's immediate next move but also what his negotiators at the Paris peace conference had up their sleeves. By breaking the Soviet diplomatic code, the Anglo allies were hoping to discover what the Soviet bargaining chips were. It would not be till after the Paris peace conference was over in late 1946 and the KGB messages began to reveal a serious counterintelligence threat that Rosetta's focus would shift to spy hunting.

According to NSA historical monographs, Venona breakthroughs were achieved exclusively by the U.S. Army while the U.S. Navy played little to no role in the process. This downplaying of the Navy's role and the relative obscurity that the Navy has been relegated to in the Venona chronology deserves a closer look.

After the disastrous odd-even day sharing of diplomatic responsibility that led up to Pearl Harbor, the U.S. Navy reluctantly agreed to defer work on diplomatic traffic to the Army until after the war, focusing on naval military communications instead. In theory this meant ALL diplomatic, but in practice it was not so black and white, as we shall soon see. Regardless, since the Navy's hands off agreement was intended to last only until the end of the war, there was no impediment to the Navy reacquiring diplomatic targets after the war.

The Navy expressed its postwar goals in a February 7, 1945 OP-20-G memorandum from Captain Joseph Wenger, that:<sup>1</sup>

When hostilities cease, the Navy must be able to get complete coverage on the peace negotiations. It is also expected that the U.S. naval COMINT organization will resume activity in the diplomatic field as rapidly as possible so that the U.S. officials charged with the formulation of this country's foreign policies will be in a position to know what the other countries are planning since such plans

frequently differ from what the countries in question actually promulgate for public consumption.

This was echoed by the ASA's Colonel Carter Clarke as far back as May 6, 1942 who stressed the importance of enabling American peace delegates "with fullest intimate knowledge... of the purposes and attitudes, overt and covert, of those who will sit opposite them"<sup>2</sup>, both Wenger and Clarke describing the same COMINT customer – the U.S. Department of State.

The historical importance of COMINT to the State Department was highlighted in a January 3, 1944 memo from Secretary of State Cordell Hull who said that:<sup>3</sup>

The Department has found this material valuable at all times, and vital in a number of highly important situations. It would appear that information of this kind, and its analysis, will be even more vital in the future than in the past, both during the period of actual hostilities, and after hostilities may be concluded. This material is of great value in determining the facts on which policy must be formulated or action taken.

Hull's assessment of how COMINT would play an important role in diplomacy in the post war period was dead on. In a September 15, 1947 letter of commendation to Wenger and OP-20G from Mr. Norman Armour, Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Armour wrote:<sup>4</sup> "It gives me great pleasure to be able to express to you the State Department's appreciation of the very valuable service which your Division rendered apropos of the recent Inter-American Conference at Petropolis, Brazil."

This conference culminated in the signing of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, a collective security arrangement more popularly known as the "Rio Pact" where the Brazilian government endorsed the American policy of containing the threat of International Communism by outlawing the Brazilian Communist Party and severing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.<sup>5</sup>

Another postwar example is revealed by a January 8, 1948 letter of appreciation from W. Park Armstrong Jr. acting Special Assistant to the Secretary of State who summed up COMINT's importance to diplomacy by saying:<sup>6</sup>

It is with pleasure that I write to you, as we enter the New Year, to express the appreciation of the Department and of my office for the unique source of intelligence which is made available to us through you and the personnel of your division.

I refer, of course, to communication intelligence and the very real benefit which it brings to bear upon the complex problems of our country's foreign relations and of the Department's efforts to maintain and consolidate a state of peace favorable to the national welfare.

The Department now relies upon the technical and the skills of the (Navy) Communications Supplementary Activities, Washington, and the corresponding units in the Army, for its basic communications intelligence material, and I should be grateful if you would inform Captain Wenger and Captain Harper of our appreciation for this indispensable service.

As can be seen by these heartfelt OP-20-G accolades, the Department of State had a vested interest in the U.S. COMINT organizations providing real-time intelligence to the diplomatic process especially after the European war was over - when the Department of State would need actionable intelligence in the peace negotiations that followed. Although no specific details of this assistance appears in the declassified record, we can deduce that the COMINT organizations did not stand idly by when the call for assistance came.

The Venona history only tells the part of the Soviet diplomatic codebreaking story that involve the elements of espionage and counterintelligence. What it doesn't reveal is how the codebreakers assisted the U.S. Department of State in the art of diplomacy.

---

<sup>1</sup> OP-20-G memorandum from Captain Joseph Wenger. (February 7, 1945). U.S. National Archives, RG 38, 003003, Box 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Venona*. p. 13. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum from Secretary of State Cordell Hull to OP-20-G. (January 3, 1944). National Archives, RG 38, 003003, Box 4.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of commendation to Wenger and OP-20G from Mr. Norman Armour U.S. (September 15, 1947). National Archives, RG 38, 003003, Box 4.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, J. (2014). *A History of Brazil, 1500-2000*. Routledge. President Truman was at the September 2, 1947 treaty signing.

<sup>6</sup> Letter of appreciation from W. Park Armstrong Jr. to OP-20-G. (January 8, 1948). National Archives, RG 38, 003003, Box 4.

## CHAPTER 58

### The Art of Diplomacy

The Navy's obscurity in Venona can be put into context based on the nature of the diplomatic work it was assigned. Whereas the Venona breakthroughs were coming from the Soviet Trade and KGB traffic which was assigned to the Army, naval codebreakers had been working on true Consular diplomatic traffic since 1944. The Navy may have taken a backseat in breaking KGB related traffic, but that was only part of the story, as the allied attack on Soviet diplomatic was far more encompassing.

Five different Soviet entities were using the diplomatic channel to communicate with Moscow including the GRU (Russian military intelligence), GRU-naval, the KGB, Soviet diplomats and Soviet trade (Amtorg); both the ASA and OP-20-G were therefore selective about which channels to work on.

By July 1944, ASA's efforts were focused on Trade and KGB that afforded the first Venona breakthroughs with the discovery of duplicate pad manufacture. The Navy meanwhile worked on the true Consular channel that bona-fide Soviet diplomats used to communicate with the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Each Russian entity had its own unique codebook, so true Consular traffic was encrypted with an entirely different codebook than the KGB traffic. When the Finns acquired codebooks from the Soviet consulate in Petsamo in 1941, the KGB codebook known as KOD POBJEDA was different from the Consular codebook known as KOD-26.<sup>2</sup>

The KGB and GRU traffic represented a minority of the Soviet diplomatic messages sent and collected – the bulk of the material then and later would be Trade and Consular.<sup>3</sup> According to NSA, the voluminous Trade messages involved mostly Lend-Lease matters whereas the Foreign Ministry messages most often dealt with routine Consular affairs.<sup>4</sup> While it is certain that the Trade's lend-lease records would contain very little of intelligence value, can we really believe NSA's assessment that the Consular traffic was just routine and of little intelligence significance?

Even if the NSA's assessment is true, it was made in hindsight. In 1946, when the Soviet diplomatic code had yet to be broken and the nature of Consular traffic was unknown, it could potentially contain information of tremendous intelligence significance to the Department of State, especially during the post war peace negotiations. In other words, the codebreakers wouldn't know if Uncle Joe was sharing his thoughts with his representatives abroad until they could first read the Consular traffic.

Keeping in mind the success against Japanese diplomatic and the immense intelligence it provided during the war, U.S. COMINT would have examined Soviet Consular traffic in the same light, as a potential source of high caliber intelligence. In the postwar period, it was the U.S. Navy's responsibility for exploring this potential intelligence goldmine.

The Navy and the State Department maintained a special COMINT relationship that was revealed in the STANCIB meeting of February 15, 1946 where OP-20-G leader Wenger voiced his concerns over granting British liaisons direct access to the Navy's collateral center. Admiral Inglis responded that this could not be tolerated as this would make collateral from the State Department available to the British and that such material must be excluded.<sup>5</sup> No such concerns were voiced by the Army, indicative that the State Department only maintained this special relationship with the Navy.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Venona*. p. 34. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.

<sup>2</sup> *Venona*. p. 51. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.

<sup>3</sup> Benson, R. L. (2001). *The Venona story*. Fort George G. Meade, Md.: National Security Agency, Center for Cryptologic History. p. 10. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic\\_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona\\_story.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona_story.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *Venona Monograph # 5: The KGB and GRU in Europe, South America, and Australia*. Retrieved from <http://www.theblackvault.com/documents/nsa/venona/monographs/monograph-5.html>.

<sup>5</sup> STANCIB meeting. (February 15, 1946). p. 9.

## CHAPTER 59

### Naval Nostalgia

To comprehensively understand the U.S. Navy's interest in pursuing Soviet diplomatic in the post war period, it is important to scrutinize the background of OP-20-G leader, Captain Joseph Wenger.

During the war, Wenger was as noted for his passion for all things COMINT as was his political rivalries with the decentralized naval COMINT components that he eventually wrangled under his control.

It was OP-20-G under Wenger's leadership that using an advanced version of the British Bombe broke into the Shark cypher used by German U-Boats; helping the U.S. to win the battle of the Atlantic. In the postwar period, Wenger championed the use of early computer technology in codebreaking and led the American delegation that negotiated the postwar COMINT agreement with the United Kingdom – the BRUSA agreement.

But Wenger harbored a frustration that weighed heavily on his conscious despite all of his many wartime accolades – the cryptologic breakthroughs that turned the tide of war in the Pacific were not his to boast. Instead, it was a small group of renegade naval codebreakers at Pearl Harbor that broke the Japanese naval code JN-25 that contributed to the victory at Midway. The Navy as a service lost its pride at Pearl Harbor but regained it at Midway – only Wenger's NEGAT (mainline Navy) codebreakers were not responsible for that victory.

In addition, Wenger harbored a personal frustration – his own inability to crack a code before the war – a Russian code. Wenger had been attempting to crack Russian codes since 1931 – when Representative Hamilton Fisher of New York conducted an investigation into communist propaganda and espionage in the United States focused on the Soviet Amtorg Trading Company.

A congressional committee subpoenaed about 3,000 code messages from the cable companies and submitted them to the Navy's Code and Signal Section (predecessor of OP-20-G), which at the time consisted of only two cryptanalysts, one who was a young Lieutenant

Wenger. After the Navy efforts were unsuccessful, the coded messages were turned over the Army, which also could not crack the codes.<sup>1</sup>

From this holistic view, Wenger's pre-war lack of success with Russian codes, his complete loss of control over diplomatic traffic during the war and his burning desire to make up for the bitter missed opportunity of Midway, all motivated him to make a major breakthrough that OP-20-G could claim as its own.

Although this may sound too selfish and egotistical to be true, Wenger's personal grievances cannot be discounted. Rather than just speculate on motive however, let's take a look at the historical record and Wenger's efforts to position OP-20-G for achieving that breakthrough performance.

The official history of the Navy's efforts against Soviet diplomatic traffic, begins with Wenger's failed efforts in 1931 and continued years later with "a small Navy effort against Soviet diplomatic traffic begun in 1938 and which perhaps continued into 1941, but which produced no results and did not influence later work on this target",<sup>2</sup> with:<sup>3</sup>

the Navy's lack of success inferred from later Army-Navy discussions and the Navy's own summary of its work on Russian communications which reported no significant effort until the summer of 1943. In 1944, the Navy continued its small but active inquiry into Soviet diplomatic systems, but always in consultation with the Army.

The Navy's overall Russian program grew considerably during 1944. By June a 26 person unit at OP-20-G on Nebraska Avenue in Washington D.C. was working the traffic and internal organizational changes were made at this time to increase security and disguise the existence of the Russian program.<sup>4</sup> The Russian problem was U.S. eyes only during 1943-45.<sup>5</sup>

The Army and Navy began informal cooperation even prior to war's end by forming a joint COMINT committee. Originally called the Army-Navy Communications Intelligence Coordinating Committee (ANCICC), this collaborative effort of the military services evolved through many name changes. In the immediate post war period ANCICC became known as the Army Navy Communications Intelligence Board (ANCIB). In December 1945, ANCIB changed

to STANCIB when the State Department joined and six months later in June of 1946, STANCIB became the United States Communications Intelligence Board (USCIB) when the FBI and CIG joined, reflecting the shift of COMINT consumer interest from military targets to those of a strategic and counter-intelligence nature.<sup>6</sup>

By September of 1945 after the war was over, Navy COMINT now completely under the centralized control of Joseph Wenger, found itself in a position to renew efforts against diplomatic traffic – but this time under the auspices and joint task allocation of ANCIB. With postwar budgets demanding a reduction in COMINT resources, the Army and Navy recognized the need for even greater cooperation and division of responsibilities. Talks of merging their two COMINT organizations was ultimately ruled out but joint cooperation on important tasks such as diplomatic traffic was seen as necessary.

Fortunately for both the Army and the Navy COMINT organizations, when their defeated wartime targets dried up, a new major target emerged. As the Russians became more belligerent, plans were already underway to focus U.S. COMINT efforts on this new target. As early as November 1945, the Army and Navy codebreakers shifted their focus from wartime opponents to their next set of priority targets and for diplomatic targets, the number one priority was the Soviet Union.<sup>7</sup>

Having learned the hard way at Pearl Harbor how detrimental jealously-guarded overlapping COMINT efforts were to the United States, the Army and Navy wisely moved towards a more sane centralized allocation of COMINT duties in the post war period. A Joint Operating Plan (JOP) was adopted in April of 1946, just six weeks after the BRUSA agreement with the British was signed. The JOP is also known as the “Corderman Wenger Agreement”, named for the principal Army and Navy negotiators, Colonel W. Preston Corderman and Captain Joseph N. Wenger, USN.<sup>8</sup>

A new position was created, the Coordinator of Joint Operations (CJO) to oversee the allocation of COMINT duties between ASA and OP-20-G. The CJO was simply a facilitator to coordinate the intercept, processing, and liaison activities of both services, allowing the Army and Navy to retain exclusive coverage of their natural military targets, but jointly collaborating with assigned non-overlapping functions on diplomatic traffic.<sup>9</sup>

After years of disjointed and uncoordinated efforts between the U.S. COMINT military services, the USCIB, its Joint Operating Plan, Joint Coordinator and its joint subcommittees represented a major unified front in U.S. COMINT operations, both in target allocation and attack and also as a unified voice in alliance with the British.

One of its first tasks would be to support Rosetta's Phase 1 goal of reading the mind of Uncle Joe. It would be Joseph Wenger's OP-20-G that would lead this charge.

---

<sup>1</sup> Peterson, M. L. *Before BOURBON: American and British COMINT Efforts against Russia and the Soviet Union before 1945*. NSA DOCID: 3853634. Retrieved from <https://cryptome.org/2015/12/nsa-before-bourbon.pdf>  
Johnson, T. R. (1995). *American Cryptology during the Cold War; 1945-1989, Book I: The Struggle for Centralization 1945-1960, Series VI: The NSA Period*. Washington, DC: National Security Agency Center for Cryptologic History. NSA DOCID 3188691. p. 158.

<sup>2</sup> *Venona*. p. 11. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.

<sup>3</sup> *Venona*. p. 46. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.

<sup>4</sup> *Venona*. pp. 46 – 47. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.

<sup>5</sup> *Venona*. p. 16. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>. Footnotes: Frank Rowlett, Ferdinand Coudert and Oliver Kirby told me (Benson).

<sup>6</sup> Burns, T. (1990). *The Origins of the National Security Agency 1940 – 1952, Series V Early Postwar Period, Volume 1*. pp. 39-40. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/cryptologic\\_histories/origins\\_of\\_nsa.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_histories/origins_of_nsa.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Memorandum from Thomas B. Inglis, Chief of Naval Intelligence to Chief of Naval Operations. (December 18, 1945). Subject: *Diplomatic Ultra Intelligence, Priority as to Countries of Interest*. National Archives, RG 38, 003003, Box 4.

<sup>8</sup> Burns, T. L. (2005). *The Quest for Cryptologic Centralization and the Establishment of the NSA: 1940-1952. United States Cryptologic History, Series V, The Early Postwar Period, 1945-1952, Volume VI. Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency*. p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> Burns, T. (1990). *The Origins of the National Security Agency 1940 – 1952, Series V Early Postwar Period, Volume 1*. p. 37. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/cryptologic\\_histories/origins\\_of\\_nsa.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/cryptologic_histories/origins_of_nsa.pdf).  
*Joint Meeting of State-Army-Navy Communication Intelligence Board and State-Army-Navy Communication Intelligence Coordinating Committee*. (February 15, 1946). p. 3.

## CHAPTER 60

### The Navy Advantage

Both the Soviet Union and Japan employed a variety of different codes for encrypting their military as well as diplomatic communications. This included the use of super-enciphered codes that involved doubly encrypting a message, first using a codebook and then an additive book (one-time pad pages).

U.S. codebreaker successes against Russian codes were polar opposite those against Japanese codes. Whereas, Russian super-enciphered diplomatic codes were exceedingly difficult to crack, Russian military codes were less difficult. Conversely, Japanese diplomatic codes were more easily cracked using reconstructed Purple machines whereas Japanese super-enciphered military codes like JN-25 were difficult to break.

From this perspective, it was not the Army's ASA but the U.S. Navy's OP-20-G, who having broken the difficult JN-25, was most uniquely qualified to break into the Soviet diplomatic code. The U.S. cryptographers that were most experienced with super-enciphered systems were from the U.S. Navy.

One of the great naval cryptographers of her time – pre and post war, was Agnes Driscoll, also known by her fellow Navy codebreakers as Madame-X. Although Driscoll has been relegated to relative obscurity by COMINT historians, her work at OP-20-G is legendary. During WW2, Driscoll worked on cracking the difficult super-enciphered Japanese code JN-25 which had been giving U.S. codebreakers headaches for some time.

To put in perspective what Driscoll was up against with JN-25, the underlying codebook consisted of 30,000 non-alphabetic code groups.<sup>1</sup> Even worse, the Japanese changed their additive books four times between June 1, 1939 and October 1, 1940.<sup>2</sup> But to further complicate the efforts of Driscoll's team, the Japanese changed the underlying codebook AND the additive book on December 1, 1940, nullifying all previous efforts and forcing the Navy to start the bookbreaking process from scratch. This process of periodic additive and codebook changes repeated itself throughout the war.<sup>3</sup>

The JN-25 additive books were replaced yet again, in June, August, and on December 4, 1941 and with only four percent of the codebook solved by August 1941, OP-20-G was not unexpectedly denied any foreknowledge of the December 1941 Pearl Harbor attack.<sup>4</sup>

Given Driscoll’s extensive experience with super-enciphered Japanese codes, it was only natural for OP-20-G leader Joseph Wenger to assign her to work on Soviet diplomatic, also a super-enciphered system.

What doesn’t come naturally however is reconstructing Driscoll’s work history at OP-20-G. Unlike the more concise NSA history on the Army’s Venona effort, OP-20-G’s codebreaking efforts against Soviet diplomatic are more difficult to piece together, complicated by a plethora of unit re-designations and re-organizations over just a short four year period. Tracking Driscoll’s involvement with Soviet diplomatic in this evolutionary maze is equally difficult.

To avoid confusing you with these mind numbing evolutions, please refer back to the special chart below when reading the unit history that follows:

After Pearl Harbor	Jan 1944	Apr 1944	Dec 1944	Jul 1945	Mar 1946	Jun 1946	Sep 1946	Oct 1948	After Oct 1948
Deferred to the Army	GV, Known as the Foreign Language Research Section	GV-1 under OP-20-G-50, Driscoll is chief of GV-1	G-10	U.S. and UK reestablish their codebreaking partnership	NY-1	N3 Special Research Team A, Driscoll is in charge	N2	(N3 again) N-32 Special Research Team A, Driscoll still in charge	Returned to the Army

In January 1944, the Navy’s Russian cryptanalytic effort became known as GV, the Foreign Language Research Section and just a month later a Russian traffic analysis section was added. On April 17, 1944, GV was placed under OP-20-G-50, the Research Department. This move did not affect how the section worked but was done to make the crypto breaking machines

of section GM, also under OP-20-G-50, available for research. Mrs. Driscoll became the chief of section GV-1 at this time.

Section GV/GV-1 was the U.S. Navy's equivalent to the Army unit that worked on Venona. Starting in January 1944, weekly meetings were held between GV/GV-1 and ASA alternatively at Arlington Hall, Virginia and the naval Communications annex on Nebraska Avenue in Washington D.C. These weekly meeting were discontinued in February 1945 and replaced by informal liaison.

On December 21, 1944, section GV was designated G-10 in an effort to increase security by hiding the number of people working on Russian but Driscoll's section retained the name GV-1.<sup>5</sup> A March 1945 memorandum for OP-20-G stated that "there are practically no personnel engaged in projects for post-war purposes unless you consider the special project under G-10 in that category".<sup>6</sup> It was at this time that U.S. work on Soviet Diplomatic was considered U.S. eyes only and was not shared with the British.

Soon however, the U.S. would reestablish codebreaking ties with its British war ally. In June 1945, the Navy agreed that G-10's efforts would be a cooperative venture with the Army governed by the Army Navy Communications Intelligence Board (ANCIB).

In February of 1945, the Army and Navy had agreed to use the code word Rattan for the Russian effort, but this was changed in July 1945 to the code word Bourbon after the U.S. and the UK reestablished their codebreaking partnership. It is also around July 1945 that Mrs. Driscoll is noticeably absent from the G-10 personnel roster.<sup>7</sup>

On March 8, 1946, section 3-G-10 was reorganized as NY-1 under division N2. Commander E.W. Knepper who was formerly in charge of the 3-G-10 section that worked on Soviet diplomatic was put in charge of NY-1 having just returned from liaison with GC&CS (GCHQ) in London, an assignment that was originally supposed to last three months but was extended to six.

Then on June 7, 1946, a major shift occurred within NY-1. All Soviet diplomatic efforts in NY-1 ended and all traffic, research material and results were transferred to Mrs. Driscoll. Driscoll was then working in OP-20-G's Cryptanalytic Research Section N3 as the head of Special Research Team "A".<sup>8</sup>

NY-1 was the cryptanalysis division while N-3 was the cryptanalytic research department with Driscoll's Special Research Team "A" responsible for the following tasks: (1) Making the initial solution of assigned cryptographic systems and decrypting traffic in such systems until that task is transferred to NY. (2) Collaborating with appropriate sections of NY on mutual problems. In other words, Driscoll's team in N-3 would make the initial inroads into a cipher system before passing on the work to NY which would further exploit the cipher through cryptanalysis.<sup>9</sup>

So why the dramatic shift in Soviet Diplomatic to Driscoll? Was the decryption effort stagnated in NY-1 and it was decided that new blood was needed to propel the effort forward? Unfortunately, although the official history of the Navy's Russian section extends to 1948, it reveals nothing about Soviet diplomatic after the work was shifted to Driscoll on June 7, 1946. The dramatic shift of responsibility and the subsequent vacuum of information that followed are indicative of compartmentalization, where a project is sequestered away and only those with the need to know, privy to it.

To summarize up to this point, declassified official NSA documents unequivocally show that the Navy mounted a cooperative effort with the Army's ASA against Soviet Diplomatic traffic as early as June of 1945.

This cooperative effort was formalized by STANCIB (formerly ANCIB) on April 22, 1946 under a Joint Operating Plan. The Army was assigned Trade and KGB traffic and the Navy was assigned Consular traffic.

Just a little over a month after the Joint Operating Plan was initiated, the Navy made a dramatic change by shifting all Soviet diplomatic work to its top cryptographer, Agnes Driscoll. The official Russian section history then falls silent on the fate of Consular diplomatic under Driscoll, indicating possible compartmentalization.

Other NSA documents pick up the trail of the Russian section where the official history leaves off. In September 1946, Driscoll's group moved under the operational control of N-2, the Processing Department which was responsible for internal handling and distribution of intercepted traffic, traffic analysis, cryptanalysis, decryption and translation, collation, interpretation and dissemination, and machine processing. By October 1948, Driscoll's team was

back under N-3 with Driscoll still in charge of Special Research Team “A”, although the designator had changed to section N-32.<sup>10</sup> When Driscoll’s Research Team A’s work on Soviet diplomatic ceased, it was returned to the Army sometime after October of 1948.

Unfortunately, these additional documents do not shed any light on exactly what Driscoll’s team was doing and it is also unfortunate that Driscoll’s two year work on Soviet diplomatic from 1946 – 48 has not been declassified as many NSA historians are less than the flattering when describing her work:

The Navy attacked only one Soviet diplomatic system. This part of Venona, to grossly oversimplify, was both the most voluminous and the least lucrative for intelligence content. Its primary value was in whatever light it shed on the espionage traffic that it shared with accidental one-time-pad use. Unsurprisingly, Driscoll and her seven-person group did not have any success to report.<sup>11</sup>

This singular Soviet diplomatic system which the Navy had been working on since 1944, was the Soviet Consular code, also known as true diplomatic because it was the communications channel that Soviet diplomats used in their normal diplomatic duties. As previously pointed out, although the Consular decrypts may have ultimately proven to be routine and uninteresting, this would not have been known in 1946 and the Navy would have still treated it as a high value target that could potentially yield intelligence bonanzas comparable to those of the Japanese Purple diplomatic decrypts.

Of course this dredges up other interesting questions. Did the Soviets truly neglect their missions and diplomats to the point that no secrets were entrusted to them, secrets which would show up in the Consular traffic? Would Moscow Center only entrust such secrets to the diplomatic pouch? Considering that the Soviets thought their super-enciphered diplomatic code based on one-time pads to be unbreakable, there was no security reason why Consular traffic could not contain data of strategic intelligence value.

Further, it was the Trade and KGB channels which would become the crux of Venona, not Consular traffic. The NSA historian’s assessment that the Navy’s contribution to Venona was negligible is correct but only vis-a-vis Venona. The Navy was not focused like the Army was on

KGB or Trade traffic but instead on Consular traffic. In other words, the Army was focused on the counter-intelligence traffic while the Navy was focused on the strategic mindset traffic.

OP-20-G leader Joseph Wenger was chomping at the bit to resume attacking diplomatic in earnest after the dry WW2 spell when this work was deferred to the Army. Wenger overtly expressed his desire that OP-20-G resume diplomatic after the war to support the Department of State at the post war peace conference and by December 1945 had an eager client in the State Department that joined ANCIB (with a subsequent name change to STANCIB). The Department of State was anxious to receive any intelligence that would give the United States the upper hand during the Paris negotiations.

Once the Joint Coordinator assigned the Navy the piece of the diplomatic pie working on Consular traffic, Wenger would have put the Navy's top cryptographer to work on it. Agnes Driscoll was that top cryptographer but her efforts on Consular diplomatic are missing from the historical record and downplayed by NSA historians as trifle and unproductive. This vacuum of official information hints at compartmentalization.

But for what reason? Based on the timing of the Navy's efforts, only one operation would need to be filed away under such tight security – Rosetta's gardening operation that produced COMINT collateral that was too sensitive to release publically. What was being hidden away from prying eyes was the Navy's codebreaking efforts on behalf of Rosetta.

It would be OP-20-G that would receive the raw data from Rosetta's gardening operations in the American Press and OP-20-G machines that would clack away continuously to process the raw data in an attempt to recreate out of thin air the Soviet Consular and other diplomatic codebooks. The major breakthrough that Joseph Wenger sought was within his grasp as it was his naval codebreakers who would attempt to read the mind of Uncle Joe.

---

<sup>1</sup> Budiansky, S. (2000, April). *Closing the Book on Pearl Harbor*. Cryptologia: Volume XXIV, Number 2. p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> Budiansky, S. (2000, April). *Closing the Book on Pearl Harbor*. Cryptologia: Volume XXIV, Number 2. p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, K. W. (2015). *The Neglected Giant: Agnes Meyer Driscoll*. Center for Cryptologic History Special Series Volume 10. p. 23. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic\\_heritage/center\\_crypt\\_history/publications/the\\_neglected\\_giant\\_agnes\\_meyer\\_driscoll.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic_heritage/center_crypt_history/publications/the_neglected_giant_agnes_meyer_driscoll.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, K. W. (2015). *The Neglected Giant: Agnes Meyer Driscoll*. Center for Cryptologic History Special Series Volume 10. p. 23. Retrieved from

---

[http://www.nsa.gov/about/ files/cryptologic heritage/center crypt history/publications/the neglected giant agnes\\_meyer\\_driscoll.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/ files/cryptologic heritage/center crypt history/publications/the neglected giant agnes_meyer_driscoll.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> *Naval Communications Activity, Russian Language Section: July 1943 - January 1948*. (1948). p. 1. Retrieved from <http://primarysources.brillonline.com/browse/cold-war-intelligence/naval-communications-activity-russian-language-section-july-1943-january-1948-1948-top-secret-umbra;b01253>.

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum for Op-20-G. *Subject: Personnel at Negat*. (March 14, 1945). US National Archives

<sup>7</sup> *Naval Communications Activity, Russian Language Section: July 1943 - January 1948*. (1948). p. 2. Retrieved from <http://primarysources.brillonline.com/browse/cold-war-intelligence/naval-communications-activity-russian-language-section-july-1943-january-1948-1948-top-secret-umbra;b01253>.

<sup>8</sup> *Madame X: Agnes in Twilight, The Last Years of the Career of Agnes Driscoll, 1941-1957*. (2003). NSA: DOCID: 3575741.

<sup>9</sup> OP-20-G Staff Memorandum 1-44. *Subject: Functions of OP-20-G*. (November 21, 1944). Retrieved from [https://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/ files/friedmanDocuments/ReportsandResearchNotes/FOLDER\\_531/41771439081052.pdf](https://www.nsa.gov/public_info/ files/friedmanDocuments/ReportsandResearchNotes/FOLDER_531/41771439081052.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> Johnson, K. W. (2015). *The Neglected Giant: Agnes Meyer Driscoll. Center for Cryptologic History Special Series Volume 10*. p. 31. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/about/ files/cryptologic heritage/center crypt history/publications/the neglected giant agnes\\_meyer\\_driscoll.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/ files/cryptologic heritage/center crypt history/publications/the neglected giant agnes_meyer_driscoll.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, K. W. (2015). *The Neglected Giant: Agnes Meyer Driscoll. Center for Cryptologic History Special Series Volume 10*. p. 31. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/about/ files/cryptologic heritage/center crypt history/publications/the neglected giant agnes\\_meyer\\_driscoll.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/ files/cryptologic heritage/center crypt history/publications/the neglected giant agnes_meyer_driscoll.pdf).

## CHAPTER 61

### The Pearl Harbor Precedent

In December 1944, when Driscoll's GV-1 section was moved under 3-G-10 to hide the number of people working on Russian, 3-G-10 was under the command of Wesley A. Wright.<sup>1</sup> Wright, a 1926 Annapolis graduate, was a crack Navy cryptographer who was at Station Hypo at Pearl Harbor during the December 1941 Japanese attack.

Station Hypo the following year would be placed under ICPOA, the joint intelligence unit founded and lead by Rosetta member Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter. At Hypo, Wright worked alongside some of the other great Navy cryptographers of that time including Joseph Rochefort, Thomas Dyer, and Joseph Finnegan.<sup>2</sup>

Wright exacted his own personal revenge on the Japanese six months after the Pearl Harbor disaster by decoding the date and time of the 1942 Japanese attack on Midway and it was fellow cryptographer Joseph Finnegan who tricked the Japanese into revealing Midway as their intended target. Finnegan used gardening to tease this intelligence out of the Japanese, planting information that the Japanese believed important enough to embed inside a JN-25 encrypted message which was subsequently intercepted and decrypted by the Navy.

In December 1944, Wright was OP-20-G's Technical Assistant responsible for all technical operations necessary for the production of communication intelligence and its delivery to designated disseminating authorities. This included supervising Driscoll's Russian team in section GV.<sup>3</sup>

Wright supervised Agnes Driscoll for most of 1946 and on her evaluation dated March 31, 1947 he gave her the highest rating of "Excellent". Evidently Agnes Driscoll was doing a good job at whatever she was doing on Soviet Diplomatic in 1946, contradicting the assessment of her work by later NSA historians.<sup>4</sup>

Wright played another important role at OP-20-G in 1946 as the chair of the Joint Processing Allocation Group, JPAG, one of the three STANCIB committees that administered the Army Navy Joint Operating Plan. The JPAG examined all of the COMINT tasks and

problems being handled by the Army and the Navy and then assigned out those that were of joint responsibility like diplomatic as appropriate.<sup>5</sup>

Joining Wright at OP-20-G as chief of processing in February 1946 was former Pearl Harbor colleague, Thomas Harold Dyer.<sup>6</sup> After graduating from the naval Academy in 1924 and serving a tour as a radio communications officer, Dyer was assigned to OP-20-G, in May 1931. There he trained under Agnes Driscoll and developed procedures for using IBM tabulators to ease the burden of sorting through the myriad of possible solutions for breaking codes and ciphers. This earned him the title of "the father of machine cryptanalysis".<sup>7</sup>

As the lead cryptanalyst at Station Hypo in Hawaii from 1936 to 1945, Dyer led the team that was responsible for most of the breakthroughs in reading Japanese naval communications during the war in the Pacific. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for his WW2 COMINT contributions, only one of six to achieve this, another being OP-20-G leader Joseph Wenger. When Driscoll's team was moved to N2, the Processing Division in September, 1946, Driscoll reported to her former protégé, Thomas H. Dyer.

So what is the significance of former Pearl Harbor cryptologists working on Soviet diplomatic in 1946? It shows that Joseph Wenger made attacking the Soviet diplomatic Consular code, OP-20-Gs top priority and that it would be a no-holds barred effort.

In 1946, OP-20-G gathered its top civilian and military cryptographers, each who had a long distinguished COMINT career, and assigned them the singular task of attacking a Soviet super-enciphered code similar to one that they already had years of experience with, the Japanese JN-25. This was not the half-hearted effort NSA historians painted with just a Venona brush. It was a major effort that involved attacking one of the five Soviet diplomatic channels of communication that could contain strategic intelligence of immense importance to the Department of State and the White House.

There is one other Pearl Harbor precedent of significance that must be explored. The de facto leader at Station Hypo at Pearl Harbor prior to the Japanese 1941 attack was Commander Joseph Rochefort. An enigmatic naval cryptographer who many historians believe was purposely sidelined by Joseph Wenger and the mainline Navy despite his important contributions to the war effort, Rochefort was not one to let personal grievances get in the way of serving his country.

Days before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Rochefort took interest in acquiring Japanese diplomatic traffic sent between Tokyo and the Honolulu consul general Nagao Kita. Similar to the Soviet legation on the U.S. mainland, the Japanese legation in Hawaii relied on U.S. commercial cable companies to send their encrypted diplomatic messages to Tokyo. Rochefort had previously asked the commercial cable companies for copies of the Japanese diplomatic traffic and was denied, the cable companies citing the illegality of doing so under the Communications Act of 1934.

In November 1941, David Sarnoff, president of RCA, visited Honolulu and was persuaded by Commandant Claude C. Bloch who was in charge of the Fourteenth naval District at Pearl Harbor to provide to the Navy, copies of the most recent Japanese diplomatic cables, although this was illegal to do so. Sarnoff agreed.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, RCA shared the responsibility for transmitting Japanese Consular traffic with another telecommunications company, Mackay Radio and it wouldn't be RCA's turn at handling the traffic until December 1941.

When RCA resumed transmission duties in early December, David Sarnoff arranged to have the Japanese diplomatic cable copies sent to the Navy and these were passed through a Captain Mayfield to Rochefort. Although years later, Rochefort told a congressional committee investigating Pearl Harbor that he had no idea how Mayfield obtained the RCA cables<sup>9</sup>, Rochefort already knew they could only come directly from RCA. Rochefort protected the Navy rather than admit that the service he loved had violated a federal law.

Once again, Rosetta member David Sarnoff ignored the legality of his own actions in his efforts to help out his adopted country. Despite Sarnoff and Rochefort's best efforts, the bundle of RCA messages arrived too late, only being deciphered after the Japanese attack, the decrypts revealing information that could have forewarned of the disaster.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> OP-20-G Staff Memorandum 1-44. Subject: *Functions of OP-20-G*. (November 21, 1944). p. 77. Retrieved from [https://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/friedmanDocuments/ReportsandResearchNotes/FOLDER\\_531/41771439081052.pdf](https://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/friedmanDocuments/ReportsandResearchNotes/FOLDER_531/41771439081052.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Van Vleet, C. (1982, June). *The Unsung*. Naval Aviation News. pp. 8-9. *The Dungeon*. Retrieved from <http://www.usspennsylvania.com/TheDungeon.htm>

<sup>3</sup> OP-20-G Staff Memorandum 1-44. Subject: *Functions of OP-20-G*. (November 21, 1944). p. 1. Retrieved from [https://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/files/friedmanDocuments/ReportsandResearchNotes/FOLDER\\_531/41771439081052.pdf](https://www.nsa.gov/public_info/files/friedmanDocuments/ReportsandResearchNotes/FOLDER_531/41771439081052.pdf). Johnson, K. W. (2015). *The Neglected Giant: Agnes Meyer Driscoll*. Center for Cryptologic History

---

*Special Series Volume 10*. p. 24. Retrieved from

[http://www.nsa.gov/about/\\_files/cryptologic\\_heritage/center\\_crypt\\_history/publications/the\\_neglected\\_giant\\_agnes\\_meyer\\_driscoll.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/center_crypt_history/publications/the_neglected_giant_agnes_meyer_driscoll.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, K. W. (2015). *The Neglected Giant: Agnes Meyer Driscoll*. *Center for Cryptologic History Special Series Volume 10*. p. 49. Retrieved from

[http://www.nsa.gov/about/\\_files/cryptologic\\_heritage/center\\_crypt\\_history/publications/the\\_neglected\\_giant\\_agnes\\_meyer\\_driscoll.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/_files/cryptologic_heritage/center_crypt_history/publications/the_neglected_giant_agnes_meyer_driscoll.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Oral Interview of Benson Buffham. (1999). pp. 11-12. Retrieved from

[https://www.nsa.gov/public\\_info/\\_files/oral\\_history\\_interviews/nsa\\_oh\\_51\\_99\\_buffham.pdf](https://www.nsa.gov/public_info/_files/oral_history_interviews/nsa_oh_51_99_buffham.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Maffeo, S. E. (2015). *U.S. Navy Codebreakers, Linguists, and Intelligence Officers against Japan, 1910-1941: A Biographical Dictionary*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 52.

<sup>7</sup> Maffeo, S. E. (2015). *U.S. Navy Codebreakers, Linguists, and Intelligence Officers against Japan, 1910-1941: A Biographical Dictionary*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> Stinnett, R. B. (2001). *Day of deceit: The truth about FDR and Pearl Harbor*. New York, NY: Touchstone. pp. 105-107.

<sup>9</sup> 79<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress. (1946, February). *Hearings before the Joint Committee on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack*. p. 4708.

<sup>10</sup> Carlson, E. (2011). *Joe Rochefort's war: The odyssey of the codebreaker who outwitted Yamamoto at Midway*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press. p. 173.

## CHAPTER 62

### British Bookbreakers and OP-20-G

On July 31, 1942, Geoffrey Stevens, a codebreaker from Britain's GC&CS (future GCHQ), was assigned as a liaison to Arlington Hall, home of the Army's SSA (future ASA). There he learned that the Americans were intercepting Soviet traffic to and from Washington. Steven reported back to GC&CS that the Americans were doing nothing with this traffic as they were too busy decrypting Axis communications.<sup>1</sup>

Stevens just happened to be working in the same office where the original Russian project started at Arlington Hall in February 1943. Two months later his conversations with one of the Americans working on Russian, Lieutenant Zubko created a security concern that caused the project to be temporarily shut down, as at that time the U.S. Russian effort was U.S. eyes only.

“Meanwhile, the British moved their own existing Soviet team from Ryder Street in London to larger premises at Sloane Square in late 1944.”<sup>2</sup> “The team was working to read the Soviet internal radio teletype traffic between Moscow and East Berlin known as “Caviar”.<sup>3</sup> This British Russian effort at Sloane Square was so secret that it was kept under the control of MI6 and completely separate from GCHQ until 1945.”<sup>4</sup>

Hugh Alexander, onetime head of cryptanalytic research at GCHQ, which included the Venona program, recollected that an active program of Russian intercept and analysis began in January, 1945 with the setting up of “Pritchard's covert party at Sloane Square”. Major Richard C. Pritchard, was head of the Russian Cryptanalytic Section<sup>5</sup>, part of the Eastern European Division, which dealt with traffic analysis and Russian non-morse.<sup>6</sup> Soviet diplomatic was not part of this effort, at least not until the secret unit at Sloane Square returned to GCHQ in July 1945 and work on Russian became overt.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly before the end of WW2, the U.S. and the UK began to share details of their Russian COMINT programs and began planning for joint or complementary operations against that target. The codename for the overall Russian target became Rattan and later Bourbon.<sup>8</sup>

In July 1945, Captain Joseph Wenger of OP-20-G and General Preston Corderman, head of the Signal Security Agency, SSA (future Army Security Agency, ASA) agreed that liaison with the British on Rattan, the codename for the Russian problem, would be under the auspices of the joint Army-Navy Communications Intelligence Coordinating Committee (ANCICC, later ANCIB, STANCIB, USCIB) rather than individually by each service.<sup>9</sup>

“During the mid-1940s the two sides mounted a relentless attack on the wartime generation of Soviet ciphers. The British provided much of the cryptanalytic expertise, the Americans most of the processing capability.”<sup>10</sup> Liaison between the two allies ramped up with a steady exchange of cryptanalysts between GCHQ and each U.S. military service. In March, 1946, Mr. Marr-Johnston was GCHQ's senior liaison officer in Washington while Mr. Wilfrid Bodsworth was the liaison officer with OP-20-G and Major Cheadle the liaison with ASA at Arlington Hall.<sup>11</sup>

In a letter from OP-20-G liaison Wilfrid Bodsworth to Joseph Wenger, Bodsworth stated that after his liaison work was up and he reported for duty back at GCHQ on June 1, 1946, “the Director told me to take sick leave at once and return in two weeks to take Pritchard’s place. Pritchard, who you will recall is Knepper’s opposite number, has just left to work in the city”. Bodsworth’s innocuous letter provides an important clue to the British effort on Soviet diplomatic.<sup>12</sup>

Bodsworth’s letter confirms that after Major Pritchard returned to GCHQ from Sloane Square in 1945, the British had resumed work against Soviet diplomatic as Pritchard was “Knepper’s opposite number”. As previously mentioned, E.W. Knepper was the head of the Navy’s 3-G-10 whose subordinate unit NY-1 was working on Soviet diplomatic just prior to the work being shifted to Agnes Driscoll in June of 1946.

The Army-Navy joint operating plan was put in place to ensure that the two services were not assigned overlapping Soviet diplomatic functions – the Army would work on Trade and KGB and the Navy on Consular. Pritchard at GCHQ and Knepper at OP-20-G were working on the same Soviet diplomatic problem – the Soviet Consular code.

Even more interesting is that both OP-20-G and GCHQ made dramatic internal changes in who would handle the Soviet Consular effort in June 1946, Bodsworth taking over at GCHQ

and Driscoll taking over at OP-20-G. This hints at a closely coordinated effort between Driscoll and OP-20-G's former British liaison to jointly attack Consular traffic.

The stage for Rosetta gardening operation in the U.S. and the UK was being set with OP-20-G as the logical recipient for gardened news from the U.S. press along with the enciphered Soviet telegrams that were being copied to it from RCA, ITT and Western Union, while GCHQ would be the recipient of gardened news from the UK press and the encrypted diplomatic traffic that was now overtly being analyzed by the former Sloane Square unit.

The 1946 BRUSA agreement between the US and the UK called for a complete exchange of collateral including any gardened data. The channels that would be used to exchange collateral as well as raw traffic consisted of a landline between Washington and Oshawa (Camp X) where the former BSC facility would transmit the data to GCHQ over the Hydra radio-telegraph (subsequently converted to channelized teletype<sup>13</sup>), and alternatively over a US Navy four-channel multiplex radio-teletype circuit between the Navy Communications Annex (OP-20-G) on Nebraska Avenue in Washington DC and the British Admiralty and separately to the Commander, US Naval Forces in Europe under the command of Admiral Hewitt.<sup>14</sup>

When the Department of State requested OP-20-G's support during the diplomatic negotiations at the Paris peace conference, Wenger did not hesitate. Putting his top cryptographers to work on this special project, OP-20-G would process and analyze in conjunction with its British partners the information that flowed in from Rosetta's gardening operation.

Contrary to Wenger's desire for cryptologic fame, his efforts on behalf of the Rosetta deception could only be recognized in the shadows and even then few would know of OP-20-G's Soviet diplomatic exploits. Hidden under layers of classification that even the Venona revelations could not bring to the surface, Wenger's post war efforts deserve their day in the sun. It is time for Wenger and the Navy codebreakers to finally take their bow.

---

<sup>1</sup> Aldrich, R. J. (2010). *GCHQ: the uncensored story of Britain's most secret intelligence agency*. London: Harper Press. pp. 45 – 46.

<sup>2</sup> Aldrich, R. J. (2010). *GCHQ: the uncensored story of Britain's most secret intelligence agency*. London: Harper Press. pp. 45 – 46.

<sup>3</sup> Aid, M. *Stella Polaris and the Code War in Europe*. (2002). *Intelligence and National Security* Volume 17, Issue 3. p. 37.

- 
- <sup>4</sup> *Venona*. p. 30. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.
- <sup>5</sup> Aid, M. M. (2009). *The Secret Sentry: The Untold History of the National Security Agency*. New York: Bloomsbury Press. p. 14.
- <sup>6</sup> Retrieved from <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/bletchleypark/conversations/topics/1270>.
- <sup>7</sup> *Venona*. p. 30. Retrieved from <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB278/01.PDF>.
- <sup>8</sup> Benson, R. L. (2001). *The Venona story*. Fort George G. Meade, Md.: National Security Agency, Center for Cryptologic History. p. 49. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic\\_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona\\_story.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona_story.pdf)
- <sup>9</sup> Benson, R. L. (2001). *The Venona story*. Fort George G. Meade, Md.: National Security Agency, Center for Cryptologic History. p. 59. Retrieved from [http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic\\_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona\\_story.pdf](http://www.nsa.gov/about/files/cryptologic_heritage/publications/coldwar/venona_story.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> Johnson, T. R. (1995). *American Cryptology during the Cold War; 1945-1989, Book I: The Struggle for Centralization 1945-1960, Series VI: The NSA Period*. Washington, DC: National Security Agency Center for Cryptologic History. NSA DOCID 3188691. p. 160.
- <sup>11</sup> Retrieved from <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/bletchleypark/conversations/topics/1270>
- <sup>12</sup> Bodsworth (GCHQ) to Wenger (NSS). (September 6, 1946). Box 104, CNSG records, RG 38, NARA.
- <sup>13</sup> *Final Recommendation of the Technical Conference for the Implementation of the US – British Communication Intelligence Agreement*. (March 11-27, 1946). p. 50.
- <sup>14</sup> *Appendix F to the British US CI Agreement*. (February 4, 1946). UK National Archives HW803.

# **Part 5 – Decoded**

## CHAPTER 63

### Timing is Everything

In March 1946, the Fortier Committee recommended that the CIG's Office of Special Operations (OSO) immediately concentrate on the current activities of the Soviet Union and to penetrate key Soviet institutions and Soviet satellites.<sup>1</sup> On March 9, 1946, CIG Directive No. 9, Development of Intelligence on USSR, was issued by DCI Hoyt Vandenberg with the unanimous concurrence of the CIG's Intelligence Advisory Board (IAB).<sup>2</sup> The directive read:

There is an urgent need to develop the highest possible quality of Intelligence on the USSR in the shortest possible time. By informal agreement, a Planning Committee, composed of a coordinator from the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) and representative from the State Department, Military Intelligence Division (G-2), Office of naval Intelligence (ONI), and the Office of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff-2 (A-2) has been formed and has drawn up a plan to coordinate and improve the production of intelligence on the USSR.

Rosetta was way ahead of the curve, with its plans well-defined from as early as 1945 with the Ghost Rockets deception initiated in the summer of 1946 and the press gardening operation in the fall of 1946 – Phase 1 of the Rosetta Deception. But Rosetta's penetration of the Soviet Union would not come in the form CIG envisioned of infiltrating agents into the Soviet Union or satellite countries or turning inside Soviet resources into double agents, it was focused on penetrating directly to the strategic mind of Uncle Joe.

Rosetta meticulously planned out every detail from when a rumor would be released to how the channels of communications would be manipulated. For example, to initiate the Ghost Rocket deception, an important timing constraint was alluded to in a July 19, 1946 memo to General Carl Spaatz from Rosetta member George C. McDonald. McDonald stated that "the possibility that the objects may have been a meteor is lessened by a report from the U.S. naval Observatory stating that no meteors were predicted for the Scandinavian area between 4 May and 28 June, 1946".<sup>3</sup> McDonald was stating the obvious, at least for someone who was in on the

deception, but more importantly he provided the timeframe Rosetta had to work with to get the rocket party started.

Rosetta didn't want the "missiles" they were about to rain down over Scandinavia to be initially misinterpreted as meteors...at least not until the story had taken on a significant foothold in the media. So something real had to trigger the scare before the annual Perseid meteor shower that is normally active from mid-July to late August.

The plan was simple – prime the charge with a few "real" missiles and then following BSC protocols, inundate the press with planted stories with Rosetta churning the rumor mill via their media contacts. Then the story would build upon itself into the following months until the predicted peak that coincided with the annual Perseid meteor shower, by which time every Scandinavian neck would be angled skywards looking for Russian terror from above. When the shimmering green meteors began streaking overhead, it would look like World War 3 to the panic stricken residents of Scandinavia.

A January 13, 1947 War Department General Staff report titled Project 3506: Possibilities of Trans Arctic Attack regurgitated the Rosetta provided yet erroneous data but also recognized the role that meteoric activity played:<sup>4</sup>

It is believed that a modified form of the V-1, launched from the vicinity of Stolp<sup>5</sup> (Polish-administered Germany) or from Estonia and the Baltic islands of Dago or Oesel, was responsible for the recent reports of 'Ghost Rockets' over the Scandinavian countries. These reports, however, have been greatly exaggerated and augmented by a large number of natural phenomena such as meteors.

Newspapers in Scandinavia covered the rockets from the end of May through the end of June 1946 before American newspapers picked up the stories in July. As BSC outlined, an important aspect of planting stories was being careful of where the story would originate. Following BSC's model that the story have "the appearance of news originating from strictly American sources but which was directed to targets outside of the United States", Rosetta would reverse that for the Ghost Rockets, with the story having the appearance of news originating from strictly Scandinavian sources but which was directed to targets (Soviet agents) inside the United States and the United Kingdom.

In other words, the Ghost Rocket media hype migrated from the Scandinavian press to the American press by July, 1946 and it was the American press that was being gardened. With the news blackout imposed by the Scandinavian countries on July 25, 1946<sup>6</sup>, the Soviets looked to the American free press to fill in the details.

Soviet agents in the U.S. who by the fall of 1946 had become Uncle Joe's news clipping service were forced by the Press Wireless strike to send a steady stream of media summaries via encrypted diplomatic channel. OP-20-G/GC&CS could then exploit those intercepted messages for Soviet diplomatic bookbreaking purposes. When gardening operations were winding down in the U.S. at the end of August 1946, they migrated to the UK press where the sensational Ghost Rocket stories would also take hold and serve the same purpose.

Meanwhile at OP-20-G and GCHQ, small groups of each organization's elite cryptographers would receive, process and safeguard the raw gardening data, classifying it as Top Secret Special Cream, which ensured its eternal classification and justifying its exemption from declassification.

From the illegal practices of the telegraph companies supplying copies of commercial traffic to the morally questionable manipulation of the press and the world public with false planted news stories<sup>7</sup>, Rosetta adopted the precedent set by BSC during WW2, embracing wholeheartedly the cliché that all is fair in love and war. Not a hot war like WW2 that made BSC's methods expedient but a Cold War that more than any other set of world events has defined the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Report of Survey of Strategic Services Unit under CIG Directive No. 1.* (March 14, 1946). Retrieved from [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/1700319/1946-03-14.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1700319/1946-03-14.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Central Intelligence Group C.I.G. Directive No. 9. *Development of Intelligence on USSR.* (May 9, 1946). Retrieved from [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/50/CIG\\_Directive\\_No\\_9\\_Development\\_of\\_Intelligence\\_on\\_USSR\\_b\\_9\\_May\\_1946\\_.PDF](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/50/CIG_Directive_No_9_Development_of_Intelligence_on_USSR_b_9_May_1946_.PDF)

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum from George C. McDonald for Commanding General, Army Air Forces. Subject: *Reports of 'Rocket' Sightings over the Scandinavian Countries* (July 19, 1946).

<sup>4</sup> Project 3506: Possibilities of Trans Arctic Attack. (January 13, 1947). National Archives College Park. (1946, October 26). Stolpmuende Called Rocket Base. *New York Times*. p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> (1946, July 25). Mystery Rockets Worry Sweden. *El Paso Herald-Post*.

(1946, August 2). New Rockets over Sweden. *Indiana Evening Gazette [Indiana, Pennsylvania]*.

<sup>7</sup> Pumphrey, C. & Echevarria, A. *Strategic Deception in Modern Democracies: Ethical, Legal, and Policy Challenges*. U.S. Army War College, and Triangle Institute for Security Studies.

## CHAPTER 64

### A Theory about Conspiracy Theory

Americans are obsessed with conspiracies. From wondering if Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, to doubting that man actually landed on the moon, to allowing for the possibility that our own government played a part in the horrific events of September 11, 2011. This penchant for the unseen controlling hand of the conspirator and their cohorts has become a dominant theme in American society.

But what exactly is a conspiracy theory and where can we draw the line on classifying something as conspiracy or not? Those questions are as hotly debated by psychologists and sociologists as the individual conspiracy theories themselves are by their adherents.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary definition of a conspiracy theory is “a theory that explains an event or set of circumstances as the result of a secret plot by usually powerful conspirators”. From that definition, Rosetta’s deception would be considered a conspiracy theory, as its principal proponents from Hoyt Vandenberg to James Forrestal to the complicit media and codebreaking leaders were all in positions of great power and yes they were secretly plotting to break the Soviet diplomatic code.

The definition for the word conspiracy itself however does not fit in so nicely to this story: “a secret plan made by two or more people to do something that is harmful or illegal”. The Rosetta deception planners at Joint Security Control did not see their actions as illegal; their 1947 charter authorized such deception during times of peace. The media leaders who allowed false stories to be planted in the press did not see what harm they were causing if their actions were limited in time and scope. The only illegal action on record was the telegraph companies violating Federal law by providing copies of commercial telegrams to the codebreakers and this is not a conspiracy but a known fact under the exposed Operation Shamrock.

Unfortunately the term conspiracy itself has taken on as automatic a denigrating connotation as “cult” or “UFO” has. Insomuch, that simply labeling something a conspiracy is as damaging to the theory as being labeled a “communist” in the 1950s was damaging to one’s career.

It doesn't matter whether the label is accurate or false – the act of labeling creates irrevocable damage.

Nonetheless, there have been conspiracy theories that have proven to be “true conspiracies” whether through outright confession like the CIA’s public release of its “family jewels”<sup>1</sup> or due to inadvertent forced disclosure like the illegal abuses of the FBI’s COINTELPRO program<sup>2</sup> that only came to light courtesy of a burglarized FBI office.

The overarching problem is that American society is so awash in conspiracy theories that the small number of true conspiracies have become overwhelmed and outnumbered by the very loud noise of unproven conspiracies that float through the American zeitgeist.

With so much conspiracy noise, even the highly cultured and educated cannot differentiate the true from the unproven and so any new conspiracy is dismissed outright. There is only so much noise the human mind can take before automatically tuning out for self-preservation.

Adding to the mind numbing noise of conspiracy mongering is the ease in which information flows across the Internet - a conspiracy spawning machine in its own right. Even the cable channels like History and Discovery have gotten into the act by serving up large slices of conspiracy pie intermingled with their normal programming.

The JFK assassination is a case in point. The breath of printed literature, websites and documentaries on who killed JFK – from the Mafia to the CIA to Lyndon B. Johnson; and for equally confounding reasons – from hiding the truth about UFOs to revenge for the Bay of Pigs to an outright power grab – makes it incredibly difficult for any person to assimilate and to synthesize all of these conflicting viewpoints.

Despite official investigations, the varied conspiracy theories that believe Oswald did not act alone still steadily circulate Americana. In fact rather than put the question definitively to bed, these official inquiries often spawn white washing conspiracies of their own.

Ironically, Soviet Russia right after the fall of communism was just like the U.S. today, conspiracy central. Vladimir Shlapentokh, professor of sociology at Michigan State University wrote an interesting op-ed on Soviet conspiracy in the April 16, 1991 edition of the LA Times:

Conspiracy theories are most popular in societies experiencing rapid change or difficult times. Even the United States has not been immune. Conspiracy theories are especially prevalent where the society has been totalitarian, the political process has been hidden from the public or the secret police have been free to organize plots against the government's enemies.

All of these conditions apply to the situation in the Soviet Union. As a result, the number of conspiracy theories being seriously discussed in the Soviet Union is greater than anywhere else in the world, except perhaps the Middle East. Every event of political import, whether large or small, whether in the capital or in the provinces, is subject to a conspiracy analysis.

The conspiracy mindset in other words is not unique to any particular country or society but prevalent where rapid change is experienced or where secrecy is practiced to excess. The vacuum of official facts can be filled by any layman's theory.

What the Rosetta deception planners did not factor in to their grand plan is how the vacuum of information created by the deception itself would be filled by the citizenry at large. The Rosetta planners did not intend to create myth but it happened nonetheless and the deceived citizenry is still trying to come to grips with what the real truth could be. The collateral damage Rosetta created by deceiving Uncle Joe still has incredible blowback power even up until today and from this perspective, Rosetta's operations although expedient at the time were extremely short sighted.

Getting back to whether or not you will throw my book onto the conspiracy bookshelf, rather than try and defend this story as a true conspiracy, I like Dennis Wheatley have simply dangled the clues in front of you and let you, the reader decide the appropriateness of the label.

But I have also repeatedly highlighted through footnotes those components in this story that are irrefutable documented facts – and offer them to you as known puzzle pieces. Where you choose to place those puzzle pieces always remains your prerogative. For example, if I managed to convince you based on the evidence that the Leech-Snodgrass weapon was purposely misrepresented in the press, then that puzzle piece fits somewhere as nothing ever occurs in a vacuum.

If you decide that it fits into a deception operation perpetrated by Rosetta, I am grateful for your vote of confidence. If on the other hand, you decide that the puzzle piece, however anachronistic or abnormal as it irrefutably is, fits somewhere else, I am all ears. If you decide that it does not fit anywhere but stands unexplainably and sadly alone, then I apologize for wasting your time.

Looking for patterns where none exist is always a danger in any kind of synthesis attempt. The same holds true for this story as it did for the COMINT analysis work I did during my four year stint for the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) when as an inexperienced 21 year old Army sergeant I analyzed Soviet radio traffic for any significant Cold War intelligence.

While stationed for a short time at a British GCHQ listening post in Holland I recall the British Army officer who was overlooking my work telling me in no uncertain term - "Sergeant Carrion – I don't see the same pattern here as you do – it is easy for us all to sometimes detect patterns that are not there". He then proceeded to explain to me why my analysis was off the mark. Of course, he the more experienced analyst was right and I stood corrected – because he was able to point out the errors in my work.

As for a reality check of this story, I may yet stand corrected – but not by those who dismiss outright my research – but instead by those who are willing to get out of their armchairs and do their own research that shows unequivocally how I may have erred. Disproving a theory by simple dismissal is too easy. Instead, disproof requires an enormous amount of hard work and serious motivation. To disprove a theory requires alternative plausible explanation through documented empirical research. Anything short is just opinion.

I wish to thank the Cold War and military intelligence historians that have reached this point, for having both the patience and the openness to read this story. More importantly, I implore them not to ignore this part of documented history just because of its peculiar nature. By putting to bed these anachronistic stories through peer evaluated empirical research, they would be doing their fellow man a great service by deflating the conspiracy mindset that surround these events.

I aim not to convince you but rather to empower you to disprove the data I have documented and presented. After all, central to any scientific theory, whether in the hard or the

social sciences, is the tenant of falsifiability – that is in order to prove a theory – there must be a way to disprove it as well.

How can you disprove my theory? There are vast archives out there yet to explore whether in the public or private domain. Get out there and do some hard core research! In the meantime I will be doing the same and don't be surprised if we cross paths at the National Archives in College Park.

Contrary to what Fox Mulder of X-Files fame wanted to believe, the truth is not *out* there. Instead the truth is *in* there - in Government and private archives and with each declassified document or donated private journal, another piece is added to the puzzle. Good hunting! Now how about grabbing one last cup of coffee or tea, kicking back in your armchair and hearing me out to the end?

---

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.foia.cia.gov/collection/family-jewels>.

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from <http://vault.fbi.gov/cointel-pro>.

## CHAPTER 65

### End of Act One

I started off this story telling you that Rosetta had performed the most simple of magic tricks, one that only a five year old would truly be impressed with. Now imagine yourself in the audience watching that magic act unfold.

The oldest trick in the book is for a magician to place his tall hat on a table and pull out something unexpected, whether that is a rabbit, a dove or some other object. Between 1946 and 1947, the magician's guild known as Rosetta performed a similar trick for Uncle Joe – pulling out of their hat a marvelous although fictional weapon of war. Uncle Joe, fixated on his object of desire was enthralled.

These magicians were not intent on entertaining Uncle Joe but instead on reading his mail, and in the process unraveling the enigma that was Soviet Russia at a most crucial time in world history. Neither World War 1 nor 2 proved to be the war to end all wars - instead at the cessation of WW2 hostilities, humanity simply found itself on the brink of another world conflict. Rosetta took up the mantle of deception and employed their dark arts to neutralize this emerging threat to world peace but in the process triggered a war of a different kind.

As the iron curtain came cascading down over eastern Europe, Rosetta was raising the curtain on its deception performance, first in the north in Scandinavia before shifting its focus to the south in Greece and Turkey. In the very short time frame from when Igor Gouzenko defected in the fall of 1945 until the Ghost Rockets started to rain down in the summer and fall of 1946, Rosetta was diligently operating behind the scenes firing the opening salvos of the Cold War.

From overt conflicts in Korea and Vietnam as well as covert intrigue from the hallways of Anglo intelligence agencies, Cold War events unequivocally have defined the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The modern day shadow warriors of the FBI, CIA, NSA, MI5, MI6 and GCHQ can trace their legacy directly to Rosetta members like William Stephenson, Hoyt Vandenberg, Stephen Chamberlin, George McDonald, Joseph Wenger, James Forrestal and many others.

Driven by a sober sense of duty and patriotism, these Rosetta magicians used their war honed skills to not only deceive Uncle Joe, but through collateral side effect the world at large. Almost seventy years after their incredible performance, it is finally time that Rosetta take its bow.

## **Appendix: U.S. Attaché List**

MA Stockholm, Alfred A. Kessler

MA Stockholm, Stanley W. Connelly

MA Moscow, Robert C. Macon

NA London, Tulley Shelly

NA Paris, Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter

MA London, Clayton L. Bissell

MA Helsinki, Victor Charles Warren

MA Oslo, Charles E. Rayens

NA Oslo, Alf O. R. Bergesen

NA Helsinki, F.A. Klaveness