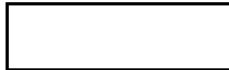


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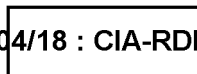


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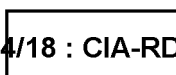
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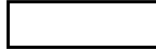
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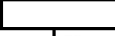

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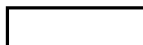
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Intelligence pathologists

THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY POST-MORTEM PROGRAM, 1973-1975

Richard W. Shryock¹

For roughly two years, from late 1973 to late 1975, the US intelligence community produced—fearlessly or fecklessly, depending on one's point of view—a series of critical post-mortem assessments of its own performance in one or another (usually trying) circumstance. There was, of course, some precedence for this unusual activity, but not much:

- Intelligence production offices in the community had for years prepared various kinds of post-mortems. But they did so only irregularly, and then almost always in response to the complaints of high-level policymakers and military officers who wanted to know what-had-gone-wrong within the very same production offices. Rightly or wrongly, but understandably, post-mortems produced in this fashion were frequently dismissed by their requesters and others as unresponsive and self-serving.
- A special subcommittee of the National Security Council Intelligence Committee tried a new, hybrid approach to the post-mortem problem in the early 1970s, producing, with the community's indispensable help, two or three assessments presumably untainted by the special interests of the community. (The best known of these seems to have been a paper on the community's performance concerning the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971.) But for eminently understandable reasons, including their unofficial status and bureaucratically peculiar origins, these post-mortems were largely ignored by both the policymakers who had indirectly commissioned them and the community officials who were the supposed beneficiaries.

The principal architects of the 1973-1975 post-mortem program of the Intelligence Community (IC) Staff sought to avoid problems of this character. They wanted to create a system that would, somehow, serve the community's real interests and, simultaneously, the "legitimate" (as opposed to the political and the purely policy) needs of its critics.²

¹Author's note: This article was prepared at the request of two members of the Board of Editors of this journal. I have discussed its contents with one of them, and have conducted interviews with several past and present officers of the intelligence community, but the views expressed herein are my own.

I have not had recent access to the post-mortem documents discussed here, so I have had to use my memory and the resourceful press as major sources of information. Under the circumstances, some errors may have crept unbidden into the manuscript. If so, I extend my apologies.

I should also explain that I have deliberately omitted almost all names from this account, partly because they seem unnecessary in a non-scholarly, non-historical essay, and partly because it would be unfortunate if readers were distracted by controversial references to individual luminaries.

Finally, on a more personal note, let me record the fact that the post-mortem program, for which I bore a large responsibility, died quietly in 1975 without memorialization and without obituary. This, then—belatedly—is that memorialization and that obituary. R.W.S.

²Mutual suspicions between policymakers and intelligence officers have always existed but, not so surprisingly, seemed to reach a high point in the early 1970s. More than a few intelligence officers, for example, saw in the NSC-sponsored post-mortem on the 1971 Indo-Pak war (cited above), an effort to justify or shift blame for US policy before and during that conflict.

A total order. Perhaps too tall, especially inasmuch as the post-mortem program did not always enjoy the unalloyed support of the top IC Staff management. Still, the principal distinguishing characteristics of the program, as it was in fact instituted in November 1973, were: (1) official status, obtained via DCI and USIB (i.e., community) sponsorship; (2) preparation by an organization (the Product Review Division—PRD—of the IC Staff) that was separated, if not divorced, from any and all “line” production and collection offices and that was charged with, among other things, the preparation of post-mortems on a continual basis; (3) a serious, if not always successful, effort by this organization to strike a balance between objectivity (normally the privilege of the non-involved) and expertise (often the province of the involved); and (4) the great amount of favorable and unfavorable attention paid several of the papers by readers (and non-readers too) within and without the community.

Seven post-mortems were produced by PRD between December 1973 and September 1975. Five of these were specifically requested by the DCI; one was asked for by his Deputy for the Community; and one grew out of an IC Staff commitment to the DCI. Geographically, four concerned one or another problem in the Middle East, one dealt with Chile, one with India, and one with Southeast Asia. All are discussed in some detail below.⁹

It is the contention here that on the whole this series of post-mortems was a success, or at least not a failure. In any case, members of the community, together with observers and critics in Congress and the Executive Branch, should be aware that the program existed and for a time—until the unwelcome intercession of the House Select Committee on Intelligence (on which more later)—even prospered. For the community might one day decide to revive a candid post-mortem process with similar characteristics and objectives. It is likely, after all, to gain or accept only so much nourishment from granting a monopoly on post-mortems to “outsiders” in Congress or elsewhere. These, too, can be useful, but they should not be exclusive.

More important, the community could in the long run benefit from objective, mostly self-initiated post-mortems because, however embarrassing they might prove to be temporarily, they could help in a variety of ways to improve the quality of intelligence—in production, in collection, and yea, even in management. This, at any rate, is the hope of more than a few who not only understand the need for such improvement but who also comprehend the essentiality of the community’s services to the nation.

The Seven Reports

1. *The Arab-Israeli War, 1973*: The cumbersomely titled “The Performance of the Intelligence Community Before the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973: A Preliminary Post-Mortem Report,” was published in December 1973. Soon thereafter it became the IC Staff equivalent of a best seller; it received good reviews from prominent critics (Kissinger wrote the DCI to say that it was “outstanding”), and it was as widely read as its rather restrictive classification permitted. In a sober mood, well aware that their best estimates about the likelihood of war had turned out to be (as later headlined in the press) “starkly wrong,” even members of the United States Intelligence Board (USIB) praised the document for its thoroughness, objectivity, and candor.

⁹Not discussed are several PRD papers issued during the same period which bore some resemblance to post-mortem studies but which did not, for one reason or another, bear post-mortem designations. One of these, interestingly enough, dealt specifically with an intelligence success; it was the only such paper ever prepared in PRD and the only one ever asked for (by policymakers, the DCI, USIB, or, indeed, any high-level community official). A post-mortem program, by its very nature, is likely to deal primarily with shortcomings—real or presumed—although there is no theoretical reason why this need be so.

The report itself reflected a prodigious amount of work and as much analytical effort as could be brought to bear on a difficult problem, the dimensions of which were clear but the causes of which were not. All pertinent intelligence published by the community from May to early October 1973—daily items, memoranda, weekly articles, Watch Reports, estimates, and research papers—was carefully read. Thousands of individual collection reports from the Department of State, CIA, DIA, NSA, and other agencies were also reviewed. Scores of intelligence officers and consumers were interviewed. All the data thus assembled were sifted and analyzed, chronologically arranged to serve as reference aids, and then interpreted in preliminary reports prepared by individual investigators. A paper (together with six annexes which were later dropped) was then produced and finally, after review by the DCI and his Deputy for the Intelligence Community, disseminated in early December.

In brief, after quoting from appropriate intelligence papers and examining the pre-war information available to the community from a variety of sources, the report concluded that: (a) a great deal of information indicating the imminence of an Arab attack on Israel had been collected and distributed to analysts in the months (especially September) prior to the outbreak of war;⁴ (b) analysts, perceiving growing Arab reliance on political and economic rather than military tactics to achieve their aims vis-a-vis Israel, rejected the evidence suggesting the contrary and in almost unequivocal terms predicted no war;⁵ and (c) they did so essentially because they were firmly committed to the (mistaken) proposition that an Arab attack could only result in a disastrous Arab defeat, or even “national suicide;”⁶ that any rational man could foresee this; and that, inasmuch as the Arab leaders (e.g., Sadat and Assad) were indeed rational men, they would obviously not make a decision to attack.

These conclusions of the post-mortem were relatively easy to reach, given the clear record of misestimates. Not so easy to isolate, however, were the reasons why the analysts clung so tenaciously to the faulty syllogism outlined above. But surely their awareness of recent history had something to do with it; although they believed that, sooner or later, war was probably inevitable, the analysts had been hardened by previous false alarms. Further, the long string of Arab defeats helped reinforce the analysts’ faith in overwhelming Israeli military superiority. And the failure of the Israelis themselves to anticipate the attack—despite all their sensitivity, experience, and efficient intelligence machinery—reinforced the analysts’ no-war consensus.

But, more specifically, what caused the analysts to hold so rigidly to this belief in the face of good signs of Arab preparations for war? What led them to believe that the Arab forces were no better than they had been in 1967, despite the years of additional training and the receipt of vast quantities of new and better Soviet equipment? (A joint CIA-DIA study published in July 1973, for example, asserted flatly that the Egyptian Army could not cross the canal in force.) And—the biggest mystery of all—

⁴ In the words of the report, as quoted in US newspaper accounts, US experts had been provided with a “plenitude of information which should have suggested, at a minimum, that they take very seriously the threat of war in the near term.”

⁵ As subsequently reported by the press and as stated in the report: “[A thorough search] failed to turn up any official statement from any office responsible for producing finished analytical intelligence which contributed anything resembling a warning. . . . Instead of warnings, the community produced reassurances . . . that the Arabs would not resort to war. . . . The principal conclusions concerning the imminence of hostilities reached and reiterated by those responsible for intelligence analysis were—quite simply, obviously, and starkly—wrong.” It should be noted, however, that an analyst from one agency (which was not responsible for finished analytical intelligence) did provide a briefing a few days before the Arab attack that suggested that war might be imminent. But this warning was strictly unofficial, was addressed to only a handful of officials, and was not put in writing.

⁶ They were also beholden to the conviction that the Arabs, *in lieu of war*, had decided to resort to the use of an oil embargo, or threat of embargo, as a means to pressure the West into forcing Israeli concessions.

what made these same analysts totally forget the wisdom of the previous spring, when State/INR produced an almost prescient memorandum which concluded that, in certain circumstances (which in fact came to pass over the summer), the Arabs would probably attack Israel in the fall, principally in hopes of achieving essentially political, not military, objectives?⁷

The post-mortem study concluded with several pages of recommendations for improvements in the way the community conducted its business. Better communications between and among the collectors and producers of intelligence—a problem as old as intelligence itself—were urged, and some new machinery for accomplishing this was suggested. The publication of a single community situation report during crises—in lieu of the four discrete reports usually issued (on a several-times-a-day basis)—was suggested. Ways of relieving the analysts of the burden of reading countless “raw” information reports, including a controversial scheme calling for more active screening and highlighting procedures on the part of collectors, were explored.⁸ A more effective system of community crisis “alerts” was proposed. And there were other notions advanced, some suggesting in general terms the need for budgetary reallocations (a bigger share of the pie for production offices). But, other than a proposal to find a systematic way to present the views of “devil’s advocates,” there were no recommendations that directly tackled the problem of analytical prejudices and preconceptions.

2. *Chile*: Soon after the anti-Allende coup in Chile in September 1973, the officer in PRD specializing in Latin American affairs was asked by the head of IC Staff to conduct an informal post-mortem examination of intelligence coverage before and during that event. His findings, issued in typescript in December 1973 (somewhat delayed by the intervention of the higher-priority Arab-Israeli post-mortem), included the judgment that although the analysts had done a respectable job of covering the increasingly turbulent domestic Chilean scene, they had been somewhat remiss in not really warning their leaders of the likelihood of a coup in the near term. It appeared to him that sufficient good information was available in time for them to do so. All in all, the PRD reviewer gave somewhat higher marks to DIA than CIA coverage.

The paper was never presented to or discussed by USIB or followed up by the DCI or any other senior community figure.

3. *The Indian Nuclear Explosion*: Though of modest size, the nuclear explosion set off by New Delhi in May 1974 set off political shock waves around the world and around Washington. The DCI wanted to know why he and his constituents had not been forewarned and called for another post-mortem.

⁷ A full discussion of this intriguing question, under the caption “A Case of Wisdom Lost,” is one of the most interesting sections in the post-mortem. The power of preconceptions, together with the analysts’ understandable feeling that those who might fear war were only crying wolf, is thoroughly explored, but the paper fails to provide an altogether satisfactory answer.

⁸ One way of handling the “information explosion”—in this instance the number of discrete information reports reaching analysts in the production agencies—is to computerize the data. This greatly reduces the amount of paper reaching the analyst and permits him to summon information as he needs it. Trouble is, this route is enormously expensive, is resisted by many mechanophobic analysts, and may not lead to a solution of the problem in any event.

There is at least an interim alternative, and it was proposed in the report: cut down the flow of words and paper to analysts by requiring the issuing agency to summarize, interpret, highlight, and condense (but not analyze). Many items (but of course not all) normally sent on an “as received” basis could be held, combined with other, similar documents, and disseminated in summary form, say on a weekly basis. Trouble here is that analysts—who on the one hand complain about “too much mail” and on the other want to read “everything”—do not trust anyone other than themselves to digest the material, i.e., all the material. And the collection agencies, which may lack adequate resources for the job, are in any case reluctant to take it on for a potentially ungrateful audience.

The report, published in July 1974, pointed to a curious sequence of events and raised a question about the way in which the community goes about its business. A year and a half or so before the event, a National Intelligence Estimate discussing the problem of nuclear proliferation concluded that India could (and indeed might) explode a nuclear device at almost any time. After the publication of this estimate, the flow of reports concerning Indian nuclear capabilities and intentions, hitherto reasonably heavy, almost ceased. So too, partly as a consequence, did the coverage of relevant material in intelligence periodicals and memoranda. Thus, in the months preceding the actual detonation, the possibility was simply ignored in intelligence publications.

The question, as more or less posed in the post-mortem: after the appearance of the NIE, did the community somehow feel that, having fully discharged its duties concerning this significant topic, it now could sit back and relax?

The answer was a frustrating "perhaps." At any rate, for whatever reason, the collectors and producers alike seemed to lose interest in India's nuclear effort after the NIE had pronounced on the problem. The post-mortem, in a mood of diffident daring, suggested that maybe, just maybe, this disinterest reflected a similar lack of regard in the *policy-making* community as well.

The post-mortem also concerned itself rather extensively with the problem of collection in countries with serious nuclear potential. It pointed out that, once a certain state of readiness had been achieved (as in India), the decision of whether to explode a device and to develop weapons was a political one and, in the event (again as in India), might be made on political grounds. The paper then urged (as it subsequently developed, with some success) that collection programs be revamped, requirements and priorities be revised, and the character and interests of the human collectors concerned be substantially altered.

4. *The West Bank*: A sequel to the Arab-Israeli post-mortem of December 1973 had been promised the DCI, and it appeared about a year later. Called "Military Intelligence During an International Crisis: Israel's West Bank Campaign in October 1973," it provided a brief examination of intelligence coverage of that campaign and suggested some significant possible consequences of that coverage. Although the report was in this way a valuable addition to the body of intelligence literature, it did not purport to be a post-mortem report of conventional breed.

5. *Cyprus 1974*: It was clear in late 1973 that the new Greek strongman, Ionides, was likely to cast a covetous eye on Cyprus. Intelligence memoranda of the time emphasized Ionides' aggressive interest in *enosis*, the reunion of Cyprus with the Greek motherland, and, because of this, foresaw trouble ahead between Greece and Turkey.

Six months or so later, however, in early July 1974, intelligence analysts—although by no means claiming that the issue was dead—suggested in effect that American policymakers need not be concerned with a crisis in the immediate future. *Inter alia*, they highlighted and implicitly endorsed a report from an "untested source" that Ionides would not move against Cyprus in the near term. On 14/15 July, however, Athens sponsored a coup in Nicosia that threw out the reigning Cypriot, Archbishop Makarios, installed a Greek puppet regime, and in general set the stage for *enosis*. Turkey invaded within the week, and war between the two NATO allies in the eastern Mediterranean appeared imminent.

The DCI, knowing that *he* had been surprised by the coup, was concerned that the community might have missed another one; if so, he wanted to know why; and so he called for post-mortem number five. The result was "An Examination of the

Intelligence Community's Performance Before and During the Cyprus Crisis of 1974," published in January 1975. This report, in the course of examining the published record, concluded that the analysts had misperceived Ionides' intentions in July. Perhaps they had been distracted by the Aegean seabed issue, which had flared in late June and which had then received much greater emphasis in an estimative memorandum than the Cyprus problem. Or perhaps they had made too much of the misleading report that Ionides would not soon move against Cyprus because they themselves did not wish to believe earlier signs (and their own fears) to the contrary. Indeed, perhaps the analysts had been persuaded that it would be irrational of the Greek leader to risk war with Turkey, the wrath of the United States, and the possible intervention of the Soviets, all for the sake of Cyprus; that although he was hardly less than eccentric, Ionides was not irrational; and that—in the now familiar syllogism—Ionides would thus not move precipitately (at least so long as the risks seemed so large).

The Cyprus post-mortem report also pointed out, in a positive vein, that the pre-July intelligence record on Cyprus was quite good. And concerning other topics of major interest—the possibility of Soviet intervention, the probable reaction of the Turks to the coup in Nicosia, and the outcome of the fighting on the island—it was judged that coverage ranged from right-on-target (*in re* the Soviets) to pretty good (the invasion) to adequate (the course of the fighting).

Concerning collection, the post-mortem noted some weaknesses, especially in Athens, and some strengths, as in Nicosia and Ankara.

The Cyprus report created something of a stir immediately upon publication. There were, for example, laments to the effect that the authors of the report had enjoyed the advantages of hindsight, a curious but commonly voiced complaint. (Of course they had. The process is by definition *post*, and a condition of such studies is precisely that they can be made in the light of hindsight.)

One official charged (and was partly right) that the paper contained several "factual errors," and an NIO asserted that the post-mortem fundamentally misapprehended the nature of estimative intelligence when it criticized analysts for their failure to predict the coup. Further, some of these analysts felt themselves unjustly accused of mistakes they hadn't made. This is surely not the time or place to rehearse old argument about specifics, but some general observations are in order:

- It is true, of course, as the NIO suggested, that intelligence analysts, lacking supernatural means of peering into the future, should not be expected to predict with precision. (It is also true, and too bad, that many consumers of intelligence do expect such predictions.) And certainly there is merit in the often-heard proposition that highlighting the serious possibility that an event will take place within the foreseeable future should be sufficient to alert policymakers, who are then, in the great scheme of things, supposed to devise appropriate responses.
- In the case of the Cyprus post-mortem, however, analysts were not faulted for failing to make a precise estimate about, for example, the date of the coup sponsored by Ionides. They were criticized, rather, for making what the authors of the post-mortem perceived to be a *negative* estimate, *viz.*, the clear implicit estimate made during the first half of July in daily publications that there probably would *not* be a coup in the near term. This estimate was strongly reinforced during the same period by what the analysts did *not* provide, *i.e.*, anything akin to the kind of warning sounded earlier to the effect that a crisis or a coup or some other major move by Ionides was likely, and

fairly soon. At best, the backtracking in July muffled the alarm; at worst, it would have told the policymakers that they could afford to relax for a spell. (In fact, the policymakers did not relax, partly because in some instances they simply weren't *aware* of what intelligence analysts were saying, partly because in other cases they just didn't *care* what the analysts were saying.) Finally, in sum, as the post-mortem suggested, if the analysts were right to sound warnings in June—and they were—then they were wrong not to do so in July.

6. *Egyptian Military Capabilities*: In February 1975, the members of USIB, meeting to consider a new NIE on the Arab-Israeli situation, made a last-minute change in the paper, radically altering a key judgment concerning the likelihood of war by estimating that the Arabs might attack Israel within a few days. They did so at the urging of one member who cited a number of very recent items of information which to him seemed to portend war. This member also cited a just-published memorandum written by analysts in his agency; this offered a similarly alarmist view and also presented a singular and (as it subsequently developed) distorted view of the state of Soviet-Egyptian relations at the time.

The memorandum had been published only a day or so after the appearance of a community paper that was relatively reassuring *in re* the prospects for war; this community effort, sponsored by an NIO, had been concurred in by all major intelligence components, including the agency now offering alarmist views at USIB. Consumers (in, for example, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, on the NSC Staff, and in the State Department) were understandably indignant or confused by the alarmist position of the second paper, especially since it made no reference to the milder conclusions of the community analysis. Indeed, one consumer cabled his principal in the field to say that the alarmist position was ill-founded—based on erroneous evidence—and should be ignored.

The National Intelligence Officer responsible for the community memorandum and the NIE thought that USIB should not have been so quick to amend a critical judgment in an important estimate. The NIO asked the DCI to call for a post-mortem look at the entire affair, and the DCI thereupon did so.

It was clear that this problem could not be handled in an orthodox way. It not only involved some delicate information, several sensitive interviews, and a number of private communications at high levels of the US Government, but it also focussed on only one agency of the intelligence community. All concerned agreed that, although the paper might in most respects resemble a conventional post-mortem report, it would be (and in fact was) given only to the head of the agency involved.

The specific conclusions of this "private" post-mortem cannot be reproduced here. But two of its recommendations, which regrettably came to naught, should be mentioned.

One—rapping USIB on its collective knuckles—suggested that USIB members should not on their own alter NIEs on the basis of information presented for the first time at the meeting called to consider that NIE. USIB should return a challenged paper to the appropriate NIOs and analysts for immediate checking and possible amendment. The other suggestion proposed, in the interest of potentially confused consumers, that intelligence memoranda issued by one agency which contradict the conclusions of recent community papers dealing with the same or similar topics should acknowledge the fact, i.e., bear a specific notice acknowledging the differences.

7. *Mayaguez*: The *Mayaguez* and its crew of 39 were seized by the Cambodian Communists on 14 May 1976. Within days the administration—taken completely by

surprise—wanted to know what the intelligence community had known and reported both before and after the seizure.

There was no time for a formal post-mortem, so a hastily assembled community-wide chronology of events was prepared by the NIOs and a more ambitious narrative account was rushed into print within three days by the IC Staff. This study revealed, among many other things, that the government—intelligence and operational-policy communities alike—lacked effective machinery for warning US merchant ships of possible hostile actions.

In August of 1975, the DCI asked PRD to produce a more thorough and careful post-mortem examination of the *Mayaguez* incident. Although he did not explicitly say so, the DCI indicated that he was moved in part by his desire to show both Congress and the White House that the community could examine its own performance during an international crisis with care and publish its findings with candor. And perhaps he hoped to head off any sensational and unjustified criticisms of that performance by the staff and members of the then highly active Pike Committee.

The PRD inquiry confirmed the earlier judgment that the warning system for US merchant ships was seriously deficient. In fact, there was no real contact between the community and those elements in the departments of State and Defense involved in the issuance of such warnings; intelligence officers had not even been aware that offices in these departments were so involved.

The report also confirmed that no intelligence agency had foreseen Cambodian seizure of a US ship. Prior to the event, there was some reporting by collectors of actions against coastal shipping in the Gulf of Siam (where the *Mayaguez* was intercepted), but most of these incidents seemed to involve only small coastal craft. There were also a few reports of episodes involving larger ocean-going ships—Panamanian and South Korean—but there had been no Cambodian seizures of these ships. Analysts receiving these ambiguous reports did not see in them a harbinger of hostile moves against US ships and thus (with one minor exception) did not mention them in their publications. There were various other reasons why they failed to do so, not the least of which were: (1) the almost complete dearth of information about the organization, composition, policies, and intentions of the new Cambodian Communist regime; and (2) the weariness of the community's analysts who covered Southeast Asia, analysts who had just witnessed the sudden fall of both Cambodia and South Vietnam and who were still trying to sort out the aftermath.

If, as the DCI wondered, the community could handle two simultaneous crises in two parts of the world adequately, could it also cope with two crises in *one* part of the world? For despite all the extenuating circumstances, it was simply a fact that had to be faced that, in the week before the seizure of the *Mayaguez*, the analysts had known from unclassified radio broadcasts reproduced by FBIS that the South Korean government had issued a public warning to *its* merchant ships to avoid the Gulf of Siam.

The post-mortem also looked closely into a question initially raised by the White House: was there an excessive delay between the community's first knowledge of the seizure of the *Mayaguez* and its notification of its principals in the White House and elsewhere? The essence of the answer provided by the post-mortem was "yes." The original CRITIC (Critical Intelligence) message received concerning the *Mayaguez* arrived in the community's operations centers at about 5:30 a.m. (Washington time), roughly two and a half hours before the President and the Secretary of State got the word, much, as it turned out, to their consternation.

The senior intelligence officers on duty when that first CRITIC message came in were uncertain about both the fact and the significance of the seizure. (So too, apparently, were a number of officials not in the intelligence community who were notified well before the President and the Secretary.) Subsequent clarifying CRITIC messages should have helped to resolve this uncertainty, but did not. To be sure, there was some confusion about what had actually happened and a concomitant disinclination to grapple with the question of what the event might portend. There were also some problems associated with the incorrect handling, timing, and numbering of the CRITIC messages. And then, too, there was an understandable reluctance among operations officers and others to rouse the top figures of the government from their sleep; the CIA Operations Center, for example, was the first to notify its principal, but did not do so until 6:35 a.m., the time of the DCI's normal awakening. But, as was clear in hindsight, none of these circumstances constituted a legitimate reason for the delay. Uncertainty is likely to attend the beginnings of any crisis. And clearing up the unknowns prior to notifying those who will be responsible for managing the crisis not only risks their wrath but also may jeopardize their ability to cope.

The post-mortem highlighted some of the problems associated with the CRITIC system, and it recommended in unequivocal terms that in the future the appropriate operations centers get in touch with each other immediately following the receipt of an initial CRITIC message. Had such a procedure been in effect vis-a-vis the *Mayaguez*, senior principals would almost certainly have been notified promptly.

Some Community Post-Mortems Not Produced

A number of formal community post-mortem reports that probably should have been written during this period (1973-1975) were not. Performance concerning at least three major developments—the leftist coup in Portugal in the spring of 1974, the rapid collapse of Cambodia and South Vietnam a year later, and the Cuban intervention in Angola in the fall of 1975—merited more careful and judicious examination than it in fact received.

- The community's face was not visibly red in the aftermath of the surprise coup in Portugal, nor did the community seem to blush because it had not foreseen Lisbon's subsequent (temporary) drift toward Moscow. In any event, no one called for a post-mortem investigation at the time. That came later, in effect—during the hearings of the Pike Committee in the summer of 1975.
- In the case of Vietnam, PRD did, at the request of the DCI, hastily prepare a paper—some called it a “mini-post-mortem”—that was given very limited but high-level dissemination. This, however, was completed even before the fall of Saigon and made no pretense of examining circumstances in a thorough way and in the light of true hindsight. Several months later, again at the request of the DCI, a second paper on the subject was prepared, but this time under the aegis of an NIO. It, too, could not lay claim to any real post-mortem status, in part because in this instance its principal drafters were examining their own performance.
- Concerning the community's (and their own) performance regarding Angola, the NIOs produced another post-mortemlike paper in early 1976, again at the specific request of the DCI. This, however, was not a full-scale effort, nor could it meet a test of objectivity.
- One 1976 development, unrelated to any specific event or crisis, may have warranted post-mortem investigation, and that was the CIA's and the community's unprecedented (and highly publicized) revision—from six percent to 11

to 13 percent—of their estimate of the percentage of the Soviet Gross National Product devoted to the military budget in recent years. Long carried at the lower figure, the proportion was increased—some charged very tardily so—after the receipt of new information and a prolonged study by teams of community experts. The significance of the change seemed to lie not so much in what it revealed about the size and strength of the Soviet military establishment, but rather in what it told about the determination of the Soviet leadership to allow the economy to bear such a burden. The change also raised serious questions about the community's and especially CIA's methodology for making cost estimates.

Post-Mortem Purposes . . .

In a sense—because they reviewed and recounted the past—the community post-mortem studies constituted a form of history. But they were history with a special purpose; to provide present and future members of the community—analysts, collectors, and processors, and managers alike—with a new means to measure and improve their performance. These reports, in fact, sought objectively to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the community's processes, systems, and attitudes, as manifested during a particular period or vis-a-vis a particular problem, and they tried, however imperfectly, to record the truth as best as could be ascertained.

To be sure, as already indicated, not all readers of these reports looked upon them in a kindly light. Some analysts and collectors, for example, although not named in the reports, felt themselves the targets of unfair criticism. But others recognized that there was merit in a program that could, by design, avoid many of the problems afflicting previous critical reviews of intelligence performance.

It was as if the Director, in establishing an independent post-mortem capability in the IC Staff, was seeking a perspective not available either to the producers of the play (the policymakers, who often believe themselves to be the only *responsible* critics) or to the actors on stage (the performing intelligence professionals who frequently feel themselves to be the only *qualified* critics).

- Intelligence post-mortems conducted or ultimately controlled by the policy-makers can suffer from two conspicuous faults. They may reflect the relative ignorance of their authors concerning intelligence matters and thus may even neglect to ask the right questions, much less provide helpful answers. More important, they may seek in a self-serving way to pin blame for one or another policy problem on alleged intelligence deficiencies.
- Post-mortems conducted by the “actors” (in community production offices and collection entities) may try to do the same sort of thing, i.e., shift blame away from themselves. Or they may simply try to deny—sometimes correctly, but only rarely convincingly—that any real problem existed in the first place.

This is not to say that community post-mortems can be immaculately conceived or ever achieve the degree of objectivity they should strive for. Still, if post-mortems are commissioned by a DCI who insists on dispassionate analysis, and are prepared by qualified officers who have little or no stake in the outcome of the review, then they hold the *promise* of a unique efficacy. Put another way, it is simply a truism that the chances are better that the system will permit a constructive concentration on the nature and causes of intelligence problems and intelligence successes if the post-mortem task is undertaken by knowledgeable parties whose interests are not directly affected by the post-mortem “verdict.”

... and Principles

Little formal methodology guided (or could have guided) the preparation of the community post-mortem reports. An effort was made, however, to meet certain minimum standards in all the formally published papers. These can be stated as general "post-mortem principles:"

- All published intelligence items relevant to a post-mortem investigation should be obtained and read. These include individual current intelligence reports, or portions thereof, as well as more ambitious intelligence studies such as National Intelligence Estimates. The vast bulk of reporting from intelligence and other sources should also be reviewed.
- As many as possible of the parties involved in the reporting and preparation of relevant intelligence should be interviewed; a representative selection of appropriate supervisors and office heads should be, too; and a fair number of high-level consumers should be asked to comment as well. (The names of individuals, however, should as a general rule be omitted from the published post-mortem report.)
- The post-mortem team should doublecheck the opinions and facts it gathers in the course of the investigation. The word of one intelligence officer or group of officers cannot be taken as final, not because such officers are necessarily suspect, but because they are as capable of shading meaning, or committing inadvertent errors, or speaking from ignorance, as any other comparable group of human beings. And sometimes what appear unquestionably to be facts turn out not to be.⁹
- Many, perhaps a majority, of the members of a post-mortem team should have served successful terms as intelligence analysts; some should be familiar with the specific area or topic under scrutiny; and some should also be thoroughly conversant with the various means of collection. At the same time, none of the members of the team should have been personally involved in the work being investigated; and none should function as representatives of any of the community's components—each member should try to speak for the community as a whole.
- The product of the post-mortem exercise should reflect judgments as independent and objective as those presumably reflected in finished intelligence itself. Post-mortem investigators, however, must ask themselves if the analysis they are studying is itself in fact objective. Are there signs of institutional or personal prejudice; riding of hobby horses; covering up or defense of past errors of judgment; excessive fascination with or fondness of particular countries or particular national leaders; or capitulation to the presumed policy interests of the consumers?
- To be effective, post-mortem reports should be well presented. The way in which even an eager readership receives a given report depends in part on how

⁹ To cite one example, during preparation of the post-mortem on the *Mayaguez* incident, investigators fixed the times of the (simultaneous) receipt in Washington of the first three CRITIC cables on the basis of machine-imprinted time stamps on the copies of those cables received by one particular operations center. Subsequently (but not too late to make the necessary corrections in the draft) it was more or less fortuitously discovered that those particular time stamps had been off by roughly half an hour, the result of a power shutdown over the previous weekend. The resultant errors exaggerated the length of the delay—bad enough as it was—between the initial receipt of the information by operations centers and the passage of that information to senior principals.

skillfully it is put together. Is it physically attractive, handy, easy to read? And are its contents pertinent, reasonably concise, well written, and above all, lucid? It is easier to extol clarity—and pertinence and concision and all the rest—than it is to achieve it, so writers should be given some help; competent editors can sometimes perform miracles.

Some Accomplishments

In the area of specific accomplishments, there is no theoretical limit to what a good post-mortem can do. As a practical matter, however, and as demonstrated by the fate of many of the recommendations of the community post-mortems issued in the past, there are a variety of hard constraints. It is a lot easier to isolate problems than to propose workable remedies. And it is, in turn, easier to propose such remedies than to implement them.

The post-mortems and the Product Review Division were responsible, however, for some specific and tangible improvements in the way the community conducted its business and, perhaps, the way in which the rest of the government responded to the community as well. For example:

- PRD's extensive work with watch and operations centers and in the general area of warning intelligence was in large part an outgrowth of post-mortem findings. Its various enterprises helped to lower the surprisingly high barricades surrounding all the intelligence operations centers and to establish mutually profitable contacts between these centers and similar centers in the White House, State Department, and Pentagon. The old, almost exclusively vertical lines of communication leading upward from each of these centers to its own principals were (loosely) tied—through telephone conferencing systems, personal contacts, a series of mutually profitable "business conventions," and the adoption of a number of important common procedures—into a horizontal network serving the government as a whole.
- In work that followed the revelations of the *Mayaguez* inquiry, PRD tackled and solved a number of problems associated with the CRITIC system. It was discovered that the CRITIC procedures and "rules"—designed to move vital all-source information from the field to the President and other top officials in Washington via the operations centers—badly needed overhauling. They were in certain respects out-of-date, unrealistic, and incomplete, and they varied from agency to agency. Indeed, there was no single system, only sets of systems, and not all these were compatible with one another. As was the case in the *Mayaguez* incident, this disarray had led to some problems and delays but, fortunately, no intelligence disasters. A failure to bring community-wide order into CRITIC, however, would have surely risked such a disaster in the future.
- Partly as the consequence of the revelations of the 1973 Arab-Israeli post-mortem, the DCI and the community (working through the IC Staff and PRD) in 1974 established a new form of estimative warning paper, the Alert Memorandum. The inspiration of a senior officer in one of the community's current intelligence offices, this kind of paper could when necessary be produced very quickly with light coordination by secure telephone, and could be delivered to top-level consumers in such a way as to virtually guarantee that they would read it.¹⁰ A survey of Alert Memoranda was made by PRD in the

¹⁰ These consumers had long complained that even when intelligence had "called it right," they sometimes hadn't gotten the word. Kissinger, for example, is said to have told one of the rare meetings of the National Security Council Intelligence Committee that a warning was not a warning unless it reached *him*. And, of course, he had a point.

Post-Mortems

summer of 1975 at the request of the DCI. It revealed that the system was working well—more than a score had been produced under the aegis of the National Intelligence Officers, and top consumers were in fact receiving and reading the memoranda.

- The same Arab-Israeli post-mortem pointed in 1973 to the excessive number of situation summaries published by components of the community during crises and to the complaints of consumers about this unnecessary and confusing duplication of effort. It then took three years of sporadic effort by PRD and others to work out procedures for the production of a single national crisis “sitsum” for high-level consumers.¹¹ But a “charter” was finally drafted by PRD and agreed upon by the community in 1976, and a national sitsum was actually issued during a crisis some two months later.

The Decline and Fall of the Post-Mortem

There were many reasons why the once-promising community post-mortem program died in the fall of 1975. Not least among them were shortcomings of the program itself, the departure from the community of its principal sponsors, the effects of bureaucratic politics and reorganizations, and a growing conviction among many intelligence officers that candid critical reviews of past performances represented, at best, an unbalanced look at the condition of the profession and, at worst, an unnecessary exercise in self-flagellation. It seems unlikely, however, that any of these circumstances, individually or in the aggregate, would have been controlling had it not been for: (1) the public reaction against the Constitutional and ethical abuses, both real and imagined, committed by CIA and the community over the course of two decades; and (2) the effort to exploit that reaction by the House Select Committee on Intelligence and its staff.

Although the House Committee initially professed a serious interest in evaluating the activities of the community and especially of CIA—how much did they cost, what were their risks, how successful were they?²—its staff soon demonstrated that it was more anxious to condemn the community than to examine it.¹² It also demonstrated that for this purpose it was eager to concentrate on the substantive end of the intelligence business. Some of the post-mortems—forwarded to the Committee staff under threat of subpoena—may have helped to inspire this strategy and were in any event extremely useful to it.

In the end, the use and misuse of the post-mortems by the House Committee, together with the reactions of those in the community who had to contend with the Committee, were simply too much for the program. Still, the post-mortems then died with more than a mere whimper. They died, in fact, to the rousing accompaniment of a Constitutional confrontation between Congress and the President of the United States, occasioned by the President's refusal to grant Congress permission to release classified information drawn from the Mid-East post-mortem of 1973, and the Pike Committee's determination to assert its right to do so, no matter what the position of the Executive Branch.¹³

¹¹ It had also taken an order from the President to get the effort moving again. Truth is, both the practical and bureaucratic problems associated with this sort of enterprise were and are enormously complex.

¹² It did not really explore the reasons for the community's problems or show much interest in so doing—although the post-mortems and other available sources provided a clear opportunity for sober inquiry. Nor did it reflect on the Community's successes, of which, of course, there were many.

¹³ Neither side seemed at all anxious to bring this matter to a head. The Chairman of the Committee was apparently not sure he enjoyed the support of the House as a whole. The Executive was far from confident that it would win a test in the Supreme Court, which is presumably where the matter would have been decided had the stalemate persisted. Ultimately, of course, the Committee in effect caved in, although the issue as such was not resolved.

The Future

A post-mortem assessment of the 1973-1975 post-mortem program would no doubt reveal many ways in which it could have been improved. It might, in addition, uncover means to persuade in-house skeptics that future programs of comparable intent need not resemble an exercise in masochism.

If, in fact, the decision is ever made to resurrect candid post-mortem procedures, those responsible could do worse than to ponder some of the lessons of the recent past:

- Large, formal post-mortem reports should only concern the community's performance vis-a-vis especially important circumstances—such as major international crises and key analytical or collection problems—and should be produced only with the approval and bearing the imprimatur of the DCI. They should receive a broad readership within the community, subject of course to restrictions imposed by classification, and should be presented to the National Foreign Intelligence Board (or its equivalent) for rumination, discussion, and—if appropriate—action.
- The community's performance in less dramatic circumstances, involving particular incidents, might best be treated in shorter, more informal papers, disseminated on a more selective basis. These papers should be quite flexible in content and form and could appear as often as events seemed to warrant. Such papers might be issued as "Special Studies" or "Special Reviews," rather than as post-mortem reports *per se*.
- The successes of the community should receive greater attention than was customary in the 1973-1975 post-mortem series; not because the public relations aspects of such emphasis are tempting, but because it is as easy—perhaps easier—to learn from honest successes as it is from honest mistakes.
- Post-mortem reports and similar papers should be disseminated outside the community only with the approval of the DCI. There should be no blanket proscription of such dissemination; some papers could usefully inform, say, the NSC, or even respond to its requests for post-mortem reviews. But it should be generally understood that the primary audience for most community post-mortems should be the community itself.
- The subjects of post-mortems should not be confined to assessments of analytical and collection performance vis-a-vis a particular international incident or development. Some papers should address such broad (and sensitive) topics as: the quantity and quality of reporting and analysis on a given country (e.g., China) over a period of years; the controversial procedures followed last year during the preparation of the annual NIE on Soviet strategic forces; and the benefits and costs of the community's maintenance of competitive and duplicative analytical centers and collection programs.

Clearly, any future post-mortem staff would have more than enough to do. Even so, to allay apprehensions, it should be made obvious to all that there would be no trespass on the functions of the inspectors-general or the prerogatives of managers, that it would not be the role of "post-mortemists" to seek out mis-or-malfeasance or to supervise personnel. "Post-mortemists" are, however, historians of community error and accomplishment and as such—if it is true that those who do not know history are condemned to repeat it—are better read than ignored.

Intelligence support for a presidential trip

RAT-RACE

William Newton

“Get your gear on—we’re movin’ out!” was an all too familiar phrase among the combat units of the First Marine Division as we fought our way from island to island toward Tokyo and the end of World War II. Somewhat naively, no doubt, I thought I had heard the last of all that when I got back to the States the day after V-J Day. But during nearly 20 years in the Office of Current Intelligence I was to hear, if not the exact words, the same message many times, albeit generally from the Operations Center rather than the company commander. Wars always start in the middle of the night, ships get captured by Cambodians at ungodly hours, WSAG meetings are convened on the spur of the moment, and Congressional committees are not bashful about asking for a DCI briefing “at two o’clock this afternoon.” If you are in the line of fire when these horrors occur—and I was most of the time—you get your gear on and move out fast, try to think sweet thoughts, and hope for the best.

Probably the record for this sort of thing was set early on an October Thursday in 1966 when I was trying to write President Johnson’s *Daily Brief*. Dick Lehman—then Deputy DOCI—materialized at my desk and casually announced that I would be the DDI Representative in the President’s party during part of his imminent trip to the Far East. Soft-spoken as always, he added, “You should leave Saturday afternoon.”

There followed a wild and memorable two weeks of getting to and thrashing around in New Zealand, Australia, and Korea.¹ There were lots of problems, some hairy moments, and some hilarious ones, all topped off by the definite impression that the President and his party felt that the Agency was serving them well.

II.

The problems began to raise their ugly heads almost at once, and it soon became apparent that leaving by Saturday evening would take some doing. First of all, as anyone knows, was the matter of a passport and shots. I had wandered over into the bowels of the Pentagon only a week before to get my official passport renewed. Naturally on that Thursday morning its whereabouts assumed the proportions of a national mystery. After frantic calls and, believe it or not, a special messenger, Central Processing finally laid hands on it. So far so good, but this was Thursday, and “yellow fever shots are given only on Wednesdays.” Why yellow fever?—that’s not much of a threat in Australia. Well, there were rumors (as always), one of which had it that Vietnam might just happen to get onto the itinerary. None of the OCI hierarchy wanted to lend any credence to that rumor by pleading my case anywhere, so I was left to my own ingenuity pretty early in the game. A few phone calls, replete with white lies, finally resulted in yellow fever shots at a hospital. After these two close calls right at the start, the Boy Scout motto sounded not too ridiculous after all.

All this fingernail biting took up a fair share of Thursday, and a physical exam pretty well accounted for Friday morning. Along with these administrative hassles there were other considerations. After all, I was a “generalist” going to New Zealand,

¹ Bill Read, also of OCI, was already in the area and supported the party during the conference of Asian leaders at Manila, and stops in Thailand and Malaysia.

Australia, Malaysia, and Thailand—at least that was the plan at the moment—and I couldn't appear utterly ignorant of these places. So during the relative calm of Thursday evening I crammed on fact books, memos, and previous *Daily Brief* articles until I knew the main issues confronting these countries, the principal cabinet officers, and miscellaneous facts such as that sheep in New Zealand outnumber the people, and that Chinese do almost the same for the Malays in Malaysia. I also remembered why the King of Thailand was born in the United States: at a tense moment in a pre-NSC meeting Mr. Dulles had asked this question—and was told that it was because his mother was in the U.S. at the time.

Instant expert though I was, it was a relief to know that a special OCI task force of genuine area specialists would be on 24-hour duty back at Headquarters, and would cable me the regular OCI publications on schedule, with spot reports as events dictated. A long session with the chief and principal officers of this task force on Friday morning did much to restore my confidence. (Naturally, the questions I did have to field had nothing at all to do with these sessions or my own cram course!) During the entire trip this group kept me supplied, on time, with almost all that I needed, and responded promptly to requests for further information so that I could answer particular questions.

What questions? This touches on another of the problems that arose during that Thursday and Friday. Assuming that I ever got to New Zealand, let alone anywhere else (more about this later), what was I supposed to do? Fortunately, this problem was met head on. Thursday evening I delivered the *Daily Brief* to Mr. Bromley Smith at the White House, as was then the routine, even though my writing of it had ceased abruptly that morning. Our front office had arranged for me to meet Mr. Walt Rostow. He received me most cordially, and we speedily got our signals straight. I was to brief him early every morning, again in the evening, and track him down at any time, any place, should crises develop. He would keep the President up to date. Rostow said I should also be prepared to handle his or the President's requests for further information, and was delighted to hear that the task force and our cable facilities were at his instant disposal. By the time he shook hands and said "See you in New Zealand," I thought I knew what my mission was. There is *nothing* that can equal getting one's instructions from the horse's mouth, rather than depending on the inevitably garbled versions that come through channels. In addition to serving Rostow, I was of course to report to [redacted] and assist him (or stay out of his way) as required.

Friday afternoon, I darted into Central Processing just as safes were banging shut for the weekend, and actually got my passport, orders, airplane tickets (with one vital flight unconfirmed), and a cheery "Have a great trip."

Anyway, I finally got to New Zealand, after clearing one last hurdle—an hour's *en transit* stop at Tahiti, with the inevitable daydreams of just plain staying there. We touched down in Auckland while the Redskins were still in the showers after losing their Sunday afternoon game to the Giants, to discover that in this urban sprawl it was 10:30 Monday morning. A few hours later I began working in Wellington, with an acute understanding as to why the tennis pros object to playing a match under the influence of jet lag. Around dinner time, shortly before becoming a basket case, I was taken to my quarters. Since all the hotel rooms in Wellington had long been booked for an international scientific convention, and the New Zealand Government (unlike the Royal Hawaiian Hotel) was unwilling to throw people out on the streets because of a hastily arranged Presidential visit, the teeming press corps and all but the four or five top members of the party had to be billeted elsewhere. "Elsewhere" turned out to be a large, decommissioned ferry boat that in better days had made the overnight run

to South Island, and for the nonce was moored at the Overseas Terminal. No one was sure how to pronounce the Maori name of this rust-bucket, but since it had a distracting starboard list it was quickly rechristened the "Tiltin' Hilton." I've seen doghouses bigger than my room, but the bed was an inch longer than I was and I managed to doze for 13 hours.

III.

Things began to happen the next morning, and except for local variations set the pattern for the remaining stops on the trip. Several of the key aspects deserve special mention.

First was the enthusiastic cooperation of the [redacted] and all our people, which was evident from the moment of my arrival. (In New Zealand, as already mentioned, we started working soon thereafter.) Everyone was glad to have someone aboard who both knew Mr. Rostow and was aware of what kind of intelligence support he and the President had been receiving in Washington, and who could take the briefing job off their backs. Believe me, they had plenty else to do.

25X1

Equally important, preparations had been made. At every stop there was a desk ready where I could work, and the secretary knew the local layout and could hear cries of "Help!" Also, local officials whose cooperation was essential were on hand. Within moments of arriving at the Wellington embassy, for instance, I was introduced to the New Zealand internal affairs officer in charge of security for the visit. He had a special pass that would get me through police lines and security guards, and gave me a briefing on what to expect in the way of trouble ("Nothing"). At other stops, special lapel buttons were waiting for me. These were honored by both the local security forces and our own Secret Service, and assured immediate access to anyone I needed to see. These trinkets were invaluable, especially at three o'clock in the morning when there really wasn't time for the "Who are you?" routine. The last morning at Seoul airport I had no trouble getting through the crowd and out to the President's plane with a last-minute report I thought Rostow should have.

25X1

The [redacted] Chiefs were not bashful about employing me. In the middle of the night in Canberra I was told to get myself to Brisbane the next day, to be there when the party arrived in the evening; a special plane would be ready in the morning for me and an embassy contingent. The first bitterly cold morning in Korea, where I had arrived some three days ahead of the party, I was promptly shown to a desk, asked to fish-eye a stack of TDCSs, write a fresh security assessment, and have it ready the next morning. This time it was the secretary who yelled "Help!" when confronted with the fossil bird tracks that pass for my handwriting, but we made the deadline amid thanks from both American and Korean security officials.

Transportation proved to be something of a headache, but generally the [redacted] rallied around. When I got to Wellington, my unconfirmed reservation on Air New Zealand to Australia was still unconfirmed. A local official, summoned to the embassy, made comforting noises ("I'll do what I can"), but it was obvious that the government was not going to bounce anyone. At best, this flight would not have gotten me to Canberra until Thursday afternoon, whereas the party was arriving in the late afternoon on Wednesday. The Chief [redacted] got busy, and arranged for me to go with the party, on Air Force Two. Considering the wild confusion around the embassy, the sight of my luggage being carted away around noon did not calm my already upset stomach. Sure enough, when I finally got to Air Force Two, no one had ever heard of me or the list of "reservations" that the embassy had compiled. This

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Trip Support

proved to be by no means the last time on the trip when the best of plans went awry, and I was on my own. I found the pilot, an Air Force Colonel, and started talking—with a generous sprinkling of Mr. Rostow's name. The ride was fascinating, the drinks marvellous, and the Chateaubriand done to the turn.

Sometimes things got out of the [] control. While I was in Australia, someone at Headquarters discovered I simply couldn't get to Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok in time to be of much help to the party, so cables started going everywhere. I was told to proceed to Korea instead, and Bill Read, already in Manila, would go to Malaysia and Thailand. Well, the Canberra embassy had set up a travel section in the ballroom of the Rex Hotel. The place was a madhouse, with newsmen and heaven knows who else scrambling for reservations and Australian TV filming the whole scene. Try explaining—on candid camera—who you purport to be and why you have to get to Korea.

25X1

At each step I was quickly taken to the communications room to learn about the facilities and meet the young men who operated them, some of whom had been specially detailed to support the trip. This was an invaluable help. Once I had the chance to get acquainted and explain what sort of material would be coming in, whom it was for, and why I needed it *pronto*, these men exerted themselves to the utmost. In Korea, the party stayed at Walker Hill, a posh Korean R and R facility about a dozen miles outside Seoul. So that I could operate from there too, [] had gone all-out to set up an auxiliary land-line facility, even flying in some of the necessities from Tokyo. All the various gadgets proved to be temperamental, however, and without the zeal, the tool kits, and the incantations of the communicators (one of whom I had already met in Australia), I wouldn't have had much to tell Mr. Rostow on a couple of occasions. Also, once we understood each other, I could use the communicators as watch officers, to alert me when anything other than the scheduled material came in. They did this, assiduously, twenty-four hours a day. My job would have been impossible without their dedication and expertise.

25X1

A trip like this is not a tourist jaunt; don't even take your camera. There are, however, lighter moments, and chances to see old friends and to make new ones. The first night at the Rex Hotel in Canberra, where the President was staying, things in the lobby were pretty convivial. Our people [] all of whom I knew, were showing me a pleasant time, and the free drinks made it easier to put up with the noisy demonstrators just outside, including the much-photographed blonde with "Make Love, Not War" emblazoned on her interestingly configured T-shirt. Around one o'clock—probably all for the best—my communicator/watch officer called, and I had to go ferret out Mr. Rostow. That morning the Tiltin' Hilton's wake-up service had me on my feet at 3:00 a.m., and we lost a couple of hours on the flight to Canberra. For once I wished I rated over-time, just for the fun of making the computer try to figure out how to pay someone for a twenty-five-hour day. On another evening a friend who had been [] in Washington treated me to some reminiscing and a 100-m.p.h. ride back to the hotel in a red Ferrari. On the Cathay Pacific flight from Hong Kong to somewhere in Japan, I sat next to a Canadian journalist from Toronto, and we played over Maple Leaf hockey games from the early '30s, including the not-so-sudden-death affair where, at ten of two in the morning, nobody had scored. Such moments of relaxation are vital to restoring one's perspective, and even sanity, during the frantic pace of such a mission. At other times, all that will save you are the charms, potions, and mighty magic you had the foresight to bring along. The evening before that 25-hour day I had devoured some New Zealand sheep that Evel Knievel wouldn't have eaten, and ended up deathly sick. The cold showers on the Tiltin' Hilton didn't help all that much, and I

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got through the early morning meeting with Rostow only by becoming a real-life Alka Seltzer commercial.

IV.

And what about these sessions with Mr. Rostow? Here, too, the pattern was pretty much set at our first meeting in New Zealand.

The President was to arrive in Wellington at about four in the afternoon. However, the crowds were so tremendous and enthusiastic, and Mr. Johnson responded so warmly, that the motorcade was soon inching its way through what seemed to be a solid mass of cheering people. No one knew where Rostow was.

I had spent the afternoon going over the recently arrived material, and had organized it into a fairly decent briefing by the time the party was supposed to arrive. I had no way of knowing how many of the items Rostow had already seen, since I knew that the White House was in communication with Air Force One. Anyway, I was ready—but time kept slipping by, taking the edge off my briefing. Finally about six-thirty a call came from the Ambassador's residence; Mr. Rostow was there, and would like to see the Chief [redacted]. It wasn't at all clear that this meant me, too, but the Chief insisted I come along. We got there through back streets and alleys, and Rostow received us enthusiastically, but with the directness of the busy executive: no, he didn't want to see me. He took the [redacted] Chief by the arm and abruptly led him into the library. They emerged in about five minutes, and someone told Rostow that because of the crowds, the Governor General's reception had been postponed an hour. Instantly he spun around, pointed at me, said "Well then, let's go," and was back in the library ready for a briefing before I could move a muscle. Wondering where he had played basketball, I followed to receive the first momentous question of the trip: "What time does it get light enough here to play tennis?"

Somehow that broke the ice, and from then on our relationship, though business-like, was relaxed and easy. What could have been taken as brusqueness, or occasionally lack of attention, was simply intensity. He had a lot to do, and wanted to get on with it. Like the next morning at 0630, when I arrived at the residence to find Symington the younger, in immaculate whites, practicing his backhand in the living room. Rostow, also in tennis togs, took me into the library for a session that he didn't let drag on; he said he had to teach that young fellow a few things. At other sessions he really was dashing, either to a meeting, a dinner, or to see the President, but he always took time to go over whatever I had brought. His swirling mind would occasionally send him off on tangents. Early one morning we were discussing Laos when something in the middle of a sentence set up another train of thought. He grabbed the telephone and snapped "Get me Bromley Smith." Brom, back in the White House (heaven only knows what time it was in Washington!), answered a lot more quickly than the Fairfax County police usually do. Rostow talked to him about something or other, said "Well, have a nice day—or night," and with a mischievous grin took up the conversation on Laos exactly where we had left it—in mid-sentence.

The "briefings" turned out to be my handing him—or his grabbing—one by one the items I had brought along, fresh off the communications machine. He had obviously gotten an "A" in someone's rapid reading course; he practically inhaled the things. But almost always he made some comment or asked some question, provoking frequently spirited discussions. Occasionally he even volunteered how he figured the President would react, especially in regard to reported actions or statements of other world leaders. Most of the comments I remember are hardly repeatable here.

At our very first session, Rostow made plain that he was accessible whenever I had something I thought he should know, and every morning gave me a copy of his schedule for the day. This led to some unusual encounters. The message that the communicators called me about that first night in Canberra didn't make much sense for a while, but ultimately I figured it out: the business with the [redacted] Chief in the library in Wellington had been a request to use our communication facilities to send a four-part message to Ambassador Lodge in Saigon without the State Department people seeing it. The just-arrived communication said that, for some reason I'm not sure I understood even then, the fourth part of that message had not arrived in Saigon. One-thirty or no, I decided this was important, went upstairs, flashed my lapel button at the horrified people in the small reception room, found Rostow's door, and knocked a bit tentatively. It opened before I had time to get really scared. I can't say he was happy, but he was grateful, and immediately made preparations to send off Part Four again first thing in the morning. His chief concern was that we not wake up his roommate, a snoring member of the President's staff whom I didn't know.

25X1

The next day in Canberra a report came in about some sort of trouble in Laos, and off I went to the tennis courts. At love-40 we had a baseline pow-wow, he asked me to get an assessment from Washington, and wondered about what the Australians thought of all this. By the time the match was over, the regular DDI rep had arranged for him to be present when the Australian Watch Committee met to evaluate the situation. Again, well after midnight in Brisbane, he opened his hotel room door to put out his shoes and was confronted with his just-arrived briefer. A courtly "come in" was followed by the decision that I deserved—or needed—a drink. He had just come from a long session with the President, and was going over, with Bill Jordan, a presidential speech this worthy had just drafted. ("You've got the tune, but not the words," was the verdict.) The Scotch was great, the briefing discursive, the speech so-so—and six o'clock closer with every word.

The briefings were not always given under such ideal conditions. Our last one was in Rostow's villa in Korea, by which time a portion of his Washington staff had joined him. In pajamas and propped up on a mass of pillows in a huge bed littered with papers and books, he was dictating to one secretary, signing something with one hand while tossing assorted papers with the other in the general direction of several aides. He squinted at me over the top of his glasses, obviously impatient for me to get on with the briefing. A nightcap on his head would have made him look exactly like my idea of Voltaire. With all this going on it was not easy to keep his attention, but like the orchestra and the soprano, we at least ended together.

Occasionally I had to wait to see him, as on one very early morning in that improvised reception room upstairs in the Rex Hotel. I didn't mind, because suddenly a tall, restless figure in a bathrobe and slippers appeared, obviously wanting someone to talk to. My unfamiliar face elicited a "Who are you." I told the President what I was doing on the trip, and that back in Washington I was one of the writers of his *Daily Brief*. He said, "It's great—keep up the good work," and was off to other things.

Another time I was lucky to get to Rostow at all. The party finally got to Lennon's Hotel in Brisbane around six in the evening, and our paths had not crossed since early that morning in Canberra. I had gone down to see the party come into the lobby—a small, long, and narrow place, with the elevators in a still narrower spot right across from the dining room entrance. The uproar from the large, wildly friendly mob clogging the street in front of the hotel was deafening, and by the time most of the party, including Rostow, got into the lobby, one couldn't move in any direction. Finally in came the President and Mrs. Johnson, while the cheering outside reached a crescendo. With obvious relish and a "Here-we-go-again" look from Mrs. Johnson, the

President bolted out the front door to face the crowd again. Rostow got to the elevator, but I didn't stand a chance. The statuesque blonde next to me in the crush turned out to be the assistant manager of the hotel. When my plight became evident, a friendly "follow me" led to a trek through the kitchen, the laundry, and a back staircase to the floor where Rostow—and the President—were quartered. Unless the surly chef with the meat cleaver or the old lady brandishing the mop on the stairs were products of Central Cover, we saw no security people. But the gesture certainly said something about the friendliness of the locals, which was warmly displayed at every stop on the trip.

The last morning finally came in Korea.² Things were slightly relaxed, and I didn't have to start stumbling over the sleeping forms (I never knew quite who they were—some of our security men, I think) encamped on the floor of my room until four-thirty. After that last session with Rostow/Voltaire, I was driven back to Seoul over the road that a *levée en masse* of Koreans—little boys and girls, grizzled old women, and bearded patriarchs, many with their feet wrapped in newspapers—had been gallantly trying with picks, baskets, and their bare hands to resurface "for the President." They made it, but he didn't. After all, the time of the helicopter had arrived.

It was a gorgeous day at the airport, I had made my last delivery to the President's plane, the farewell ceremonies were drawing to a close, and the excitement was over. Almost, that is. As the President mounted the ramp to Air Force One, a group of Korean school girls, massed some distance from the plane and decked out in dazzlingly bright kimonos, burst into high-pitched song. The words weren't too easy to follow, but the tune was "The Yellow Rose of Texas." The President went down that ramp as if it were a fire-escape and strode coat-tails flying toward the singers. Before the Secret Service could catch up, this towering man was shaking hands amongst a squealing mass of ecstatic, tiny Koreans. Air Force One left a bit behind schedule.

I have tried to make the trip sound like fun. It was. Despite the frantic pace, the constant uncertainty, and the lack of sleep, everyone—from the Aussie drivers who manned their vehicles for 30 straight hours in Canberra to the highest members of the Presidential party—rolled with the punches. Words were sometimes few, but never short, and everyone tried to make everyone else's job as easy as possible. Bill Read came away from Manila, Bangkok, and Kuala Lumpur with the same impression.

There can be little doubt that this sort of current intelligence support was useful to and appreciated by the highest levels. It had been a splendid team effort on the part of a lot of intelligence professionals. Mr. Rostow and others were clearly impressed and grateful at this demonstration of the Agency's ability to be there with what they needed, when they needed it. When all was over, Mr. R. J. Smith, then the Deputy Director for Intelligence, wrote that "on trips like these, the professionals of OCI can and do provide a signal service to our most important customers." I had long since acquired the habit of agreeing with most things Jack Smith said, but this time I even yelled "Bravo!"

² By this time Secretary Rusk had joined the party, and I delivered most of the material sent to me to him, as well. So did DIA reps, apparently from 8th Army. This made for an interesting race to see who could get to the Secretary's villa first. I knew (but am not telling!) which material he read first, regardless of when it arrived.

It was not Horatio, of course, but Hamlet who discoursed on the limits of human knowledge; the author does indeed appear afflicted by both a whimsical if not profound melancholy and a conviction that something is rotten in the state of Methodology.

THERE ARE MORE THINGS—IN NATIONAL ESTIMATES

Horatio

The Long Slow Wind-Up:

I was reading an article the other day concerning the “problem of how a group of individuals can, by a symmetric or democratic procedure with due attention to individual preferences, come to make a group decision with which the individual members are reasonably satisfied.”¹ Here, I concluded, is a way to produce National Intelligence Estimates without any footnotes!

I read farther and found that the proposed “group decision arrived at is accompanied by a system of transfers of cash among the members of the group, which transfers, roughly speaking, can be viewed as a means by which those who are relatively content with the decision compensate those who are relatively discontent.” Even better. Not only can NIEs be produced with no footnotes, but the DCI has a potentially equitable tool to equalize the budgets of the community agencies.

The Pitch

Here's how the procedure works. Assume that the eleven members of a branch had to reach an equitable decision on which of their number would take Saturday duty, when none wanted it. Each member would decide, privately, on the maximum amount he would be willing to pay to have one of the others take the duty. Say one decided this amount was \$10. Since the process is mathematically symmetric—fair and honest with no unilateral advantages for any side—when one decides to pay \$10, he must be willing to accept 10 times the amount to perform Saturday duty himself. In other words, he must be willing, without substantial regret, either to pay \$10 not to have duty, or to accept \$100—\$10 from each of the other branch members—to perform duty. After each member has decided on his amount, the branch member with the smallest asking price is picked for Saturday duty. He gets his asking price, and every other branch member pays his offering price or less. All are substantially satisfied.

Implementation of the method for more complex group decisions is itself made more complex through the use of set functions and other disagreeable mathematical paraphernalia. But technicians can work out the details. The joy lies in anticipating the brave new world.

The Swing:

Imagine, if you are able, that DIA and the Air Force think that the SA-5 is an ABM, while the CIA, NSA, State, and Navy think it is a SAM. A deal could be worked

¹ Lester E. Dubins, “Group Decision Devices,” *American Mathematical Monthly*, May 1977.

out with the CIA and NSA giving up 50 analytic slots each, State INR giving up 5, and Naval Intelligence giving up 10. The 115 slots could then be divided between DIA and Air Force Intelligence. Not only is the issue decided foresquarely with the SA-5 being declared a SAM for a year, but with the Air Force and DIA having been given the manpower to generate more persuasive arguments on the matter for use the following year.

The Hit:

Who knows where it will all lead? The trading of modern large ballistic missiles for so many metric tons of grain? A ban on long-range cruise missiles in exchange for so many million cubic feet of natural gas? Who Knows?

The files of Nest Bremen

THE ABWEHR MYTH: HOW EFFICIENT WAS GERMAN INTELLIGENCE IN WORLD WAR II?

Gerold Guensberg

Ladislav Farago, a prolific writer on intelligence subjects, some time before 1971 gained access to National Archives films of captured German intelligence files. He used them to write *Game of the Foxes*,¹ a gospel for those who would believe in the efficiency if not the infallibility of Third Reich German intelligence.

In 1945 the United States, Britain, and France had seized German documents which could only be measured in tons, ranging from military personnel records to the German foreign ministry files from 1870 to 1945. All but an infinitesimal proportion of these documents were declassified between about 1958 and 1962, and returned to the West German government. The remainder included some 55 to 65 reels of film of records seized by the U.S. Navy at the Bremen Abwehr station. Documents considered historically valuable had been filmed before the return of the documents to Germany, and ultimately all films in U.S. hands, along with a few remaining hard-copy documents, were transferred from their storage place in Alexandria, Va., to the National Archives. The bulk of the documents had been declassified, and while such action had not been taken with regard to the Bremen Abwehr files, some Archives employees apparently did not differentiate in meeting the requests of researchers such as Farago.

On 22 December 1976, however, with the passage of more than 30 years since the end of the Second World War, virtually all of the remaining documents were declassified. It thus becomes possible to make an unclassified evaluation not only of the reliability of Farago—which is a side issue—but also of the efficiency he attributed to the Abwehr.

Upon study of the Abwehr files, it is difficult to believe that Farago was working from the same material, but he refers specifically to film reels of Bremen Abwehr documents in his possession—there are in fact gaps in the numbering system for reels now in the Archives holdings—and describes how he “stumbled across” the dusty records in metal footlockers in a dark loft. (The archivists irately point out that they have no dark lofts, that dust does not gather on their files, and that the microfilm reels were shelved like any other records.) Farago tells of painstakingly breaking through the puzzles of this fragmented information; actually, two of the reels Farago saw contained the key by which he could easily identify the true name, biographic summary, code name or cryptonym, and code number of every agent cited in the Bremen records by code name or number. And from his examination, Farago would have the Abwehr agents perform prodigious feats, when in reality they were collecting useless, often nonsensical material in vacuum-cleaner fashion.

- Koedel, admired by Farago as one of the most productive Abwehr agents in the United States, sends Germany information on the U.S. aircraft industry. Farago fails to mention that Koedel got some of the information by reading *LIFE* magazine.

¹ *The Game of the Foxes: The Untold Story of German Espionage in the United States and Britain during World War II* (David McKay Co., Inc., New York, 1971).

- Koedel forwards a detailed 38-page report on worldwide synthetic chemical production and, in 1939, a report on U.S., British, and Japanese production of such chemicals as sulphur, phenol, alcohol, acetone, glycol, and toluol. Farago does not state that these were open publications of the Commerce Department, available to anyone through the Government Printing Office.
- A German intelligence officer from Bremen reports a telephone conversation he had from Italy in November 1940 with former Governor Philip La Follette of Wisconsin, an avowed "America Firster." In his chapter, "The Edge of Treason," Farago uses this report to brand La Follette an Abwehr agent. A footnote to the report, ignored by Farago, specifies that La Follette is *not* an agent but simply a former University of Wisconsin classmate of the Abwehr officer, unaware of the latter's affiliation and hence not to be approached by other Abwehr officers with follow-up questions.

The shortcomings of *Game of the Foxes* have already been amply detailed in classified studies and reviews. What remains, and more to the point, is to determine what the now-declassified Archives documents can tell us—and the general public to the extent there is an interest—about the Abwehr.

To place the Bremen files in perspective, the Abwehr had its headquarters in the OKW (Armed Forces High Command) in Berlin. There were district offices in each of some dozen military districts of pre-war Germany, and branch offices operated by the districts to handle specialized activities or to simplify logistic support of operations. As the war spread, additional Abwehr offices were organized along the same lines in occupied territories. A command or main office was an *Abwehrleitstelle*, or *Alst*; a district office was an *Abwehrstelle* or *Ast*, which, confusingly, is German for "branch" (as in tree branch); and a branch office was a *Nebenstelle* or *Nest*. In addition, there were "Reporting Centers"—*Meldeköpfe* or *Kriegsorganisationen* (MKs and KOs), to collect agent reports and forward them by wireless.²

The surviving elements of Nest Bremen files are among the few from the operational Ast or Nest level to have fallen into Western hands. Presumably, the field offices conceived espionage operations and recruited, trained, and deployed agents abroad to obtain information considered vital to the German war effort. The Bremen material might, therefore, have been expected to yield information regarding some wartime German intelligence operations and provide insight into the day-to-day business of a typical German intelligence field station—the *modus operandi* of the Abwehr. But only in a limited sense do these reels—essentially an index—live up to that expectation. There are complete lists of agents, catalogs of their equipment, and detailed financial records. But most of the detailed operational records appear to have been destroyed. The Abwehr's tradecraft will have to be judged on the evidence of the reporting alone.

As mentioned above, Nest Bremen's agents are exposed in true name, matched with pseudonym and code number.³ Their spy paraphernalia, from microdot to secret ink and radio transmitter, is revealed. Pay records show how much was paid them, and what special allowances their families received.⁴

The Nest Bremen reels list the positive intelligence collected by these agents in peace and war. Judging from the register of report titles,⁵ the Abwehr collected

² A few examples: *Nest* Bremen was a field office reporting to *Ast* Hamburg in District X. In France, *Nest* Bordeaux reported to *Ast* Angers under *Alst* Paris. Reporting Centers included KOs in Greece and Spain, MK Leopold in the Middle East, and MKs in Chile and Brazil.

³ Biographic summaries of every agent appear on reels M202 and 203.

⁴ Reels ML 163, 164, and 166 contain the expenditure ledger of Nest Bremen, along with a record of foreign exchange disbursements.

⁵ Report Titles are on Reels ML 166, 167, 168a, 169, 185, 186, 188, 190, and 191.

information from every corner of the earth on every imaginable topic: threat of imminent hostilities, military order of battle, formation of convoys, assessment of political conditions, advanced weapons development, armament production, and general industrial output. The listing seems to point to an impressive performance, but close study of the actual reports⁶ shows the information to be seriously defective: of doubtful value and of questionable reliability. The reports also testify to extraordinary gullibility and naïveté on the part of both agents and Abwehr.

Agents showed little judgment, submitting information that certainly was useless in terms of fighting the war. Consider agent S-2115 in the United States, who in 1940 submitted a report on U.S. cotton production from 1929 to 1938; or agent A-2018 who submitted U.S. railroad statistics from 1910 to 1938 and farm statistics dating back to the middle of the 19th century. Such lack of discrimination on the part of agents is evidence of a woefully ineffectual supervision by the Nest and by Abwehr Command in Berlin.

Here are some other examples of inane reporting for which Bremen expended its resources and risked lives, chosen from a list which can be expanded *ad nauseam*:

- Detailed report on the New York water supply.
- Low morale in the United States due to war losses against Japan while Communism is on the rise in the U.S. (Agent F-2376, June 1942.)
- Death ray research in Italy (1932).
- In the event of a British landing in Norway and violation of Swedish territory, Sweden will enter war on Germany's side (1942).
- 3.5 million Chinese working in Russia, and 3 million more being placed at Russia's disposal for winter campaign (1943/44).

The Abwehr performance in respect to the second front was especially dismal. Consider:

- In case of an Anglo-American landing in Norway, it will occur in Drontheim and Sweden will oppose such a landing. (March 1942.)
- Same substance repeated in October 1942 by agent R-3938.
- Anglo-American landing between Narvik and Murmansk. (August 1942.)
- Seven million troops in England ready and waiting for invasion (May 1944.) (When this was doubted by Abwehr, the agent explained that not all were assault troops—many were support troops.)
- Invasion across channel is only a diversionary maneuver. Actual plans call for air landings in France, Belgium, and Germany near concentration camps, prison camps, and foreign labor camps. (Agent A-3862, May 1944.)
- No Western offensive this year or until Balkans in Allied hands. (Agent A-3182, December 1943.)
- Landings to take place along Nice-Genoa and Yugoslav coasts. (S-3248, June 1944.)
- Landings scheduled for Denmark and Norway cancelled. (F-3234, July 1944.)
- Air landings planned in Austria-Hungary to forestall Russian occupation. (S-3248, August 1944.)

⁶ Actual agent reports appear on Reels 151, 152, 153a, 159, 162, 170, 171, 172, 176, 177, 178, and 179a.

- Landings planned along Italian Riviera, Trieste, and Venice to forestall Russian advance on Austria-Hungary. (S-3248, August 1944.)
- Simultaneous attacks scheduled for Spanish Morocco and French North Africa. (R-3764, November 1943.)
- Joint Anglo-American and Russian operation planned against Sweden and Denmark aimed at occupying Pommernia. (F-3210, September 1944.)

It would seem that the Abwehr could have made its best record by ruling out any place and date cited by a Nest Bremen agent for an Allied landing.

Meanwhile, insofar as Nest Bremen's reports are concerned, such critical events as the embroilment of the Soviet Union or the United States in the war pass as non-events. The files show no increase in reporting on the two countries—nor even a temporary let-up in the trivial and the inconsequential. While the Abwehr channels are clogged with paltry affairs, there is a total lack of reporting on the two major Allied developments which proved to be of decisive importance: nuclear energy and radar. Only twice is there reference to a heavy isotope of uranium, and then without appreciation of the significance. And a lengthy analytical study of the British port of Portsmouth, dated 1939/1940, gives a detailed description plus photographs of the steel tower constructions guarding the channel approaches east of the Isle of Wight, but the Abwehr is convinced that these towers are for use in connection with audio detection of planes or against boat attacks.

The Nest Bremen agents deserve high marks, however, for providing ship traffic information from all over the globe. Theoretically, U-boats could be guided to the easiest and choicest targets promising maximum yield for minimum risks. There is nothing dramatic or romantic about this type of systematic and pedantic recording and yet, in the final analysis, this routine reporting activity, effectively carried out, came close to forcing the British against the wall when in 1942 and 1943 U-boats sank merchant ships at an alarming rate, causing Churchill to exclaim "The U-boat attack was our worst evil."⁷

The Nest Bremen files reveal several major operations, especially against the United Kingdom. In operation Edda, an agent who appears to have been a British citizen transmitted nearly 400 messages between May 1942 and June 1944 from Iceland. Commendably precise, Edda reported ship traffic in Iceland's harbors. Edda wasted no time on political analyses of doubtful validity or dispensing strategic advice as did other Abwehr agents. He describes real events, and they have a ring of authenticity. He even succeeded in infiltrating British intelligence when he received employment as clerk-interpreter. He was ill-rewarded by the Abwehr. Beginning with message number 165, in which he announced that he had exhausted all funds, the recurring theme of the Edda traffic was his need for money, his expectation that the Abwehr would supply money, and finally, his utter dejection and disgust at the Abwehr's bumbling performance. When he locates a potential recruitment and addition to the net, he refuses to act, knowing that the Abwehr could not financially support this agent. Of course, Edda may have been turned around and doubled by the British (Double Cross Operation),⁸ but there is no evidence in the Nest files that the Abwehr ever doubted his *bona fides*.

Lena was another Nest Bremen operation which produced reams of information.⁹ In preparation for Sea Lion—the Nazi invasion of England—13 Lena agents were

⁷ Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, IV, p. 125.

⁸ Edda may possibly have been COBWEB of the XX System. See John Masterman, *The Double-Cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1972).

⁹ The Abwehr did not know that its most productive LENA agent had been turned around by the British. See Masterman, *op. cit.*, re TATE.

dispatched into Britain. Lena 503 (or 3725) transmitted more than 1,000 messages between September 1940 and September 1944. Even had the reporting been genuine and not directed by the British, it was without merit whatsoever. Rated one of the most productive agents of the Abwehr, Lena 503 transmitted trivial and useless chatter—morale of the population—and woefully fragmentary disposition of aircraft. Quite obviously the Abwehr itself was at a loss to know what to do with this agent, as it pestered him with ludicrous requirements on the price and availability of bread, meat, and other foodstuffs in Britain. The petulant reply of Lena 503 in response to one such request is illustrative. On 29 August 1942, he transmitted: "In answer to question 32: One can get as much bread as one wants. Haven't the haziest notion whether consumption is rising or dropping. Only know that bread is not much liked in this region. I myself don't like it either."

This is perhaps the major deficiency of the surviving Nest Bremen material. Even when the results of an operation, i.e., intelligence messages, are available as in Edda and Lena, there is a complete lack of information on the *raison d'être* of the operations; how they were conceived, and in response to what requirements. It is not possible to learn how agents were spotted, recruited, and trained. There are no records of the discussions between Nest, Ast, and Headquarters regarding the feasibility of an impending operation, nor comments on the progress or effectiveness of operations when they were implemented. All this material was destroyed by Nest Bremen. Indeed, entire reels are devoted to an itemization of records destroyed, especially in the period September to December 1944.¹⁰

Only one case is fairly well documented, and ironically it is this operation that was declassified some years ago and made available to qualified researchers. It is the case of "Scheich," which once again documents the fatuousness of the Abwehr. Two German nationals, who in U.S. intelligence jargon had the elevated status of "staff agents," not just the run-of-the-mill agents (*Vertrauensmänner* or *V-Männer*), operated for Nest Bremen on the Paris black market. One, Dr. Paul Kuehnert, was officially involved in procuring critically required products on the French black market while the other, Wilhelm Mertons, was placed in charge of confiscated Hollywood film assets in Paris as a cover for his intelligence activities. Keeping their home office in Bremen in suspense with tales of their high-level French contacts and the great potential value of their even more important contacts among the tribal chiefs of North Africa, Kuehnert and Mertons tied up the resources of German intelligence in France which tried to track down this seemingly unsavory pair and finally arrested them. Nest Bremen had, of course, failed to inform Ast Paris that their agents were operating on French soil in the private reserve of a rival Abwehr unit. It is a delightful tale of how imaginative and unprincipled men can exploit the weaknesses and slow-wittedness of large organizations—especially intelligence agencies which, because of internal security practices, tend to have little communications and are prone to tap in darkness. The Scheich file is extensive and replete with personal requests of the kind that would arouse the suspicion of even the most gullible manager. There are requests for special phones, including authority to call abroad. There is a request for assignment of an automobile, coupled with exemption from accountability on the use of the car. Bremen officials are kept in constant motion in support of these two nonproductive agents, who meanwhile are enjoying life in Paris. When the two are investigated after their arrest, it is amusing to watch Nest Bremen's officers seek to diminish the importance of the two. Unable to explain satisfactorily why they had two agents operating in France without knowledge of the Paris Abwehr or approval of

¹⁰ Reels 52, 59, and 60 are devoted to destruction notices. Included are the files of about 80 agents of Nest Bremen.

Berlin, they lie blatantly. This was an unimportant operation: two agents with whom the Bremen station hardly had any contact; a dormant, low-level activity.

There is one topic to be gleaned from the Nest Bremen material which Farago passed over lightly: the Abwehr's use of Jews. He notes that Waldemar von Oppenheim, a German baron who was one-quarter Jewish, reported to the Abwehr on his experiences traveling abroad in early war years. But there is nothing in Farago about a Jewish agent named Loewy reporting from Haifa in December 1939; Karl Israel Eisenmann of Karlsruhe and an Israel Weil in late 1941; or what appears to have been one complete net of Jewish agents known as the May Network. A Rumanian Jew offered his shipping firm as a cover for an Abwehr activity debriefing German ship captains operating in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean.

Tekin Saygin, born Lichtenthal in Poland, converted from Judaism to Islam in 1934 and moved to Istanbul. In 1938 he offered his services to the Abwehr and became "Turco," code number S-2118, Nest Bremen's most productive source on activity in the ports of Istanbul, Port Said, Suez, and Alexandria. He made more than 40 reports in 1940, and more than 100 in 1941, becoming so prolific that the operation was transferred from Nest Bremen to the Abwehr in Turkey for closer supervision.

The whole subject invites speculation. Were the Jewish agents recruited under threat of concentration camp and death? If so, how could the Abwehr have any reasonable confidence that they would not be doubled the minute they reached neutral or Allied territory? The Gestapo was involved in the clearance of potential agents, and is known to have objected to Baron Oppenheim because of his part-Jewish blood; yet Oppenheim and dozens of other Jews and part-Jews were used by the Abwehr. How could the Abwehr so consistently ignore or overrule the Gestapo?

The Nest Bremen material, in sum, shatters the myth of Abwehr efficiency so carefully constructed in postwar literature. But it could do more, had not the very magnitude of the captured hoard of intelligence documents largely condemned the material to disuse. Consider, for example, the detailed exposure of Nest Bremen's agents—many of them in foreign countries, and in some cases perhaps still of prime intelligence importance. Consider, for example, Abwehr agent A-2009, a young French naval officer serving on the cruiser *Jeanne d'Arc*. Born in 1912, with good educational background and probably destined for a career in the French navy, he offered his services to German intelligence in 1938. Motive: money. He very quickly became one of the more productive agents in France, furnishing more than 100 reports over the next three years.

Given his educational background, it is quite possible that he rose to the higher echelons of the French Navy during the 1950s and 1960s, when he would have been in his prime forties and fifties. As far as I have been able to determine, no one in U.S. intelligence ever tried to discover what had become of this French traitor. If he remained an officer in the French Navy, or in one of the armed forces ministries, should he have been identified to the French government or liaison service?

Or take the roster of potential intelligence assets inside the Soviet Union, published by the German Abwehr on the eve of Germany's invasion of the USSR. Russians who were considered anti-regime by the Germans must certainly have also had potential as U.S. intelligence assets. Again there is no indication that this material was ever exploited. Quite literally, the vast mass of operational leads was lost under the sheer volume of captured material, and with the passage of time any further potential for current-day intelligence needs now is gone. The Abwehr files, however, deserved more than the attention they got from historians and imaginative authors.

A retired operations officer, Paul Hartman, comments:

Mr. Guensberg seems to believe that there was a lack of intelligence exploitation of the captured records. He might have a point, but only in the context that the records could have been exploited to an even greater degree than they were, and that the exploitation should have taken place sooner and with a greater sense of urgency. When the sheer mass of captured paper is taken into account, it is to the credit of the armed forces, OSS, CIC, and CIA that the documents were exploited to a fairly high degree.

The early exploitation was done by the OSS CI War Room in London. Later came efforts by the CIC, ONI, G-2, and others. Allied powers also began their exploitation, and the Soviets were not excluded from access in the very early postwar period.

The biggest flaw in these early efforts was that the records were not examined systematically. In 1956, then DDP, Frank Wisner obtained approval from the then-DCI Allen Dulles to have the CI Staff conduct a systematic analysis. All but a small portion of this study was concluded by 1964, and work on the remaining segment, continuing at a slower pace, was concluded in 1967. Each captured record deemed to contain intelligence data was summarized, indexed, and included in the records of the Directorate of Operations. Much of the same information was also fed into appropriate computerized data banks. Items of interest to other U.S. agencies or certain foreign governments were forwarded. As a result of this effort, more than 1,250,000 names of persons of intelligence interest—including all of the names on the filmed index of Next Bremen—were recorded in the DDO's Main Index.

I recall that we ran across the name of the French naval officer early in our examination of the German foreign ministry records. (The German foreign ministry established a section, headed by a man named von Grote, which reviewed all correspondence addressed by the Abwehr and the Sicherheitsdienst to field stations, bases, and personnel under diplomatic or other official cover. This foreign ministry section even retained copies of the correspondence, and thus we were able to read a great deal of Abwehr and SD correspondence in copies after the originals had quite properly been destroyed by the intelligence agencies.) We were excited with our find, and immediately advised the French, only to be told that they had received the data from U.S. sources some time ago.

I cannot pinpoint the "roster of potential intelligence assets inside the Soviet Union" referred to by the author in his final paragraph. On the eve of the invasion of Russia, the Germans published a book entitled Handbook of the USSR which was in effect a listing of names of and data on persons considered security risks from the German point of view or who were known to hold views inimical to German interests. Among the names listed, for example, was that of Klaus Fuchs, although this did not come to light until after Fuchs had been caught and sentenced as a postwar atomic spy for the Soviets. All of these names were appropriately recorded in the DDO Main Index, along with similar German listings for areas other than the USSR. If this is the book Mr. Guensberg is referring to, then the names in it are not those of potential intelligence assets in the Soviet Union from our point of view.

INTELLIGENCE IN RECENT PUBLIC LITERATURE

WILHELM CANARIS. By *Heinrich Hoehne*. (Bertelsmann, Munich, 1976.) (In German)

Heinrich Hoehne, the *Spiegel* editor with an appetite for modern German history, continues his canvassing of Hitler's Germany with a book on Wilhelm Canaris, the enigmatic chief of German military intelligence, the Abwehr, during the Third Reich. The book, now being translated for publication in the United States, successfully helps penetrate the legend and mystery of the person Canaris, a process that was begun by Abshagen in his paeon to Canaris published shortly after the war. Men of good will found it easy to sympathize with Canaris, for while he vacillated and was, perhaps, not the most effective opponent of Hitler, he paid with his life for this opposition. Opposition to Hitler does not always entitle one to placement on the honor role. There is the case of Arthur Nebe, Chief of the German Criminal Police, who unquestionably was involved in the anti-Hitler plot and who also paid with his life after the assassination attempt failed on the 20th of July. But Nebe had volunteered to lead one of the four Einsatzgruppen that entered Russia in 1941 in the wake of the Germany Army with the sole purpose of exterminating the ideological enemies of Nazi Germany. Canaris, however, had a legitimate claim, and sympathy for Canaris grew in proportion when he was attacked by resurgent extreme right-wingers. In a paroxysm of hatred, they equated his opposition with treason. It was he who allegedly betrayed plans of attack to Germany's enemies; it was he who sabotaged Spain's entry into the war on Germany's side and it was he who supported the inner opposition to Hitler.

Canaris has not suffered only at the hands of his natural enemies. A recent biographer, Klaus Benzing, did as much harm with a compassionate account that bordered on self-pity. In this book, Benzing purports to quote from Canaris's missing diaries, which Benzing claims to have buried in East Germany toward the end of the war.

Hoehne's book is a valuable antidote, and the author steers expertly between these dangerous cliffs of hatred and compassion. Most intriguing about the book is the strange similarity between the Abwehr's ailments during the thirties and forties and the current criticism of supposed excessive romanticism of the spy business—the James Bond cult which critics complain dominates the field of intelligence. Hoehne finds that this cult governed Canaris' Abwehr, which believed that the destiny of nations and governments depended largely on the invisible workings of cunning agents and effective intelligence services. Hoehne's description of the organizational insufficiencies of the Abwehr reads like a recital of latter-day accusations against intelligence organizations. Rapid expansion of the Abwehr produced a gargantuan organization that often merely spun its wheels. It employed more case officers than agents, and the education plus performance level of these was dismally deficient. In the field stations, the situation was even worse, with routine intelligence rituals producing rigor mortis; stations were the arenas for acting out vanities, and stations were often victimized by intelligence swindlers or paper mills. Too many Abwehr officers and agents were integrated into diplomatic posts abroad, and there were constant jurisdictional disputes and squabbles with ambassadors on coordinating

intelligence operations to assure that they reflected German foreign policy objectives in a particular country. The ambassadors were often unhappy with the Abwehr's reporting, which, they felt, duplicated the reporting by the embassy's diplomats. Also, it is noteworthy that it was not the maneuverings of the sinister SS and SD that finally led to the demise of Canaris, but a dispute with the German ambassador in Spain over the jurisdiction and duties of the Abwehr station.

A bitter dispute raged between the intelligence collectors in the Abwehr and the analyst-evaluators of the various military services in Germany. The G-2 of Eastern Front's General Staff (*Fremde Heere Ost*) was forever complaining of the miserable quality of the Abwehr reports and, in general, was hypercritical of the Abwehr. Those elitist staff officers looked down condescendingly on the usually less-educated Abwehr intelligence officers. As a result there was a constant threat that the military attachés might form their own intelligence networks so that the Army would not be dependent solely on Abwehr reporting.

In the end the Abwehr was taken over by an ambitious, youthful, and ruthless SS seeking a unified intelligence service under its own aegis. But it was not the preponderance of the SS but rather the failures of the Abwehr that made this demise inevitable.

As Hoehne demonstrates, nearly every major event was accompanied by a major Abwehr failure. At the time of the Rhineland Occupation in 1935, Canaris was the victim of his own agents' false reporting. These agents had reported that the British and French general staffs had a unified action plan in case the Germans marched into the Rhineland. Even later, Canaris' agents were never able to learn more than their competitors in the press corps. Two years later during the Stalin purges, in which his competitor Heydrich played a controversial role, we find Canaris perplexed. The reporting of his agents was insufficient for him to understand the background of the inner-Soviet crisis. The following year, during the Czech-Sudeten crisis, Canaris feared that his reputation as Germany's first spy must have suffered seriously as analyses and reports of the Abwehr proved consistently incorrect.

A year later came the war, which revealed another embarrassing weakness of the Abwehr which could hardly have been kept concealed from Hitler. When the first shot was fired, the Abwehr lost most its agent networks in France and in the UK. There was no penetration of the enemy camp to provide the Abwehr with reliable information. Helplessly the Abwehr puzzled over enemy troop concentrations along the Western front as for weeks no reports arrived concerning enemy dispositions. The ignorance of the Abwehr was exposed when the Army's General Staff began to plan the Western offensive.

Next came Operation Sea Lion, the invasion of Great Britain. The General Staff levied the requirement for order of battle information. It was an unhappy moment, for the Abwehr had no effective agents in the UK. Hastily a few agents were recruited and dropped over England by parachute. They were promptly picked up by the British intelligence, a fact that was, of course, not known to Canaris.

Then came Operation Barbarossa—the attack on the USSR—and again the Abwehr was unable to provide the kind of information demanded by the General Staff—a situation which soon became obvious to the intelligence analysts at the General Staff when they began to calculate Soviet force strengths. The failures continued: The Russian preparations for the defense of Stalingrad went unnoticed, as did the preparations for the landings in North Africa by the Anglo-Americans. When the Abwehr failed to anticipate the Anzio landings in January 1944, Hitler ordered an investigation of the intelligence gaffe.

Worse than the intelligence failures were the flaps the Abwehr did not even know about. In the UK, the entire Abwehr organization was turned around. All information reaching the Abwehr from its agents there actually was spoon-fed by British intelligence. Then too, the Abwehr's worldwide sabotage and covert action program was frustrated; eight saboteurs landing in the United States were arrested. Abwehr-sponsored uprisings in South Africa, Afghanistan, India, and the Caucasus all failed.

As long as 35 years ago, Hoehne shows, Canaris fought and lost the battle for his agency because he did not know and never learned that as head of an intelligence service he had to be not just a spy, but an administrator. The Abwehr failed because of the shortcomings of its leader's administrative abilities.

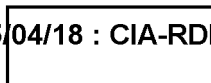
Gerold Guensberg

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