

~~TOP SECRET~~

OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

3 August 1994

SUSPENSE: 17 Aug 94

DISTRIBUTION: P05A

A952,

Z22,

M5J, Lou Benson

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

SUBJECT: VENONA Documents - ACTION MEMO

The enclosed draft decision memorandum is being sent to each of you simultaneously for comments. Michael Smith, Chief N51, and Vito Potenza, D/GC, have met to discuss this issue and recommend

If you have any questions, I can be reached at 963-4057s.

(b) (5)

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

(b) (6)

Encl:

a/s

cc: N513, Claudia Collins

& Rona Lerner & Linda Miller
58252

~~APPENDED DOCUMENTS CONTAIN
CODEWORD MATERIAL.~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

DRAFT

(b) (1)
 (b) (3)-18 USC 798
 (b) (3)-50 USC 3024(i)
 (b) (3)-P.L. 86-36
 (b) (5)

NSA STAFF PROCESSING FORM

TO D/DIR	EXREG CONTROL NUMBER	KCC CONTROL NUMBER J9837-93; J9673-93
THRU Exec Dir	ACTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> SIGNATURE <input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION	EXREG SUSPENSE KCC SUSPENSE ELEMENT SUSPENSE
SUBJECT FOIA Appeals for VENONA Documents - DECISION MEMO		

DISTRIBUTION

SUMMARY

PURPOSE: (U) To obtain a decision on how to respond to FOIA requests for Venona records. (See tabs for background material.)

BACKGROUND: ~~(TSC)~~ Venona is a codename for the US/UK exploitation of encrypted KGB and GRU communications from the time period 1937-48. The Hoover Institution and the Institute for Policy Studies have appealed the denial of releasing the Venona documents. These requests are for all Venona files, including intercepted encoded messages and their decoded contents. N513's response admitted to the fact of U.S. intercept of Soviet encoded messages called Venona, but not to our ability to decode such material. In 1993, these records were removed from compartmentation, however, they still remain classified TSC. Initially it appeared that N513's response should be upheld, but A952 indicates that there is segregable unclassified material in the Agency's Venona records.

~~(TSC)~~ A meeting was held with representatives from DDO (P05A, A952, Z09, Z2), DDP (N513), Benson/Phillips (M5J/E3), and OGC to assess [REDACTED]

RECOMMENDATION: (U) OGC and N51 recommend [REDACTED]

(b) (5)

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

COORDINATION/APPROVAL

OFFICE	NAME AND DATE	SECURE PHONE	OFFICE	NAME AND DATE	SECURE PHONE
N51	Michael Smith				
P05A		963-7044s			
A952		963-7820s			
Z22					
M5J	Lou Benson	963-1978s			

ORIGINATOR

ORG.

PHONE (Secure)

DATE PREPARED

D2

963-4057s

22 July 1994/gap

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~**DRAFT**

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

Serial:

DATE:

REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

GENERAL COUNSEL

SUBJECT:

FOIA Appeals for VENONA Documents - DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO: DEPUTY DIRECTOR

(b) (1)
(b) (3)-18 USC 798
(b) (3)-50 USC 3024(i)
(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36
(b) (5)

1. This memorandum requests a decision on how to proceed to process the FOIA appeal requests for all Venona files, including the intercepted encoded Soviet messages together with their decoded contents. The options for handling FOIA requests for this information and our analysis of them are set out below. Michael Smith and I recommend

OPTION A:

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36
(b) (5)

OPTION B:

OPTION C:

Classified By NSA/CSSM 123-2
Declassify on: Originating Agency's
Determination Required

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
(REV. 1-80)
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6
5010-114 (COMPUTER FACSIMILE)

DRAFT

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DRAFT

OPTION D:

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36
(b) (5)

2. I recommend we pursue Option

VITO T. POTENZA
Deputy General Counsel

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36
(b) (5)

APPROVAL:

Option A,
Option B,
Option C,
Option D,

~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

DRAFT

Initial
Requests

RECEIVED IN Q43 ON 23 DEC 1992

HOOVER INSTITUTION

ON WAR, REVOLUTION AND PEACE

Stanford, California 94305-6010



December 16, 1992

Director
National Security Agency/
Center Security Service
ATTN: FOIA Office
Fort George G. Meade, Maryland 20755-6000

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Sir:

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

I request that a copy of the following documents [or documents containing the following information] be provided to me: All U.S. intercepted encoded Soviet messages (cables and radio communications) together with their decoded contents; more specifically (1) those called/marked VENONA files, and (2) those separately bearing U.S. security classified markings TOP-SECRET DAUNTLESS, TOP-SECRET DINAR, or TOP-SECRET GALT, that originated during the period of 1936-1947.

In order to help to determine my status to assess fees, you should know that I am affiliated with an educational institution, and this request is made for a scholarly purpose and not for a commercial use.

I request a waiver of all fees for this request. Disclosure of the requested information to me is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in my commercial interest.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Arnold Beichman
Research Fellow

AB:ss

Public References to KGB Message; VENONA; BRIDE

1. 1951 Readers Digest J. Edgar Hoover article on Fuchs
Alan Woodhead "The Traitors"
2. ¹⁹⁶⁸ Kim Philby - My Silent War
3. 1973 Patrick Leale and Maureen McConville - "Philby - The Long Road
To Moscow"
4. 1977 Robert J. Sampson, subj of article in Wash Post concerning his
problems getting his manuscript cleared. Article referred to
Russian intelligence communications
5. April 1980 Playboy art by David C. Martin (precursor to "Wilderness
of Mirrors") on Bill Harvey, CA.
6. May 1980 Newsweek - art by Sampson
7. 1980 David Martin - 'Wilderness of Mirrors' - heavy on
Bill Harvey and Jim Angleton (Sampson denies being
Martin's source -; Martin's source probably was an ex-GA
type - critic of Angleton
8. 1981 Chapman Pincher - "Their Trade is Treachery"
9. May 1982 N.Y. Times article about Sampson
10. 1982 Nigel West - "A Matter of Trust" (in U.S. "The Circus" 1983)
11. Nov 1982 Chapman Pincher art. in the Daily Express

- 12 1983 William Stevenson - "Intrepid's Last Case"
- 13 July 1984 Interview - Peter Wright - ITV - Britain...
- 14 1985 Chapman Pincher - "Too Secret To Live"
- 15 Christopher Andrew - "Secret Service - The Making of the British Intelligence"
- 16 1986 Nigel West - "GCHQ - The Secret Wireless War"
- 17 1986 Robt Saper - "The FBI-KGB War"
- 18 1986 Penrose & Freeman - "Conspiracy of Silence" (about Blair)
- 19 1987 Peter Wright - "The Spycatcher"
- 20 1987 Nigel West "Wolfeheart"

IPS

Institute for Policy Studies
1601 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202 234 9382
FAX 202 387 7915

Transnational Institute
Paulus Potterstraat 20
1071 DA Amsterdam
The Netherlands
011 31 20 662 6608

03 SEP 1993

9673-93

SS

August 26, 1993

The Director
National Security Agency
Attn: FOIA Office
Fort Meade, MD 20755-6000

Dear Sir or Madam:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 5 U.S.C. 552, et seq. (as amended), I hereby request copies of the intercepts of Soviet transmissions commonly referred to as VENONA. I have attached photocopies of the relevant pages of publications where the intercepts have been described in detail (Wilderness of Mirrors; FBI-KGB War; KGB the Inside Story).

From the aforementioned public sources, it is clear that: a) the VENONA intercepts were derived from decrypting Soviet messages; b) the VENONA secret and the techniques used in decrypting the messages were leaked to the Soviets in 1948 by William Weisband; and, c) KGB agent Kim Philby was able to warn Moscow of the important revelations derived from VENONA and thus the target country is now, and has been for many decades, well aware of the intercepts. As I am sure the NSA is aware, these publications describe in considerable detail the "sources and methods" used in intercepting VENONA. Therefore the existence of VENONA, as well as the sources and methods of its collection, are already public knowledge. In addition, since the material itself is almost five decades old and the Soviet regime no longer exists, I believe there should be little difficulty in releasing the contents of the messages.

I ask that you disclose these documents as they become available to you without waiting until all the documents have been assembled. If the documents include classified information and the volume of this material makes a lengthy declassification review necessary, I request the segregation and prompt release of all elements of the documents portion-marked Unclassified or

Declassified. Additionally, I request that the remaining classified portions undergo a careful review for the purpose of declassification, in whole or in part, and that you release to me all reasonably segregable non-exempt portions.

As you know, an agency cannot rely simply on the markings of a document to deny its release. In order that a document be withheld under Exemption 1, it must be reviewed and found to be in fact properly classified pursuant to both procedural and substantive criteria found in the governing Executive Order. This of course requires an actual, substantive review of the materials and their classification markings, according to Executive Order 12356, Section 3.4 Mandatory Review for Declassification.

Should you elect to invoke an exemption to the FOIA, I will require in your full or partial denial letter sufficient information to effectively appeal the denial. In accordance with the minimum requirements for administrative due process, this information should include: a) the basic factual material including the originator, date, length, and location of the withheld intercepts; and, b) explanations and justifications for denial, including the identification of the subsection of Executive Order 12356 under which the withheld document or portions of the document was found to be subject to classification, and, most importantly, explanations of how each exemption fits the withheld material.

This request is being made on behalf of the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS). IPS is a public nonprofit, tax-exempt policy research and education organization which has sponsored research and publications for thirty years. (Its Federal Tax Identification Number is 52-0788947.) Its efforts aim at in-depth policy analysis and public education to promote more informed public debate, and the materials requested will benefit the general public by illuminating important events in contemporary history through articles and books. The institute's research and publication activities clearly meet the requirements for a full fee waiver under the Freedom of Information Act. I therefore request that, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. Sect. 552(a)(4)(A), you waive all search and reproduction fees.

I further ask, in the event that fees are not waived, that you inform me of the specific basis for such a decision. As an alternative to being assessed copying fees, I would accept being

granted access to the records which are responsive to my request so that I may review them without incurring duplication costs and may select those which I want copied. As you are aware, Section (a)(3) of the FOIA requires agencies to make documents "promptly available" and Section (a)(4) permits "recovery of only the direct costs." Therefore, your agency is required by law to make documents available for inspection, but may not require the purchase of copies of the documents.

As this is a specific request for a discrete set of documents which have been identified to a great degree of particularity, I believe that you should be able to locate these without great difficulty. I consequently request that consideration be given to expediting processing of this request. If you have any questions, please call me at (202) 234-6854 or the phone number listed above. I look forward to hearing from you within ten working days, as the law stipulates. Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sanho Tree".

Sanho Tree
Research Associate



THE FBI- KGB WAR

A Special Agent's Story

**ROBERT J.
LAMPHERE
and Tom
Shachtman**



Random House
New York



6

THE BREAK

MY FIRST ASSIGNMENT at Bureau headquarters was to set up counterintelligence coverage on Soviet satellite countries operating within the United States. After a few months of this I longed to get back into fighting the main threat, Soviet intelligence, and I believed that in a locked safe in our espionage unit at headquarters was a means of doing so.

The safe contained several pieces of paper that had a special top-secret classification. These were the fruits of an attempt to decode intercepted KGB messages that had been sent, in code, from the Soviet consulate in New York to KGB headquarters in Moscow in 1944-45. To date, the cryptanalysts of the Army Security Agency had only been able to decipher and translate from the Russian a few words in these messages, and some of these were code names. So the pages were mostly blank and in their present form were almost meaningless. However, they were very intriguing. Several of us in the espionage section had previously met with the supervisor who had charge of the partial message translations, and had discussed them a bit. While we were all interested in them, not much had developed because there wasn't much to go on.

I went to Espionage Section Chief Pat Coyne and asked if I could take charge of the fragmentary messages and be relieved of my work

on the satellite countries. Pat had no objection, and neither did the supervisor to whom the messages had originally been assigned. And so, one day in late 1947, I took over the few mostly blank pages and the task of doing something with them.

The KGB messages were to change my life. More important, they were to affect the course of history: in the coming years their revelations would lead directly to decisive actions that the FBI took against KGB operations in the United States.

Today, nearly forty years after I took charge of a few sheets of paper sparsely covered with seemingly unconnected words, I am able to tell in some detail the story of the breakthrough into the KGB's networks that was accomplished through the decipherment of these messages. The Soviets have known for many years that we cracked these messages; they learned of it from double agents within the British intelligence services, including Kim Philby, and I have now come to believe they learned of it from these sources even prior to the time Philby arrived in the United States in October 1949. In recent years there has been some publicity about the deciphered messages; the first hint came from leaks by former British intelligence men in Great Britain. Even this present version will lack many details, for the National Security Agency (successor to the Army Security Agency) does not want me to reveal certain aspects. However, I can now tell enough of the story so that anyone reading this account will comprehend the magnitude of the breakthrough that the deciphered KGB messages provided.

Every counterintelligence man's dream is to be able to secretly read the enemy's communications. If we could know what instructions were being given, how many networks were operating against us, who the agents were, what information was being sought and obtained—then a whole host of possibilities for countering and controlling enemy espionage efforts would be feasible. Methods used, recognition signs, dead-letter drops, places and times of rendezvous, courier routes—all would be open to our counterintelligence coverage. In the best possible scenario, the enemy would never know of our penetration; we would learn in advance his every move, though, and we would achieve the ultimate counterintelligence goal, complete control of the enemy's moves against us.

Since biblical times, countries have tried to conceal their communications from their enemies' prying eyes. Codes and ciphers of varying degrees of sophistication have been in use for many centuries. In the modern era, cipher systems have become quite techni-

cally refined, and use machines that allow both speed and almost perfect security.

When I took on my new assignment, I knew very little about codes and ciphers, although I had had some instruction from the FBI's cryptanalysis section and had studied a bit on the subject. Several of us had taken considerable interest in the shining example from the north, namely, what had happened when GRU code clerk Igor Gouzenko had defected to Canada and brought out with him the plain texts of many messages to and from Moscow. Most of the cables that Gouzenko provided to the RCMP covered a short period in the summer of 1945. Nonetheless, with these and with pages from the diary of his superior, the RCMP had been able to identify seventeen agents by code names, together with sixteen Soviet diplomats involved in espionage; many of the Canadian citizens in the net had been tried and convicted, and the Soviets had been expelled. While Gouzenko was GRU, he knew something of the KGB system, which was similar to his own "one-time cipher pad" system.

From Gouzenko and from other investigations we knew the basic method used by the KGB to transmit information to and from its embassies and consulates abroad to Moscow. A message to Moscow would be written out in Russian and delivered to a code clerk. To put it into the cipher the clerk would first turn to the KGB codebook; the front part of this book had (in alphabetical order) hundreds and hundreds of words, as well as the letters of the alphabet, each accompanied by a five-digit number. (The back part of the book had the obverse—that is, the five-digit number-groups, accompanied by the Russian words.) As the first step in the cipher process, the clerk would convert the words in the message into five-digit number-groups as taken from the codebook.

Next, the clerk would turn to the one-time cipher pad, a sheet with five-digit number-groups on it. This is called a one-time pad because each sheet in it is to be used only once and then destroyed. The number-groups on the sheets are produced in a completely random way. The clerk then adds the number-groups from the one-time pad to the number-groups he has already put down from the codebook. This makes a complete message, which would then be taken to the commercial cable company for transmittal to Moscow.

In order to provide a better understanding of the process, I'll invent a very short message: ALEK HAS ARRIVED.

In the cipher process for this message, the code clerk would first turn to his codebook. Let's suppose that in it there is no single five-

digit number for ALEK—so that the clerk will have to look up a separate number-group for each letter of that word—but that there are number-groups for HAS and ARRIVED. The message, in five-digit numbers, would read:

A	L	E	K	HAS	ARRIVED
03152	13415	05789	12141	81324	14287

The clerk would then go to the one-time cipher pad and use the top sheet for this message, working with the first six number-groups, which will suffice for this very short message. The clerk would add these groups to the others in a special addition process that has no carry-overs from one column to the next. With this transformation, the number-groups would be:

03152	13415	05789	12141	81324	14287
<u>74932</u>	<u>44734</u>	<u>65277</u>	<u>53865</u>	<u>00118</u>	<u>54968</u>
77084	57149	60956	65906	81432	68145

This last series of number-groups is what would then be sent to Moscow. When the message arrived at Moscow KGB headquarters, a code clerk would reverse the process. He would use the one-time pad known to be keyed to the sending station and, taking the appropriate five-digit number-groups from his pad, would subtract them from the message he received. This would give him the number-groups that would then be looked up in the codebook.

As long as the numbers on the one-time pad have been produced in a completely random way, a one-time cipher pad system has always been regarded as "unbreakable," offering "perfect secrecy."

I wondered how it had been possible for the Army Security Agency to make even a few partial breaks in the supposedly impregnable system, and contemplated whether the FBI might be able to assist in widening the breakthrough. Normally, to get answers to these sorts of questions one went to the appropriate liaison representative in the Bureau, but I wanted to meet directly with the man or men of the ASA who were working on the messages. With a little difficulty, our liaison to the ASA, Wes Reynold, obtained an appointment for me with the chief of the intelligence division of the agency, Frank Rowlett. Frank, whom I later came to know well, had been a top cryptanalyst at the agency for many years; under President Lyndon B. Johnson he was awarded the National Security Medal.

Rowlett wanted to impress upon me the absolute importance of

maintaining the top-secret nature of the attempt to break the Soviet code system. He wanted to make sure that if the FBI mounted any investigations based on the messages, we would never quote directly from a deciphered cable; rather, our information would be paraphrased and couched in the euphemism that it had come from a highly sensitive source of known reliability. Only persons cleared to handle this special top-secret material would be given access to the messages themselves. I had already been apprised of Rowlett's concerns by Wes Reynold, but the ASA man's demeanor in laying out the importance of protecting the source made a big impression on me.

Frank Rowlett then described to me the cryptanalyst who was working to decipher the KGB code, Meredith Gardner. Gardner, said Rowlett, was unusual and brilliant, not only as a cryptanalyst but also as a linguist. He spoke six or seven languages and was one of the few Western scholars who read Sanskrit. Until the outbreak of World War II he had taught languages at a university in the Southwest. On joining the ASA, Gardner taught himself Japanese in three months, to the amazement of his colleagues. Throughout the war he had worked on breaking the Japanese codes, and after the war was over Rowlett had put him on the KGB codes. Rowlett told me I'd find Meredith Gardner to be a shy, introverted loner, and that I'd have a hard time getting to know him.

The ASA offices were at Arlington Hall, across the Potomac from the District of Columbia, in Virginia, at what used to be a girls' school. Gardner met me in one of the brick-and-wood-frame buildings, and as we sat down to talk I soon realized that Rowlett's description of him was accurate. Gardner was tall, gangling, reserved, obviously intelligent, and extremely reluctant to discuss much about his work or whether it would progress any distance beyond the first fragments that the FBI had already received. I asked him how I could be of assistance to him; he seemed not to know. I told him I was intensely interested in what he was doing and would be willing to mount any sort of research effort to provide him with more information; he simply nodded. I offered to write up a memo about one of the message fragments because I thought the FBI might have a glimmer of understanding of the subject matter being discussed by the KGB; he was noncommittal.

From that day on, every two or three weeks I would make the pilgrimage out to Arlington Hall. Meredith Gardner was indeed not easy to know, and was extremely modest about his work, but eventually we did become friends. Neither the friendship nor the solution

to the messages was achieved overnight, but steady progress was made. Little by little he chipped away at the messages, and I helped him with memoranda that described what the KGB might be referring to in some of them. The ASA's work was further aided by one of the early, rudimentary computers.

Sometimes a few words would be deciphered, but when they were translated, their meaning would be unclear because of the fragmentary nature of what was available or because of the Soviets' extensive use of code names. This use of code names for countries and things as well as people can be clearly shown from the GRU messages that Gouzenko brought out of the Soviet embassy in Ottawa. For example, the GRU had made extensive use of the Canadian Communist Party for espionage recruits, and in its communications designated the Party by the code name "corporation," and its members by the unusual but logical name "corporants." Other code names used by the GRU in its cables to Moscow included:

CODE NAME	MEANING
dubok	hiding place
roof	a front to conceal espionage operations
Gisel	the GRU
neighbors	the KGB
Lesovia	Canada
Metro	Soviet Embassy, Ottawa
sabot (shoe)	passport
shoemaker	forgery of false passports
nash (ours)	he works for us
Grant	GRU Colonel Zabolotin
Debouz	GRU agent Fred Rose, member of the Canadian Parliament

There is a distinction between code names and cover names. While KGB agent Elizabeth Bentley knew her own cover name—"Helen"—which she used on her contacts with other agents, she did not know her code name, which would be used in the KGB's own correspondence with Moscow.

In Canada, because Gouzenko was cooperating with the RCMP, the authorities had been able to find out who the people were that were referred to in the cables by code names. In the KGB messages that the ASA had deciphered, we had no such help. To begin with, only parts of the messages were deciphered. In addition, the KGB had a habit of assigning code names to prominent people, or to those

who were targets of recruitment but who might never have been successfully recruited. At times we could discern that a message from New York to Moscow was in answer to a question from KGB headquarters, but without knowing the question it was difficult to comprehend the meaning of the cryptic answer.

From the first I was curious as to how Gardner had gotten even as far as he had in breaking into the KGB code system. Little by little I came to understand what had happened. In his office Gardner had a copy of a partially burned KGB codebook. It was not the current edition that the KGB was using, but it was immensely helpful to him in laboriously building his own version of the correct KGB codebook. During World War II the partially charred codebook had been recovered by the Finns from a battlefield, and in November 1944 William Donovan, then head of the OSS, purchased 1500 pages of code and cipher material from the Finns. A copy was provided immediately to the ASA.

Because the United States and the Soviet Union were allies, Secretary of State Edward Stettinius objected to our having and using the Soviet code material; he took his protests to the White House, and Donovan was then forced to return to the Russians the material he had purchased.

I have always wondered at this gesture of friendship by Stettinius. It certainly did the United States no good, and in the reverse circumstances, the Soviet Union would have seen no necessity to provide us with the information that they had obtained our codes.

I was also chagrined—but not surprised—to learn that by May 1945 the KGB had changed its codes, and Meredith Gardner could not break into any messages dated after that time. It is a virtual certainty that the Soviets' change of ciphers was related to having recovered their "lost" material. They assumed that the United States had kept a copy of the charred codebook, and accordingly changed their codes.

In any event, in 1948 Meredith Gardner had a codebook that the KGB had used in Finland in 1944. It wasn't the current codebook, but it was similar and above all it provided him with a start.

The sheaf upon sheaf of undeciphered KGB messages that the ASA had were ones that had been sent over regular commercial cable wires from the Soviet consulate in New York and from the Soviet embassy in Washington, to Moscow. How had these been obtained? As James Bamford has recently revealed in *The Puzzle Palace*, during

the war the Office of Censorship exercised its authority to get cable traffic, and directed cable companies to delay the transmission of messages to more than a dozen different countries—including the Soviet Union—so they could be copied and used for various intelligence purposes. This practice was continued on a regular basis throughout the war. So the cable traffic was available, albeit in cipher, and a KGB codebook was available, although it was not the right one. That gave Meredith Gardner two sets of clues.

With these Meredith had been able to make a crack into the KGB system, and by his brilliance was laboring to enlarge that crack. I wanted desperately for him to get inside that KGB communications system, and was willing to mount any kind of research effort to help him.

As he and I worked together over the first few months of 1948, and he became more comfortable with me, he began to be more willing to ask me to do things for him. One day he inquired if there was any possibility of obtaining the plain text of certain materials that had been sent to the Soviet Union in ciphered form in 1944. With the lapse of four years, I didn't hold out much hope, but told him I'd investigate the possibility. I then asked the New York field office to look into the matter; in my request I didn't go into the specifics of why I wanted the information, but at the same time I emphasized the importance of the request.

To my surprise, by return mail I received a mass of material, all in Russian except for a few translations into English—the work, I was certain, of my old translator friend, Mr. Boguslav. This material had been photographed by New York FBI agents in the course of an investigation into Soviet operations in New York in 1944.

I was still not optimistic about this when I took the stack of papers across the river to Meredith at Arlington Hall. When I returned two weeks later, I found Gardner in the most excited mood I'd ever seen him display. In his shy way he explained that we'd hit the jackpot. He now had the plain texts of some very important material.

This, then, was the beginning of an important new phase in our breakthrough, for in a short while Meredith began to give me some completely deciphered messages, and portions of others that he was deciphering at a more rapid rate than had heretofore been possible. The material I had delivered was of great assistance to him as he worked to make his own, correct KGB codebook. I remember well his slight smiles of pleasure when in his work on the messages he

would stop for a moment, reach for his own version of that KGB codebook, and hand-print a word in Russian next to one of the number-groups.

Many times during the next several years I was able to give Meredith assistance in his work. We'll encounter some of these instances at greater length in later chapters, but I'll mention a few here. Once I managed to provide him with copies of telegrams from Winston Churchill to Truman; some of these, repeated with meticulous accuracy down to the identifying numbers on the cables, had been in the KGB messages. Also, I obtained a copy of a scientific report on the gaseous diffusion process for making uranium 235. The Anglo-American cables had been stolen and given to the KGB by an agent inside the British embassy in Washington, we later learned. In a similar manner, someone inside the Manhattan Project had provided the KGB with a copy of the scientific report that was summarized in an espionage cable to Moscow. For Gardner to obtain the original materials greatly enhanced his work.

From the moment of our breakthrough in 1948, each week I would receive additional deciphered messages and new fragments of messages that had earlier been partly deciphered. As the messages became readable, I could set in motion investigations based on what they said.

I stood in the vestibule of the enemy's house, having entered by stealth. I held in my hand a set of keys. Each would fit one of the doors of the place and lead us, I hoped, to matters of importance to our country. I had no idea where the corridors in the KGB's edifice would take us, or what we would find when we reached the end of a search—but the keys were ours, and we were determined to use them.

Each day was an opportunity to exploit the breakthrough. Sitting in headquarters, I directed our agents in the various field offices to explore the possibilities and connections that the information in the messages divulged—at times I'd have agents in a dozen cities looking in a dozen different matters.

Each morning I'd come into headquarters and work with the messages, which I kept locked in a safe. I had a file system for information from the messages, arranged by code names; it was an arbitrary way of dividing up the material, but it sometimes proved effective.

One group of messages which I kept under the code name of a

KGB agent had to do with White Russian émigré circles in New York. The KGB had always been interested in the émigrés, seeing in them both potential recruits and people who knew the Soviet system and hated it. We understood that émigrés were one of the many targets of Soviet espionage, and we had some contacts among them. We used these contacts to give us help in broadening our understanding of the meaning and intent of particular messages.

A few years later one particular message in this group was deciphered. It clearly had to do with a KGB agent in the White Russian community in New York City, and immediately someone came to mind who could help me with it: Elsa Bernaut. Back in 1947, Hede Massing had introduced me to her. Elsa was the widow of "Ludwig." I had interviewed her in New York several times in connection with the Eisler case. She was a small, intense woman with graying hair and a heavy Eastern European accent. She'd been somewhat cooperative with me but, despite what the Massings had told her about me, distrustful of the FBI—a result, I'd concluded, of her European suspicion of police, whatever their name. I was therefore quite surprised when, one day at headquarters, I received a call from the reception desk that Elsa Bernaut was waiting to see me. I brought her into the office and we had a nice chat about her recent trip to Europe. That was why, when this message about the White Russian colony in New York came in, I thought of her. We had already begun to suspect that the KGB agent denoted by a code name in the messages was Mark Zborowski; I told the New York field office to go and ask Elsa about him.

Elsa told the New York office that she was positive her old friend Zborowski could not be a KGB spy; they had been through too much together.

Undeterred, we continued to tail Zborowski, and a week or two later as our men followed him, Zborowski drove out of New York and toward Connecticut. On a lonely road he met a small gray-haired lady, and the two talked for a while. Of course his rendezvous was with Elsa. Unable to believe ill of a man whom she had known for more than a quarter century, she'd made contact in order to warn Zborowski of the FBI's queries.

Shortly thereafter we picked up Zborowski for questioning; unnerved by Elsa's warning, he confessed to fifteen years of service for the KGB, which dated back to his tenure in Paris in the 1930s. One of his revelations was that he had been the KGB agent within the circle around Leon Trotsky's son Sedov; in fact, Mark Zborowski had

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By Christopher Andrew

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**CHRISTOPHER ANDREW
AND OLEG GORDIEVSKY**

KGB

THE INSIDE STORY

**Of Its Foreign Operations
from Lenin to Gorbachev**

1990



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Chap. 8

master group. In March 1944 she began acting as courier for a second group of eight government officials in Washington headed by Victor Perlo, then a statistician in the War Production Board. Bentley also later identified eleven other officials who did not belong to the Silvermaster or Perlo groups who supplied substantial amounts of classified material from government files. She considered the "most fruitful source" of the Silvermaster group's intelligence to be the Pentagon. To her inexperienced eye it seemed that the group supplied "every conceivable piece of data on aircraft-production figures, charts showing allocation of planes to combat areas and foreign countries, performance data, new and secret developments in numberless fields."

The NKVD was doubtless particularly pleased by its penetration of the American intelligence community. Elizabeth Bentley later identified seven members of the headquarters staff of the Office of Strategic Services, the wartime predecessor of the CIA, who were also working for the NKVD.⁴⁰ Decrypted Soviet communications later revealed even more.⁴¹ The most important may have been Duncan Chaplin Lee, a descendant of the Civil War General Robert E. Lee, Rhodes scholar at Oxford and brilliant young New York lawyer in the firm of William J. Donovan. Soon after Donovan became head of OSS in 1942, he took on Lee as his personal assistant. Golos, unsurprisingly, "attached great importance to Lee's intelligence."⁴²

There was in general a staggering disproportion between what the OSS knew about the NKVD and what the NKVD knew about the OSS. Soviet penetration of OSS and the Roosevelt administration effectively torpedoed Donovan's one major coup against the NKVD. In November 1944 Donovan purchased from the Finns a partially charred fifteen hundred-page NKVD code book, which had been captured by them.⁴³ Alarm bells quickly began ringing among some of the Soviet agents in Washington who feared that they would be compromised by decrypted NKVD communications. According to later evidence by Elizabeth Bentley, Lauchlin Currie, administrative assistant to Roosevelt, came dashing into the house of a leading member of the Silvermaster group, George Silverman, "sort of out of breath, and told him that the Americans were on the verge of breaking the Soviet code." The news was quickly passed on to Bentley.⁴⁴

Left to himself, Donovan would probably not have risked compromising his coup by bringing it to the attention of the secretary of State, Edward Stettinius. Others, quite possibly one or more of the NKVD agents in OSS, made sure that the secretary of State was in-

formed. Stettinius urged on the president the view that gentlemen do not read their allies' mail. Roosevelt agreed. To his chagrin, Donovan was ordered to hand over the code book to the Russians.⁴⁵ In doing so, however, Donovan was careful to misrepresent his motives, assuring Fitin that he "took the only course open to a loyal ally in accepting this material as soon as he found it procurable":

General Donovan would like General Fitin to know that we have made no study of this material and he, therefore, cannot positively state its value but has acted on the assumption that this is a matter of real importance to the Russian Government.⁴⁶

And so it was. Fitin forwarded his "sincere thanks" for Donovan's action in "this very essential business." At his request the charred code book was handed over personally to the Soviet ambassador in Washington, Andrei Gromyko, and no other member of the embassy was told of its existence.⁴⁷ Fitin was not, of course, deceived by Donovan's high-minded display of loyal cooperation, though he must have been impressed by the naïveté of Roosevelt and Stettinius. The NKVD/NKGB changed its code book in May 1945. A copy of the charred 1944 code book, kept by Donovan when he handed over the original, was used from 1948 to help decrypt some NKVD/NKGB communications during the last year of the war, which were to be of great retrospective importance in identifying wartime Soviet agents.⁴⁸ Had the capture of the code book been concealed from the Russians in 1944, however, its value to American sigint would have been immeasurably greater.

Though most NKVD/NKGB agents in wartime Washington belonged to the Silvermaster and Perlo networks, a handful of the most important agents were run individually. Among them was Alger Hiss (code-named Ales), whose friendship with Whittaker Chambers seemed to have put him at particular risk after Chambers's defection in 1938.⁴⁹ From the summer of 1939 until May 1944 Hiss served as aide to Stanley K. Hornbeck, political adviser to the Far Eastern Division of the State Department. "Alger," said Hornbeck later, "had my full confidence and saw everything that I saw." There is no reason to doubt that he passed much of it on to the NKVD. The FBI briefly investigated one allegation against Hiss in 1942, but when assured by him that "There

visas for two NKGB hatchet men posing as diplomatic couriers. On the following day it was decided in London that Philby should fly out to Turkey to deal with the Volkov case. Because of various travel delays he did not arrive in Istanbul until September 26. According to the fictional version of Volkov's liquidation later concocted by Philby and the KGB for Western consumption, Volkov was not spirited out of Istanbul until "some weeks later."¹⁵ In reality Volkov and his wife had left Istanbul aboard a Soviet aircraft sedated and on stretchers accompanied by the NKGB minders two days before Philby arrived.¹⁶

In his memoirs Philby describes how on his journey back to London he coolly drafted a report suggesting various explanations for Volkov's failure to defect: drink, indiscretion, NKGB bugging of his flat, or the possibility that he had changed his mind. "Another theory—that the Russians had been tipped off about Volkov's approach to the British—had no solid evidence to support it. It was not worth including in my report."¹⁷ In reality, Philby wrote a quite different report and returned to London in much greater agitation than he would later admit. Coming so soon after Guzenko's defection, the whole episode left him seriously alarmed that he was about to be discovered, and too eager to discredit Volkov in his report. When a copy of his report reached the Center, it caused some anxiety.¹⁸ Philby put down Volkov's desire to defect to the fact that he was "a traitor" whose "treachery" had been detected by the NKGB, an extraordinary way for an SIS officer to describe a defector.

In his anxiety to discredit Volkov's claims of Soviet penetration, which came uncomfortably close to pointing in his direction, Philby went to exaggerated lengths to discredit the intelligence that Volkov alleged he could provide. He described it as baffling, for example, that Volkov had failed to offer cryptographic information—and yet Volkov had laid great stress on Soviet success in breaking British ciphers over the past two years.¹⁹ The crudity of Philby's attempt to discredit Volkov was in striking contrast to the much more sophisticated fictional version later fabricated for his memoirs during his Moscow exile. Faced with the threat of exposure for the first time since joining SIS, Philby had become badly rattled. For the moment he himself was so far above suspicion within SIS that the Volkov episode did not threaten him. But when suspicion fell on Philby after the flight of Burgess and Maclean in 1951, the file was reopened and his inept attempt to discredit Volkov became an important part of the case against him.

* * *

The greatest potential threat to Moscow Center's postwar operations in the West came from a breach of cipher security during the last year of the war. In 1944 OSS obtained fifteen hundred pages of an NKVD/NKGB code book captured by the Finns. Though the original was returned to Moscow on Roosevelt's orders, Donovan retained a copy.²⁰ By itself, the code book was of little help to Western cryptanalysts. The first stage in enciphering an NKVD/NKGB message was to replace each word (or, sometimes, letter) by a five-digit number group obtained from the code book. But the cipher clerk in an NKGB residency then added to each group another five-digit number obtained from a series of randomly generated numbers on a "one-time pad" of which the only other copy was in Moscow Center. If, as Center regulations insisted, the "one-time pad" was used once only, the ciphered message was virtually unbreakable. But in the last year of the war the sheer amount of intelligence being sent back by the residencies in the United States and Britain was so large that the Center sometimes sent out the same pad more than once. The cipher officer responsible is believed later to have been shot.²¹ There were two further breaches of the usually rigorous Soviet cipher security at the end of the war. The FBI captured the plain-text version of some NKGB ciphered telegrams sent from New York to Moscow in 1944. After his defection in September 1945 Igor Guzenko was able to provide guidance on NKGB as well as GRU cipher procedures.²²

The crucial breakthrough in exploiting these breaches of Soviet cipher security was made in 1948 by Meredith Gardner, a brilliant cryptanalyst in the U.S. Army Security Agency (ASA), which merged a year later into the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA), forerunner to the National Security Agency (NSA), founded in 1952. Gardner was a remarkable linguist as well as cryptanalyst, who was reputed to have learned Japanese in three months in order to work on Japanese code and cipher systems during the war. During 1948 he succeeded in decrypting fragments of NKGB messages to and from the Center sent during the last year of the war. At his first meeting with Gardner, Robert Lamphere of the FBI found him "tall, gangling, reserved, obviously intelligent, and extremely reluctant to discuss much about his work or whether it would progress any distance beyond the first fragments the FBI had already received."²³ Over the next few years, however, several thousand NKGB messages (code-named *Venona*) were decrypted in whole or part. The Venona secret and the technique used by Gardner were leaked to the Russians in 1948 by an ASA cipher

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clerk, William Weisband, who had been recruited by the MGB two years earlier. Weisband's treachery was discovered in 1950. Though he was sentenced to one year in jail for failing to answer a summons to appear before a grand jury, he was never prosecuted for espionage. ASA and its British counterpart GCHQ were agreed that Venona was too important a secret to be revealed in court even during proceedings in camera.²⁴

It was immediately clear to the Center that Venona represented a series of time bombs of potentially enormous destructive force for its agent networks. Since there was no means of predicting which NKGB messages from the end of the war could be decrypted, there was no way of knowing when and where the bombs would go off. A partial solution to this dilemma was provided by Kim Philby when he became SIS liaison officer in Washington in October 1949. Meredith Gardner later recalled mournfully how Philby had stood smoking a pipe, looking over his shoulder and admiring the progress he was making with the Russian decrypts.²⁵ Until his recall in June 1951 Philby's access to the Venona material left him perfectly placed to warn Moscow when the net was closing in on one of its British or American agents.

As far afield as Australia, Venona did serious damage to Soviet intelligence operations. Until the establishment of the first Soviet diplomatic mission at Canberra in 1943, Australia had scarcely figured as a Soviet intelligence target. Thereafter, however, the NKGB residency under Semyon Makarov (1943-49) rapidly penetrated the Ministry of External Affairs, which was an important source for British as well as Australian classified documents (among them the reports of the British Chiefs of Staff Post-Hostilities Planning Staff). Makarov's two most important agents in External Affairs were both compromised by Venona.

Early in 1948 an MI5 team headed by the director-general, Sir Percy Sillitoe, and including the future director-general Roger Hollis, visited Australia to investigate Soviet penetration. In order to protect their source they deliberately gave the impression in Canberra that their information came not from intercepts but from a British mole in Soviet intelligence. The first Soviet agent to be identified in External Affairs was Jim Hill, code-named Tourist in the Venona traffic, the brother of a leading Communist lawyer. Venona made it possible to pinpoint the serial number of one of the diplomatic telegrams Hill had given to the Russians and so prove his guilt. Further clues from Soviet intercepts quickly identified another Soviet agent, with the code name Bur, as the

Communist diplomat Ian Milner, who had since left External Affairs for a post in the United Nations and was later to take refuge in Prague.

Soviet penetration of the Australian foreign and civil service during the Cold War seems never to have recovered. When the KGB resident Vladimir Petrov defected in 1954, he was able to provide reassurance that his residency had achieved only minor breaches of Australian security.²⁶

The damage to postwar Soviet intelligence operations in the West caused by demobilization, defections, and the Venona decrypts caused the most anxiety at Moscow Center in two related areas of intelligence collection. The first was high-level penetration of the Main Adversary. The faith in the Soviet millennium that inspired thousands of talented young American idealists during the Depression and the Second World War had all but disappeared in the Cold War generation. So far as is known, despite some low- and occasionally middle-level Soviet penetrations in postwar Washington, there have been no successors to agents of the caliber of Alger Hiss in the State Department or of Harry Dexter White in the Treasury. Nor is it likely that any close presidential adviser has followed Hopkins in having regular meetings with a KGB illegal without telling the White House.

By the time the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was created in July 1947, new screening methods were in force, which made impossible any repetition of the wholesale Soviet penetration of OSS. From William Weisband onward the most damaging Soviet penetrations of the United States intelligence community were to be in sigint rather than in humint. The problems of Soviet agent recruitment were compounded by the bungling of the first postwar residents in Washington. Grigori Grigoryevich Dolbin, who became resident in 1946, displayed conspicuous incompetence even before he began to show signs of insanity (due, it was believed at the Center, to the onset of hereditary syphilis). He was recalled in 1948. His successor, Georgi Aleksandrovich Sokolov, had been resident in Rio de Janeiro until a breach in Soviet-Brazilian relations late in 1947; on his departure he was pelted with eggs and other missiles by an angry crowd. During his time in Washington he, like Dolbin, was reprimanded for poor performance before being recalled in 1949.²⁷

The second main anxiety at Moscow Center caused by the partial disruption of its wartime agent networks in the West was in the nuclear field. The use of the atomic bomb against Japan in August 1945,

and the sense which it provoked of military inferiority to the Main Adversary, made atomic secrets the greatest immediate priority of Soviet foreign intelligence collection. After Hiroshima Stalin summoned the commissar of munitions, Boris Lvovich Vannikov, and his deputies to the Kremlin. They were joined by Igor Vasilyevich Kurchatov, the scientist in charge of the atomic program. "A single demand of you, comrades!" announced Stalin. "Provide us with atomic weapons in the shortest possible time! You know that Hiroshima has shaken the whole world. The balance [of power] has been destroyed!" So long as the Soviet Union lacked nuclear weapons, it would be in "great danger" from the West."

Hitherto the atomic project had been under the overall control of Molotov. Some months earlier, however, Kurchatov had written to Beria criticizing Molotov's lack of urgency and appealing for Beria's help. The letter was handwritten; its contents were so sensitive that Kurchatov feared to have them typed, but they seem to have achieved their aim. After Hiroshima Stalin handed control of the project to Beria. The change of leadership had an immediate effect. According to Kurchatov's assistant, Professor Igor Golovin, "Beria's administrative abilities were obvious for all of us at that time. He was unusually energetic. Meetings did not drag on for hours; everything was decided quickly." Under Beria's direction, all the labor for the atomic project came from the gulag. According to Golovin, the scientists gave little thought to their use of slave labor:

At that time we thought of just one thing: what we should do to complete the work as soon as possible—before the American atom bomb fell on us. The fear of a new atomic war outweighed all the rest—anyone who lived at that time will confirm this."

Some scientists, however, were more critical of Beria's direction than Golovin. The great physicist Pyotr Kapitsa (later a Nobel Laureate) wrote to Stalin on November 25, 1945, asking to be relieved of his position in the atomic project:

[Comrade Beria], it is true, has the conductor's baton in his hands. That's fine, but all the same a scientist should play first violin. For the violin sets the tone for the whole orchestra. Comrade Beria's basic weakness is that the conductor

ought not only to wave the baton, but also to understand the score. In this respect Beria is weak.

Beria, wrote Kapitsa, was intent simply on imitating the American construction of the bomb. Kapitsa argued, without success, that Soviet scientists should try to devise a cheaper and quicker method of their own.¹⁰

Beria, as Kapitsa complained, was obsessed with the attempt to copy the Americans. By the autumn of 1945 many of the secrets of the bombs that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki were in Soviet hands. But Beria was anxious for more and frustrated by the postwar decline in nuclear intelligence from the West. Guzenko's defection in September 1945 led to the detection of Allan Nunn May and to tighter security around nuclear research. The demobilization of David Greenglass in February removed one of the two Soviet agents from Los Alamos. The other, Klaus Fuchs, left Los Alamos in June 1946 for the new British atomic energy establishment at Harwell. Though he continued to work as a Soviet agent until 1949, his usefulness was much reduced. The McMahon Act, which set up the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in August 1946, effectively denied fresh nuclear information to Britain. Cut off from American research, the British Labour government decided in January 1947 to build its own atomic bomb, but took two years longer to construct it than the Soviet Union.

Despite the McMahon Act, Donald Maclean continued to have limited access to atomic intelligence in Washington, since the prohibitions on the sharing of scientific information did not cover raw materials or the question of declassifying wartime atomic secrets. As the official representative of the British embassy on political aspects of atomic energy, he obtained a pass to visit AEC premises unescorted." It was later discovered that between the summer of 1947 and his departure from Washington he visited the AEC twelve times, occasionally at night. According to an AEC damage assessment, he had access to estimates of uranium ore supply and requirement forecasts for the period 1948-52, though these later turned out to be inaccurate."

Dissatisfied with the declining flow of high-grade nuclear intelligence, Beria instructed Kurchatov to send a letter via an MGB messenger to the Danish nuclear physicist Niels Bohr asking for details of the latest atomic research that he had seen in the United States. Bohr replied by the same courier that he himself had been refused access by the Americans to the information Kurchatov requested.¹¹

Both Stalin and Beria were constantly fearful until the first successful Soviet atomic explosion that some vital American nuclear secret remained undiscovered by their agents in the West and that without it the Soviet atomic program would fail. In an attempt to overcome Stalin's skepticism, Kurchatov brought the nuclear charge of the first Soviet atomic bomb—a nickel-plated plutonium ball about ten centimeters in diameter—to his study in the Kremlin.

"And how do we know that this is plutonium, not a sparkling piece of iron?" asked Stalin. "And why this glitter? Why this window-dressing?"

"The charge has been nickel-plated so that it would be safe to touch. Plutonium is very toxic, but nickel-plated it's safe," Kurchatov replied. "And to satisfy yourself that this is not merely a piece of iron, instruct anyone of your choice to touch the ball with his hand. It's warm, whereas iron would be cold."

Stalin handled the ball himself: "Yes, it's warm. And is it always warm?"

"It always is, Iosif Vissarionovich. The continuous nuclear reaction of alpha-disintegration is underway inside. It warms it up. But we shall excite a powerful fission reaction in it. This will be an explosion of great power."

At least partly convinced, Stalin authorized the testing of the first bomb. Until the last minute, however, Beria was haunted by the fear that, despite the success of Soviet scientists and the achievements of the atom spies, the inner secret of the atomic bomb had somehow eluded them. Ten minutes before the bomb was due to detonate at the test site in Kazakhstan on September 25, 1949, Beria said pessimistically to Kurchatov: "Nothing will come of it!"

When the explosion came, Beria hugged and kissed the relieved Kurchatov. But then he had second thoughts. Had the explosion really been a nuclear explosion? He telephoned a Russian observer of the American atomic test at Bikini Atoll and demanded to know if the mushroom cloud appeared the same. Reassured that it was, he telephoned Stalin. The phone was answered by Stalin's secretary Poskrebyshch, who told him that Stalin had gone to bed. Beria insisted that he be wakened. A few minutes later Stalin came to the phone. "Iosif, all's well," Beria told him. "The blast was the same as the Americans!" "I

already know," replied Stalin and put down the phone. Outraged that someone else had been the first to give Stalin the news, Beria shook his fist at those around him and exploded: "Even here you put spokes in my wheels, traitors! I'll grind you into powder!"

At almost the same moment as the explosion of the first Soviet atomic bomb, Meredith Gardner successfully decrypted an NKGB message of 1944 that provided the first clue to the identity of the most important of the atom spies, Klaus Fuchs, by then deputy scientific officer at Harwell. Fuchs confessed in January 1950 and was sentenced in April 1951 to fourteen years' imprisonment. He described his work for the Russians in words that aptly described the state of mind of some other Soviet agents in the West:

I used my Marxist philosophy to establish in my mind two separate compartments: one compartment in which I allowed myself to make friendships, to have personal relations. . . . I could be free and easy and happy with other people without fear of disclosing myself because I knew that the other compartment would step in if I approached the danger point. . . . It appeared to me at the time that I had become a "free man" because I had succeeded in the other compartment in establishing myself completely independent of the surrounding forces of society. Looking back on it now the best way of expressing it seems to be to call it a controlled schizophrenia."

At the time of Fuchs's arrest, another atom spy, Bruno Pontecorvo, was also working at Harwell. Security investigations that followed the discovery of Fuchs revealed that Pontecorvo had a number of Communist relatives but turned up no evidence of his involvement in espionage. When arrests of atom spies began in the United States in the summer of 1950, however, the Center decided to take no further risks and evacuated Pontecorvo and his family to the Soviet Union along a well-tried escape route through Finland. Pontecorvo subsequently pursued a distinguished career in Soviet nuclear physics, receiving two Orders of Lenin and a string of lesser honors, while publicly denying any involvement in atomic espionage."

As well as leading to the downfall of Fuchs, Venona also provided the first clues that led to the arrest of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. In February 1950 a newly decrypted NKGB message of 1944 referred

to an agent in a low-level job at Los Alamos. Other clues helped to identify the agent as Ethel Rosenberg's brother, David Greenglass, who admitted his own role in June 1950 and implicated Julius Rosenberg. Greenglass revealed in questioning (though it was never mentioned in public) that Rosenberg had boasted to him of running a Soviet espionage network that had provided not merely atomic secrets but a wide range of other scientific and technological intelligence, including preliminary studies for space satellites.³⁹

Unlike the British atom spies Allan Nunn May and Fuchs, the Rosenbergs eloquently, even movingly, protested their innocence to the end. In April 1951 they became the only Soviet spies in the West to be sentenced to death. After over two years of unsuccessful appeals they died, one after the other, in the same electric chair at New York's Sing Sing prison on the evening of June 19, 1953. Ethel's last letter to her lawyer ended: "We are the first victims of American Fascism. Love you, Ethel." The courage with which both went to their deaths, their love for each other and their two sons, and the macabre squalor of their execution strengthened the suspicion of much of world opinion that there had been a miscarriage of justice. After each electrocution, the forty reporters, prison officials, and other witnesses were nauseated by the stench of burning flesh, urine, and defecation. Even after a current of 2,000 volts had passed through her body, Ethel still showed signs of life; and the current was repeated twice more, until a plume of smoke rose from her head.⁴⁰

The Rosenbergs exemplify the idealist faith that Soviet Russia—or rather their own myth image of it—represented the hope of mankind, which still inspired naïve true believers in the West even after all the horrors of Stalinism. Both Julius and Ethel were dedicated, courageous Soviet agents, who believed that they could best serve the future of their cause by denying their own association with it.

Ever since their execution KGB active measures have encouraged the belief that the Rosenbergs were the innocent victims of an anti-Communist witch hunt. No KGB active measures campaign in the United States, however, has ever encouraged that belief as effectively as the leader of the witch hunt himself, Senator Joseph McCarthy. From the moment McCarthy announced on February 9, 1950, that he was in possession of a list of 205 (mostly imaginary) Communists in the State Department, his self-serving crusade against the Red Menace helped to make liberal opinion around the world skeptical of the reality of the Soviet intelligence offensive against the Main Adversary.

Skepticism about the guilt of the Rosenbergs was also encouraged by the continued refusal, on both sides of the Atlantic, to make any reference in court to Venona on security grounds. The secret was not to leak out publicly until the 1980s and even then was not officially acknowledged in either Britain or the United States. But in the early years of the Cold War it caused varying degrees of disruption to Soviet intelligence operations around the globe.

The early years of the Cold War and the problems of Venona coincided with a highly confused period in the organization of Soviet foreign intelligence operations. The confusion derived in part from power struggles within the Kremlin and in part from the founding in July 1947 of the Central Intelligence Agency. Reports on its founding of the agency from the MGB resident in Washington, Grigori Grigoryevich Dolbin, and from the Soviet ambassador, Aleksandr Semyonovich Panyushkin, were closely studied by Stalin and the Politburo.⁴¹

The original purpose of the CIA, as defined in the National Security Bill presented to Congress in February 1947, was to coordinate and evaluate foreign intelligence from all sources. Though that purpose was never fully achieved, Molotov argued persuasively that a unified civilian and military foreign intelligence system would give the United States a clear advantage over the fragmented Soviet system. The solution, he argued, was to combine the foreign intelligence directorates of the MGB and the GRU under a single roof. Molotov's proposal had the further advantage, from Stalin's viewpoint, of weakening the influence on security of Lavrenty Beria, whose protégé Abakumov headed the MGB.

In the autumn of 1947 the foreign intelligence directorates of the MGB and the GRU were combined to form a new foreign intelligence agency, the Committee of Information (Komitet Informatsii, or KI). Though the KI came formally under the control of the Council of Ministers, the appointment of Molotov as its first head gave the foreign ministry greater influence on foreign intelligence operations than ever before. Molotov sought to strengthen foreign ministry control by appointing Soviet ambassadors in major capitals as "chief legal residents" with authority over the civilian (ex-MGB) and military (ex-GRU) residents.⁴² In the jaundiced view of the later defector, Ilya Dzhirkvelov, "This resulted in incredible confusion. The residents, the professional intelligence officers, resorted to incredible subterfuges to avoid informing their ambassadors about their work, since the diplo-

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and given a good education with money and a social conscience felt the burden of producing more for their society. [They] liked to see in Communism [their] great contribution to society. . . . [They] weren't consciously committing treason. They rationalized . . . that they were being far-sighted patriots by supporting international Communism. . . . I remember [Harvey's words] perhaps because I was young and impressionable. . . . Harvey really had deep emotional feelings about it."

Feelings aside, Harvey had a fund of knowledge about Soviet espionage that was unmatched anywhere in the United States government, and he was soon placed in charge of a tiny counterintelligence unit known as Staff C. "We'd all just gotten into the business," a member of Staff C said. "Harvey had experience in the Bureau and had seen more than we had." Harvey "exuded missionary zeal," said a CIA officer named Peter Sichel. The impression was heightened by a lifelong thyroid condition that made his eyes bulge from his head—"stand out on stems, practically," one member of Staff C said—as if he were a man possessed. Harvey's briefings, punctuated by the ritualistic clicking of his cigarette lighter, would last for hours as he disgorged almost verbatim the files of cases he had worked on. "He had an incredible memory for things in which he was involved," a senior officer in the Agency said. "He had everybody sitting on the edge of their chairs," a female staff member recalled, not because he was a spellbinding speaker but because "he spoke in a froglike voice that was at times so low that it was very difficult to hear."

As the CIA's leading expert on Soviet espionage, Harvey should have been in close contact with the Bureau, but FBI agents dealt with him at their own peril. "We liked Bill and he was one of us," said Robert Lamphere, a member of the Bureau's Security Division, "but as far as Hoover was concerned, he was the enemy." Harvey responded in kind. "I would be in Harvey's office," one agent recounted, "and he would get a phone call and say, 'I can't talk much now because there's an FBI man here.'"

Such bureaucratic jealousies seemed particularly petty in the context of the rapid and alarming succession of world events. In July of 1949 the State Department issued a White Paper conceding

that China had fallen to the Communists, and in August Russia exploded her first atomic device, ending the American monopoly. Meanwhile, the United States had come upon new and startling evidence of Soviet espionage. Through a combination of good luck, hard work, and Russian carelessness, the Armed Forces Security Agency had succeeded in breaking the theoretically unbreakable Soviet cipher. Among other things, the break disclosed the existence of a Soviet spy who was so well placed that he could obtain the verbatim text of a private telegram from Winston Churchill to Harry Truman.

Midway through World War II a gifted team of American cryptanalysts had mounted an attack against the Russian cipher system, using as their basic weapon the charred remnants of a Soviet code book that had been salvaged from a battlefield in Finland. The book contained a list of 999 five-digit code groups, each one representing a different letter, word, or phrase. A large portion of the list had been destroyed by fire, and what remained seemed of little value, since the Soviets employed a system of super-encipherment in which random numerical values were added to the original five-digit code groups. The code book might reveal, for instance, that the five-digit group for the word *agent* was 17056, but it would not reveal that the "additive," as it was called, was 05555. With the additive the word *agent* would appear in the enciphered message as 22611 (17056 plus 05555), which the code book would list as the five-digit group for a word or phrase with an entirely different meaning. Only someone in possession of both the code book and the additive would know to subtract 05555 from 22611 and arrive at 17056 and the word *agent*. Since each code group used a different additive, the effect was an infinity of codes.

To the American cryptanalysts, who had already mastered the intricacies of Japan's top diplomatic code, mere super-encipherment did not pose an insurmountable obstacle. Through collateral intelligence—the exact date and time of the message, the particular unit to which it was sent, the movement of the unit upon receipt—they could sometimes hazard an educated guess about the subject matter. Testing five-letter code groups representing words that the Russians might logically have used to refer to that subject would

Wilderness of Mirrors
David C. Martin
Harper + Row, NY
1980

HV 7961. M37

occasionally yield a solution. But without a key to the constantly changing additive, the overall system was still unbreakable—and would have remained so had not the Russians committed a colossal blunder.

Amid the confusion of war, Moscow had sent out duplicate sets of additives to various Soviet installations around the world. When the cryptanalysts discovered that the same series of additives had been used more than once, they had all the leverage they needed to break the Soviet cipher system. Having used guesswork to deduce the additives for a Soviet message intercepted in one part of the world, they could test those same additives against the massive backlog of messages intercepted in other parts of the world. Sooner or later the same additives would appear and another message could be deciphered. It was an excruciatingly tedious task with less than perfect results. Since only a portion of the code book had been salvaged, many of the 999 five-digit groups used by the Soviets were missing. Knowing the additive might yield the proper five-digit group, but if that group could not be found in the code book, the word remained indecipherable. Whole passages were blanks, and the meaning of other phrases could be only vaguely grasped.

Because of the laborious nature of the task, years would elapse between the actual transmission of a Soviet message and its decoding by the Armed Forces Security Agency. The first big break did not come until 1949, when the cryptanalysts found a duplicate additive in the New York-to-Moscow channel and were able to decipher enough of a Soviet message to identify it as the text of a 1945 telegram from Churchill to Truman. Checking the message against a complete copy of the telegram provided by the British Embassy, the cryptanalysts confirmed beyond doubt that a Soviet spy had somehow been able to obtain the verbatim text—cable number and all—of a private communication between two heads of state.

The implications were appalling, but the security officer's nightmare was the cryptanalyst's dream. The Armed Forces Security Agency requested copies of all transmissions handled by the British Embassy and began matching them against the encoded messages in the New York-to-Moscow channel, working backward through the code book and arriving at the additive. Besides determining

which messages had fallen into Soviet hands, the cryptanalysts were coming up with solutions to new additives that could be checked against messages intercepted in other parts of the world. The results remained fragmentary, but by the fall of 1949 enough shards had been pieced together to demonstrate with disconcerting clarity that during the war years there had been a massive hemorrhaging of secrets from both the British Embassy in Washington and the atomic bomb project at Los Alamos, New Mexico. ✓

One of the first Soviet spies to be undone by the code break was the German-born physicist Klaus Fuchs. A reference in one of the deciphered messages indicated that a Soviet agent had a sister at an American university. When matched against the backgrounds of the scientists working on the atomic bomb, that otherwise unremarkable detail aroused the first vague suspicions against Fuchs, whose sister, Kristel, had briefly attended Swarthmore College. According to an FBI memo, Fuchs became the "prime suspect . . . when we were able to obtain a document at the Atomic Energy Commission which had been written by him." That same document had shown up in the New York-to-Moscow link. On February 1, 1950, Hoover informed the White House that "we [have] just gotten word from England that we have gotten a full confession from one of the top scientists, who worked over here, that he gave the complete know-how of the atom bomb to the Russians." In a subsequent letter, Hoover reported that "Fuchs said he would estimate that the information furnished by him speeded up by several years the production of an atom bomb by Russia." ✓

Once the code break had identified Fuchs as the prime suspect, a number of other incriminating traces leaped from the files. Among those arrested as a result of the Gouzenko defection in Ottawa in 1945 had been a suspected Communist agent named Israel Halperin, who, according to an FBI memo, "had in his possession an address book in which appeared, among others, the name Klaus Fuchs." Another memo stated that the Bureau had received a translation of a captured German document written in 1941 that listed Fuchs as "apparently a Communist worthy of consideration for apprehension by the German army." Why had that captured document taken so long to surface? Hoover demanded to know. An inquiry revealed

that the document had been in the possession of "Supervisor W. K. Harvey up to the time of his resignation in the late summer of 1947. This material became delinquent in that it was not being handled on a current basis due to the shortage of personnel. After the resignation of Mr. Harvey, this material was reassigned, the delinquent handling of the material was corrected, and in early 1948, it was handled on a current basis."

Harvey was fortunate to be beyond Hoover's reach in 1950, for he had been the unwitting custodian of one other piece of the Fuchs puzzle. In his confession Fuchs said his American contact had been a chemist named "Raymond." Asked to pick out "Raymond" from a series of mug shots, Fuchs pointed to a picture of Harry Gold, a naturalized American citizen of Russian parentage. As an FBI memo noted, "Gold first came to the attention of this Bureau in connection with the activities of Abraham Brothman, concerning whom Elizabeth T. Bentley furnished information."

Gold at first proclaimed his innocence, insisting that he had never been west of the Mississippi, much less to Los Alamos, where Fuchs had worked on the atomic bomb. But when FBI agents searched his home in Philadelphia and found a Chamber of Commerce brochure for Santa Fe, Gold cracked and gave a complete confession that led ultimately to the arrest, conviction, and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

The trial of the Rosenbergs would become one of the most disputed court cases of the century, in part because the government, hoping to protect its most secret source, never introduced one of the most damaging pieces of evidence against them: the decoded traffic from the New York-to-Moscow channel. The Rosenbergs were identified in the traffic only by cryptonyms, but the picture that emerged of a husband-and-wife team of agents matched them precisely, even down to the fact that the woman's brother was a part of the plot. At the trial Ethel's brother, David Greenglass, who had worked on the bomb at Los Alamos, was the chief prosecution witness, having admitted his role in return for leniency.

If made public, the evidence contained in the intercepts would have stilled much of the controversy surrounding not only the Rosenberg trial but several other espionage cases as well. Sometimes

the evidence fell short of convincing. In the case of Hiss, a message intercepted in the Washington-to-Moscow channel revealed that a Soviet agent had actually been aboard Ambassador Averell Harriman's plane as it returned to Moscow following the 1945 conference at Yalta. Hiss had been aboard that plane, but so had others, including, of course, Harriman. Other times, however, the evidence was convincing beyond doubt, as when Moscow changed its agents' cryptonyms by transmitting a message listing both their true identities and their new cryptonyms.

"Crypt ops," as they were called, were the most reliable sensory organs in the espionage body. A code break eliminated the problem of relying on agents of questionable reliability and uncertain loyalty. An agent might deliberately be passing on false and misleading information, but a message transmitted in a supposedly unbreakable cipher was unquestionably the real thing. A code break shattered all the mirrors and permitted a straight line of sight across the wilderness. The breaking of the Soviet cipher could have tipped the scales of the secret war in favor of the West as surely as had the cracking of the German Enigma code in World War II. In 1948, however, the Soviets suddenly modified their cipher system in a way that made it once again unbreakable. Two years later, investigators discovered that the Soviets had been alerted to the code break by William Weisband, a disloyal employee of the Armed Forces Security Agency. The man who betrayed America's ultra-secret was never prosecuted for his crime, since a public trial would have required revelation of the code break. Instead, Weisband spent one year in jail for failing to answer a summons to appear before a grand jury. Despite Weisband's leak to the Soviets, the code break would remain a closely guarded secret for more than thirty years while cryptanalysts continued to cross-check the backlog of intercepted messages, eventually reconstructing most of the old Russian code book. Whatever marginal value the continued secrecy of the project might have had seemed more than outweighed by the public suspicion and distrust of the government's actions in the Hiss and Rosenberg cases.

Astoundingly, the British officer assigned to work with the FBI in tracking down the Soviet spies whose cryptonyms appeared in

NS131
Responses

~~TOP SECRET~~

Serial: J9837-92

cc:

(b) (3) -P.L. 86-36

M5 (R. Benson)

N51

N5131

(b) (3) -P.L. 86-36

(b) (5)

Concur OGC:

28 Apr 93

M/R: ~~(TS)~~ FOIA request from an educational institution for intercepted Soviet messages from 1936-1947 and the decodes of those messages. The requester further described such material as VENONA files, bearing the classification Top Secret Dauntless/Dinar/Galt. Linda Miller (N513) determined that fact of U.S. intercept of Soviet encoded messages, called VENONA, cannot be protected. Our ability to decode such material, however, is considered Top Secret. We, therefore, deny the encoded messages pursuant to b(1) and b(3)/all statutes; and we neither confirm nor deny the existence of the decoded material in accordance with b(1) and b(3)/all statutes.

~~(TS)~~ The decodes provide information that would also be protected under b(6) (identities of KGB agents); but, because we cannot reveal our ability to decode the messages, we do not cite this exemption to the requester.

~~(TS)~~ Because the collection of VENONA material consists of 1379 Shinn boxes of raw traffic, 500 boxes of analytic material and thousands of cryptanalytic worksheets, it was decided that only a sampling of the material would be forwarded to N513 for review. The sensitivity of the material precludes its release in its entirety. According

are still studying it. Should additional information or documents be required on appeal or in the case of litigation, the collection is held in the NSA Archives and Records Center. The POC for this material is Robert Benson in M5 (982-7872).

(b) (1)

(b) (3) -18 USC 798

(b) (3) -50 USC 3024(i)

(b) (3) -P.L. 86-36

26 Apr 93

(b) (3) -P.L. 86-36

(b) (6)

~~TOP SECRET~~

Classified by 17-03201 12-2

Excluded from NSA's Information Program



NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-6000

Serial: J9837-92

11 May 1993

Hoover Institution
ATTN: Arnold Beichman
Stanford, CA 94305-6010

Dear Mr. Beichman:

This responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of 16 December 1992 for records related to "U.S. intercepted encoded Soviet messages...together with their decoded contents." Such messages have been identified and reviewed by this Agency as required by the FOIA and have been found to be currently and properly classified in accordance with Executive Order 12356. This information meets the criteria for classification as set forth in subparagraphs (a)(2), (a)(3), (a)(4) and (a)(8) of section 1.3 and remains classified TOP SECRET as provided in section 1.1 of Executive Order 12356. The documents are classified because their disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security. Because the information is currently and properly classified, the messages are exempt from disclosure pursuant to the first exemption of the FOIA (5 U.S.C. section 552(b)(1)).

In addition, this Agency is authorized by various statutes to protect certain information concerning its activities. We have determined that such information exists in this material. Accordingly, those portions are also exempt from disclosure pursuant to the third exemption of the FOIA which provides for the withholding of information specifically protected from disclosure by statute. The specific statutes applicable in this case are Title 18 U.S. Code 798; Title 50 U.S. Code 403(d)(3); and Section 6, Public Law 86-36 (50 U.S. Code 402 note). No portion of the information is reasonably segregable.

Regarding your request for the "decoded contents" of these messages, we have determined that the fact of the existence or non-existence of decoded material is a currently and properly classified matter in accordance with Executive Order 12356. Thus, this portion of your request is denied pursuant to the first exemption of the FOIA which provides that the FOIA does not apply to matters that are specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign relations and are in fact properly classified pursuant to such Executive Order. This portion of your request is also denied in accordance with the third exemption as described above.

Serial: J9837-92

Since your request has been denied, you are hereby advised of this Agency's appeal procedures. Any person denied access to information may, within 60 days after notification of the denial, file an appeal to the NSA/CSS Freedom of Information Act Appeal Authority. The appeal shall be in writing addressed to the NSA/CSS FOIA Appeal Authority, National Security Agency, Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6000. The appeal shall reference the initial denial of access and shall contain, in sufficient detail and particularity, the grounds upon which the requester believes release of the information is required. The NSA/CSS Appeal Authority will respond to the appeal within 20 working days after receipt.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Miller
for MICHAEL A. SMITH
Director of Policy



NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-6000

Serial: J9673-93

15 September 1993

Institute for Policy Studies
ATTN: Sanho Tree
1601 Connecticut Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20009

Dear Mr. Tree:

This responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request of 26 August 1993 for copies of the intercepts of Soviet transmissions referenced in three published books. Such messages have been identified and reviewed by this Agency as required by the FOIA and have been found to be currently and properly classified in accordance with Executive Order 12356. This information meets the criteria for classification as set forth in subparagraphs (a)(2), (a)(3), (a)(4) and (a)(8) of section 1.3 and remains classified TOP SECRET as provided in section 1.1 of Executive Order 12356. The information is classified because its disclosure could reasonably be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security. Because the information is currently and properly classified, it is exempt from disclosure pursuant to the first exemption of the FOIA (5 U.S.C. section 552(b)(1)).

In addition, this Agency is authorized by various statutes to protect certain information concerning its activities. We have determined that such information exists in these documents. Accordingly, those portions are also exempt from disclosure pursuant to the third exemption of the FOIA which provides for the withholding of information specifically protected from disclosure by statute. The specific statutes applicable in this case are Title 18 U.S. Code 798; Title 50 U.S. Code 403-3 (c)(5); and Section 6, Public Law 86-36 (50 U.S. Code 402 note).

Since your request has been denied, you are hereby advised of this Agency's appeal procedures. Any person denied access to information may, within 60 days after notification of the denial, file an appeal to the NSA/CSS Freedom of Information Act Appeal

Serial: J9673-93

Authority. The appeal shall be in writing addressed to the NSA/CSS FOIA Appeal Authority, National Security Agency, Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6000. The appeal shall reference the initial denial of access and shall contain, in sufficient detail and particularity, the grounds upon which the requester believes release of the information is required. The NSA/CSS Appeal Authority will respond to the appeal within 20 working days after receipt.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Miller
for MICHAEL A. SMITH
Director of Policy

Serial: J9673-93

cc: N51
N513

M/R: The requester asks for copies of Soviet transmissions known as VENONA. During the database search, it was noted that we had just recently completed a similar request (J9837-92/88-373-93/Appealed to OGC/Arnold Beichman-). After reviewing this previous case, we respond to this requester in kind. All information is withheld pursuant to b(1) and b(3)/all statutes. A copy of J9837-92 is enclosed for reference.



9 Sep 93

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36
(b) (6)



HOOVER INSTITUTION

ON WAR, REVOLUTION AND PEACE

Stanford, California 94305-6010



July 6, 1993

NSA/CSS FOIA Appeal Authority
National Security Agency
9800 Savage Road
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755-6000

Dear Sirs:

I hereby appeal to you for a reversal of Lael A. Smith, Director of Policy, NSA/CSS as detailed in Serial: J9837-92, dated 11 May 1993. I had requested in an application, dated 16 December 1992 records related to "U.S. intercepted encoded Soviet messages... together with their decoded contents."

I question the reasons for that negative decision in the light of the historic events which have occurred since August 19, 1991. I can understand wanting to keep secret the methods by which encoded messages were intercepted or wanting to keep secret the names of informants, agents, or other individuals. It borders on the absurd for the U.S. Government to insist on keeping secret the contents of intercepted messages today when the former Soviet Union is itself spilling out dossiers of hitherto secret material to scholars and journalists; when a special authority under General Volkogonov has been set up by Russian President Boris Yeltsin to contract with Western library repositories for photocopying some 25 million hitherto secret documents of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee. I am sure that the former Soviet Union isn't offering for sale all its secrets, but surely that would not nor should it be a reason for withholding the intercepts I have requested.

I ask that you reverse the decision embodied in Serial: J9837-92 and to respond to my appeal within twenty working days after receipt of this letter which is being sent to you by special courier service.

Sincerely,

Arnold Beichman
Senior Research Fellow

AB:ss

Institute for Policy Studies
1601 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20009
202 234 9382
FAX 202 387 7915

Transnational Institute
Paulus Potterstraat 20
1071 DA Amsterdam
The Netherlands
011 31 20 662 6608

IPS

SS
30 NOV 1993

140-695-92

Ref. Serial: J9673-93

November 19, 1993

National Security Agency
NSA/CSS FOIA Appeal Authority
Fort Meade, MD 20755-6000

Dear Sir or Madam:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 5 U.S.C. 552, et seq. (as amended), I hereby appeal the National Security Agency decision of 15 September 1993 (Serial: J9673-93) for the withholding of documents listed in my FOIA request of 26 August 1993.

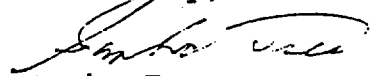
I believe my request for VENONA intercepts should be reviewed in the light of the passage of time since: a) the portions I requested are over 45 years old; b) the messages originated from a regime that has ceased to exist; c) virtually all the persons mentioned in the intercepts are deceased; and, d) the existence of the intercepts is known both to the Russian Government and the American public.

Since these intercepts contain historically important factual material I ask that they be released. I believe the exemptions listed in your denial must be narrowly applied since the overriding objective of the FOIA is to maximize public access to agency records.

Finally I would like to point out that both the FOIA and Executive Order 12356 require a paragraph by paragraph review of documents of any length. I believe that under such a review there must be some reasonably segregable material that can be released from the sections you are currently withholding.

For these reasons I believe my original request is appropriate under the provisions of the FOIA and Executive Order 12356. I therefore ask that you continue to process my request of 26 August 1993 and release the withheld intercepts in the manner outlined in the original request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (202) 234-9382 ext. 209. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you very much for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,


Sanho Tree
Research Associate

Venona
Collection

~~TOP SECRET~~

THE VENONA COLLECTION

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

* 700,000 MESSAGES HELD IN 1391 SHINN BOXES

* ☐ CRYPTANALYTIC WORKSHEETS

* 200 BOXES OF EVERYTHING ELSE:

(b)(1)

WORKING AIDS

CODEBOOKS

GCHQ REPORTS; ☐

FBI AND CIA REPORTS

MACHINE RUNS

THE VENONA TRANSLATIONS (ABT 5 BOXES)

TICOM (TAREX) RECORDS

CARD FILES OF EVERY MESSAGE AND GROUP

COVERNAME BOOKS

CRYPTANALYTIC STUDIES AND REPORTS

+ THE 3 VOLUME BENSON/PHILLIPS HISTORY***
draft

+ ABOUT 7 BOXES OF BENSON'S NOTES AND FILES

***NOTE: COPIES OF THE HISTORY HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED TO A GROUP;
BILL CROWELL; M5; HISTORY DEPT; ☐ GCHQ, FBI; CIA

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~HANDLE WITH CARE - EYES ONLY~~

Meeting Attendees

P05A

A952

Z22

M5J

N513

OGC



Lou Benson
Cecil Phillips
Claudia Collins

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

THE VENONA COLLECTION

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

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(b)(1)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

VENONA FOIA ISSUES

1. CRYPTANALYTIC TECHNIQUE AND SUCCESS

2. GCHQ WORKED PROBLEM WITH U.S.:

[REDACTED]

+ SOME CASES ARE UK PEOPLE

3. FBI AND CIA

(b) (1)
(b) (3) -50 USC 3024 (i)

+ MOST COVERNAME IDENT'S MADE BY FBI AND CIA

4. THE MLAD CASE OF *CURRENT* CI INTEREST

+ MLAD INTERTWINED WITH OTHER A-BOMB VENONA SPIES

5. PRIVACY, INCLUDING SOME FAMOUS LIVING AMERICANS

6. INTERCONNECTION: TRANSLATIONS, C/A WORKSHEETS, TRAFFIC, CODEBOOKS

7. RELEASING SIGINT DATED AS LATE AS AUG 1980 - PRECEDENT

8. BILL CROWELL'S VIEW

9. GENERAL SUDOPLATOV'S BOOK (OPPENHEIMER ET AL)

GENERAL SUDOPLATOV'S BOOK 'SPECIAL TASKS'

IN CHAPTER ON A-BOMB ESPIONAGE HE SAYS:

1. THE ROSENBERGS NOT IMPORTANT SPIES
2. OPPENHEIMER AND FERMI SPIES FOR THE KGB

COVERNAME STAR = OPPENHEIMER & SOMETIMES BOTH
OPPENHEIMER AND FERMI

3. KGB HAD THREE A-BOMB NETS
4. KGB USED ILLEGALS FOR A-BOMB ESPIONAGE; SAFE HOUSE IN SANTA FE
5. SUDAPLATOV IN CHARGE OF A-BOMB ESPIONAGE

+ ALSO: SUDAPLATOV'S VERSION OF ALGER HISS STORY

SUGGESTED COURSE OF ACTION

1. DENY THE APPEAL.
2. IN DENYING APPEAL WE MIGHT LEAVE DOOR OPEN AND SAY THAT WE ARE CURRENTLY WRITING A HISTORY OF VENONA.
3. NEED TO EDIT THE HISTORY AND THEN HAVE IT READY AS BOTH:
 - A. A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE VENONA STORY
 - B. THE FULL VERSION
4. CONTINUE TO ORGANIZE AND CATALOG THE VENONA ARCHIVES
5. INVITE A COUPLE HISTORIANS TO ACT AS AN ADVISORY "COMMISSION" [ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR.'S SUGGESTION COUPLE YRS AGO] MAYBE THE HOOVER INST. PERSON COULD PARTICIPATE?