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APPENDIX A

Tunnel Project

NOTE: This assessment was prepared by the () staff immediately after the discovery of the tunnel and is based on pertinent information available. At the time the report was prepared BLAKE's activities had not been surfaced.

15 August 1956

DISCOVERY BY THE SOVIETS OF *THE TUNNEL*

Analysis of all available evidence - traffic passing on the target cables, conversations recorded from a microphone installed in the tap chamber, and vital observations from the site - indicates that the Soviet discovery of *the tunnel* was purely fortuitous and was not the result of a penetration of the () agencies concerned, a security violation, or testing of the lines by the Soviets or East Germans. A description of the events leading to these conclusions is contained in this paper.

Following heavy rains in the Berlin area a number of telephone and telegraph cables were flooded and began to fault between Karlshorst and Mahlow on the night of 16 April 1956. The first major fault was discovered on cable FK 151 at Wassmannsdorf on 17 April. The fault was repaired by cutting the defective stretch of cable and replacing a 3000 meter length with a temporary replacement cable. Between 17 and 22

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continued. This general situation was noted by personnel at the site who checked the tap on the morning of 19 April and found it to be in good condition with no faults present. Berlin notified Headquarters of this fact on the evening of 20 April, noting, "available precautions taken including primary one of crossing fingers."

Throughout 20 April Soviet operators at Karlshorst, the Mahlow cable chamber, and Zossen/Wuensdorf checked FK 150 pairs carrying circuits serving high ranking officials and made switches where necessary or possible. Nothing was said concerning the testing being conducted to discover the faults or work being done by a Soviet labor force lent to the Germans to assist in digging up bad stretches of cable. On 21 April a Karlshorst technician told a colleague in Zossen/Wuensdorf the FK 150 had not yet been repaired and that another two days' work would probably be necessary to clear up the trouble. Testing and rerouting of circuits were stepped up during the evening of 21 April, and the Soviets showed considerable concern over the failure of the Moscow-GSFG Air Warning telegraph channel which had been transferred to FK 150 on 17 April. Lt. Colonel Vyunik, Chief of the GSFG Signal Center at Wuensdorf, telephoned Major Alpatov, Chief of the Karlshorst Signal Center, at his apartment to inform him of the failure of the Air Warning circuit. They agreed that communications had to be

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established before morning and Alpatov left for his duty station.

There is no significant information available on the actual progress of the testing and repair program proper from 0300 hours on 20 April to 0050 hours on 22 April. On the basis of available information, however, it seems probable that (a) the testing program continued north until a fault was located near the site and a decision was made to replace an entire section of cable which embraced the tap site; or (b) the repeated faulting coupled with the age and physical condition of FK 150 led the opposition to the conclusion that the only effective remedy was to replace the cable, section by section, and that this program was inaugurated somewhere south of our site and continued northward until the tap was discovered.

At approximately 0050 hours on 22 April, 40 or 50 men were seen on the east side of Schoenefelder Allee, deployed along the entire area observable from our installation, digging at three to five foot intervals over the location of the cable and, incidentally, the tap chamber. At approximately 0200 hours the top of the tap chamber was discovered, and at 0210 Russian speech was heard from the microphone in the tap chamber. The first fragments of speech indicated that the discovery of the tap chamber aroused no suspicion among those present. A small hole was broken in the tap chamber roof

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permitting limited visual observation of the chamber, and a Soviet captain ^{2/} was brought to the spot. After some discussion all agreed that the discovery was a manhole covering a repeater point, and the working crew began enlarging the hole to gain access to the "repeater point."

While the working party was uncovering the tap chamber, Major Alpatov and Lt. Colonel Vyunik discussed the communications situation in a rambling telephone conversation at approximately 0230 hours. They indicated relief at the restoration of Air Warning Communications with Moscow, and Vyunik went on to express suspicion about the continued trouble on FK 150. In context it appears that this suspicion was directed at the failure of the Germans to clear up the difficulties on FK 150 once and for all. In any event, Alpatov clearly did not share his colleague's doubts. The general tone of this conversation was relaxed and casual, completely in keeping with the character of the two men, both of whom we know well. The conversation appears to be a clear indication that, as of 0230 hours on 22 April, neither of these responsible officers was aware of the existence of the tap.

^{2/} Presumably Captain Bartash, an engineer who later received an unspecified award from Marshal Grechko for the discovery of the tap.

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Meanwhile back at the site the work of enlarging a hole to give full access to the tap chamber continued. At approximately 0250 hours an unidentified Soviet Colonel arrived on the scene, presumably in response to a request for guidance by the working party. The Colonel did not appear to be a signal officer since he took no active part in the investigation and remained on the scene only for a short time. Having enlarged the hole in the tap chamber roof, the workers saw for the first time the cables and the trap door on the floor of the chamber. They assumed the trap door to be "some sort of box" and had no suspicion of the true nature of the installation. At approximately 0300 hours barriers were erected to keep inquisitive onlookers away from the excavation and it was suggested that someone be sent to the Signal Directorate, presumably to obtain relevant cable data. At the same time the first German voice was heard, in conversation with a German-speaking Russian. The German stated that two trucks must have passed the spot without locating it. The Russian answered that "Soviet troops are coming as well," and added that they must wait "until morning" for the decision as to what further work would be undertaken.

While these developments were taking place, Vyunik held a telecon with the Air Warning Center in Moscow in which he referred to the move of the GSFG Air Warning Center and

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discussed, in detail, communication arrangements necessitated by this move. This revealing teleconference tends to support other evidence indicating that as of 0300 hours the true nature of the installation had still not been established.

The work of excavation continued, and fragments of conversation connected with it were picked up by the tap chamber microphone. A German-speaking Russian commented that "somebody has come from there and there are fewer workers there," suggesting that similar work was in progress at another point. The Russian gave instructions that nothing in the installation was to be touched. A German remarked that the chamber might be connected with sewage work and proposed that plans of the sewage system be obtained from the responsible authorities. The Russian answered that they already had this information and that the plans showed "that chamber" to be 120 meters away from this point. At about 0320 hours, when still more of the tap chamber was revealed and a better view of the interior obtained, those present began to speculate vaguely about its exact nature and the time of its construction. One of the Soviets, probably an officer, suggested that it might have been built during the war, possibly for "Vhe Che" (Russian abbreviation for "high frequency transmission," but used loosely to denote anything connected with secure communications.) Shortly after 0330 hours, the Soviets left the site by motor

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vehicle, presumably to report their findings. For approximately one and one-half hours - from 0330 to 0500 - no sounds or voices were recorded.

At approximately 0415 hours Vyunik telephoned Alpatov's apartment in Karlshorst and asked Alpatov if he had spoken with General Dudakov, Chief Signal Officer, GSFG. Alpatov said that he had, that he was getting dressed, and that he would go to his signal center as soon as possible. Vyunik told Alpatov to telephone him at the GSFG frame room at Zossen/Wuensdorf, adding, "When we speak we must do so carefully. We know what the matter is, so we will speak carefully." This indicated clearly that by 0415 hours the GSFG Signal Directorate and General Dudakov, the Chief Signal Officer, had been informed of the discovery of the ~~()~~ ^{tunnel tap} chamber, viewed it with extreme suspicion, and planned to re-route circuits passing over the target cables. This coincides neatly with the departure from the tap site of the Soviets at 0330. At 0630 Vyunik telephoned Alpatov at the Karlshorst Signal Center and informed him that Lt. Colonel Zolochko, Deputy Chief of the Lines Department, GSFG, had left Wuensdorf at 0625 to go "there." Vyunik, in a resigned tone, then added that all that remained for him and Alpatov to do was to sit and wait.

In due course Lt. Colonel Zolochko arrived at the site, accompanied by an unnamed Colonel and Captain Bartash, the

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Commander of the working party. By this time the Soviets apparently had brought circuit diagrams to the site and were aware of the pair allocations on the affected cables. There was considerable discussion of the discovery, and one of the crew actually entered the chamber and made a superficial and inconclusive examination. Shortly afterwards the statement, "the cable is tapped," was made for the first time on the scene.

At about this time (0635 hours) Lt. Colonel Vyunik telephoned Major Alpatov and asked whether he had received the "task" and whether its meaning was clear. Alpatov replied that he had received and understood the assignment. Speaking in unusually vague terms, Vyunik instructed Alpatov to take over two low-frequency channels, presumably provided by the KGB signals organization. (These channels would provide telephone communications between Berlin and Wuensdorf via overhead line and would by-pass the tapped cables.) Vyunik added that they could continue necessary technical discussions on the new facilities.

Although teletype traffic continued until the tap wires were cut - at 1535 hours on Sunday afternoon - the last telephone call of any interest was placed sometime between 0800 and 0900 hours on 22 April, when an agitated General speaking from Marshal Grechko's apartment attempted to contact Colonel

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Kotsyuba, who was then acting for General Dibrova, Berlin Commandant. Unable to locate Kotsyuba, the General talked to Colonel Pomozanovskii, Chief of Staff of the Berlin Garrison, stressing the urgency of his call. Pomozanovskii promised to find Kotsyuba at once and get him to return the call. The return call was not intercepted, but there appears to be no doubt that Marshal Grechko had by this time been informed of the discovery and wished to discuss it with Colonel Kotsyuba. A few telephone calls were attempted after this, but the operators refused to place the calls, and in one case a Karlshorst operator said, "I won't put you through to anyone. Don't ring, that's all. I won't answer you any more. It's in the order."

Between 0700 and 0800 hours a number of additional Soviet officers arrived at the excavation, including Colonel Gusev of the KGB Signals Regiment. A Russian-speaking German was heard to remark that a "commission" was expected, and a Soviet officer said that they would await the arrival of this commission before making a decision as to what the next step would be. In answer to a question as to whether anything should be disconnected, the same officer stated that nothing should be done beyond making motion pictures of the chamber. He added, however, that the hole providing access to the chamber should be enlarged and a detailed inspection should be carried out. The general discussion continued, and the possibility of some

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form of explosive booby trap in the chamber was discussed at some length. There was widespread belief that the trap door, which in fact provided access to the tunnel proper, was a "box" or "battery box" possibly involving a booby trap. One of the Soviet officers, probably Zolochko, suggested that, after everything had been carefully noted and recorded, a grappling iron could be attached to the "box" in order to tear it away. "If there is no explosion," he said, "then we can calmly go ahead and deal with it."

Several individuals, presumably German cable splicers, agreed that the cables were fully tapped and discussed the method employed. They agreed that it must have been done in such a way as to render the tap undetectable by measurements, although one of them failed to understand why the actual cutting of the cables was not detected. He added that at that time "everyone must have been quite drunk." The Germans continued to speculate on the nature of the "box" and about the means of access to the tap chamber. One of them said, "They themselves must have some means of entering this place, but naturally it's highly improbable that they have constructed a passage for getting from here to there!"

Some of those present apparently believed that the tap was an old one and had been abandoned due to recent faults on the cable. During this discussion the microphone was

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twice noted, but was not recognized for what it was. In the first instance the speaker said, "That is not a microphone," and in the second it was described as "a black ball."

The general discussion continued, with speculation as to the nature of the "battery box" and with several comments that it should be possible to identify the tappers "from the make of the materials" and the techniques employed. While the Germans began work enlarging the hole around the tap chamber, the Soviets discussed in some detail the order in which technical experts and administrative representatives would carry out their inspection. The Soviets identified the lead-off cable as "not ours," indicating that after the inspection they planned to disconnect the lead-off cable and to "check how far it goes from here" - probably by means of electrical measurements. It is evident that at this time (approximately 1130 hours) the Soviets and Germans were still unaware of the existence of the tunnel, the means of access to the tap chamber, or those responsible for the tap.

At approximately 1145 hours one of the German crew was heard to exclaim, "The box is an entry to a shaft!"

From the tenor of the ensuing conversation it would seem that a small hole had been made near the still-intact trap door. The Germans debated the removal of the trap door, but continued to work at and around it despite the alternate

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suggestion that "we should open up the road opposite until we reach the cable or the shaft." By approximately 1230 they had removed the hinges and entered the lower part of the tap chamber. The padlock which secured the trap door from below was examined and was identified as "of English origin." Failing to open the door separating the tap chamber from the equipment chamber, the Germans, after approximately twenty minutes, broke a hole through the wall and gained visual access to the equipment chamber, which they described as "a long passage." By 1300 they evidently had enlarged the access hole and described "a completed installation - a telephone exchange. An installation for listening in /Abhoeranlage/."

Additional motion pictures were made and frequent exclamations of wonder and admiration were heard. At 1420 a Soviet Colonel, probably Zolochko; a person addressed as Nikolai Ivanovich, probably Major Alpatov; and a Captain, presumably Bartash, entered the chamber and discussed the method used by the tappers in gaining access to the cables. Zolochko evidently still believed that this was done "from above." Conversations indicated that the joint Soviet-German commission, mentioned earlier, had already visited the site and established the nature of the installation without going into technical details.

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Measurements of parts of the interior were then taken, discussion of the installation became general, and the participants clearly indicated that the means of access and full implications of the operation were finally appreciated. Conversations reflected that all present realized that the planning of the tunnel approach to the cables must have necessitated a very detailed study of relevant maps and plans. The stress to which the roof of the chambers would be subjected and the necessity of preparing the lead-off cables beforehand were mentioned, and a German was heard to exclaim, "It must have cost a pretty penny." A Russian-speaking German added, admiringly, "How neatly and tidily they have done it." It was decided that work on the tunnel must have been carried out during the day when the sound of the street traffic would drown any noise, whereas the actual tapping was done "during the night, between one and two o'clock, when the traffic on the cables is slight."

One of the Germans rather indignantly exclaimed, "What a filthy trick. And where you would least expect it." -- to which another replied, "Unless one had seen it for oneself, nobody would believe it."

Between 1515 and 1530 hours the tap wires were cut, and at about 1545 the attention of the Germans began to concentrate on the microphone itself. One of them assumed it to be an "alarm device - probably a microphone," to give warning of

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approaching motor traffic, and added that it ought to be photographed. At 1550 hours work began on dismantling the microphone. Shortly afterward the microphone went dead and, after 11 months and 11 days, the operational phase of ^{THE TUNNEL} was completed.

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