

**FIVE LECTURES
ON
A RETROSPECTIVE ON INTELLIGENCE**



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Defense Intelligence College

FIRST SESSION

Intelligence From the Ancients to the American Revolution

As you have learned over the past five weeks, intelligence is not a modern-day innovation. From the beginnings of the first formal organizations, be they tribes or rudimentary states, there was a need to develop information about one's neighbors and adversaries. The "eyes and ears of the King" extended in all directions, and as speedier modes of transmitting information developed, that vision extended beyond parochial interests.

You have learned how Xenophon gave us the foundations of a military intelligence service, special military detachments among the Greek forces, for reconnoitering, discovering the position and strength of opposing forces and determining the sympathies of local inhabitants. Alexander the Great refined the process with the use of light cavalry for the purpose.

The Arab Muslim Empires added a new wrinkle to intelligence, a clear division between foreign intelligence collection and internal security mechanisms. (We see this in the appointment of the postmaster general as chief of the Arab intelligence service, and the subordination of the postal establishment to the espionage system. The khaibar, or special director of intelligence, was quite independent of the postmaster general and focused primarily on internal security matters.)

It would seem only natural, then, that these early refinements would see implementation as the nations of western Europe found need to develop their own intelligence mechanisms. Unfortunately, that is not the case.

They used spies tasked to bring back reliable information; they made full use of cover, disguise and concealment mechanisms; and, there are several surviving examples of the use of forgery and deception to achieve military surprise.

But, they were slow to develop dedicated military intelligence and even slower in separating internal security informant systems from foreign intelligence efforts.

Freedom of movement dictated who would be the earliest of spies, while the mysteries determined who would be the first intelligence officers.

I ask you to stretch your imagination a bit to ferret out the first staff intelligence officers. If we seek to compare functions in the earliest European courts, the obvious candidate is the Druid priest. Usually quite literate, the Druid knew the family lines and who was related to whom, all the cast of players, from monarch to the influential families. He knew who might be expected to be allies and who might join forces with the enemy. To this he added a sense of what had gone before--the history. He was called on to do a bit of divination of events to come, and if he did it right he took on the aura of a great magician.

The Druid could draw upon history and genealogy, couple it with an intimate knowledge of current events and reports and rumors received from abroad (particularly traveling religious), mesh it with the known desires, strengths and weaknesses of the monarch, and produce an estimate, hopefully a fairly accurate one, and his esteem grew. Reading the legend of Arthur, there can be little question that Merlin was his G-2.

As the Druids faded from influence, the slot was filled by the Christian clergy, and many of the functions of the Druid priest were diffused among the growing circle of retainers: the

heralds, the historians and the like. Although they were not spies as such, I agree with Jock Haswell that the heralds played a strong intelligence role. They could read the flags and shields of opposing armies led by men whose faces were covered by armor--they could identify the players. They were called upon to identify the dead and to write chronicles of the great battles. They traveled freely with an almost "diplomatic immunity," gathering and exchanging information.

Spies of these early times used the natural cover suitable for the conditions: peddler and hawker of wares, monk or friar, camp-follower, troubadour and actor, and the like. We see emergence of secret inks, recognition signals, concealment devices and methods of encoding information for transmittal. The Vikings and others made good use of defectors and locally-recruited agents, sending them to infiltrate, either to gain intelligence or to engage in sabotage and assassination--a fifth-column in place when the time came to invade, rape and pillage. Often, the victors rewarded these native agents by installing them in prominent positions to rule in the victor's absence, creating new lines of nobility and ultimately, as the lines expanded, a "faithful commons."

One gets the feeling that there were always spies, suggesting that there is an element of truth in the canard that "intelligence is the second oldest profession."

Thus, we see the use of spies by King Harold Godwin of England at the time of the invasion by William the Conqueror. We know he sent spies into the Norman camp at Deauville, because William's chronicler tells of how William dealt with one of them. Aware of the Saxon King's precarious military situation (about to be invaded by both the Norwegians and the Normans), William the Conqueror let the spy see the invading force, determine its strength and be informed of its strong logistical situation, before being released to return to England. It illustrates, even then, that manipulated information ("disinformation") aimed at influencing the actions of a specific person--in this case King Harold--need not be false.

Harold's spies were accurate reporters, but they didn't know what they were seeing and reporting. After the Norman invasion, they reported back that the Conqueror's army had more priests than soldiers. Fortunately, King Harold knew how to interpret the information, those clean-shaven, short-haired "priests" were Norman troops. The battle took nine hours, and the last successful invasion of England ended with Harold slain and William presiding over a people whom he hated and who hated him. A strange beginning for what would become modern England.

Except for the occasional invasion from the the fading Vikings or North African armies such as the Moors, Europe began to settle down and political mechanisms and bureaucracies began to develop. Then came the bloody onslaught of Genghis Khan and his Mongol hordes on Eastern Europe.

To quote Haswell:

"Against this new threat from the East, the people of Europe seemed to be powerless, and in 1242 a delegation of three monks, led by Fra Carpini, was sent by the court to Hungary to make peace with the Great Khan and ask him to stop killing Christians. Carpini was an excellent spy, though he was not identified as such. He returned with detailed information on the strength, organizations and tactics of the Mongolian Tartars, which he disseminated to the rulers of Europe. It was known that Genghis Khan had died in 1227, and Carpini reported that his descendants and nomadic followers were becoming more interested in the treasures of Far Cathay [China] than in the Danube basin, where the only means of subsistence appeared to be agriculture. The Mongol armies withdrew, taking the threat to Europe with

them, but the lessons they had taught in intelligence and communication had not been learned, despite Fra Carpini's efforts, by the military commanders of the West. They were still unable to see the difference between a war and a battle, possibly because they spent so much of their lives fighting each other that their outlook remained parochial, and no knight worth his spurs tried to take advantage by such underhand methods as spying on the enemy. Thus, in the world of intelligence, the emphasis tended to veer away from purely military affairs and come to rest on Church and State."

There followed a parallel development in governments in England and on the Continent. In the British Isles, the Vikings had instituted the system known as "sheadings," in which geographic regions of that name were determined by population--an area consisting of the requisite number of persons to man a long-boat when called on collectively to serve the monarch. Each sheading also was responsible for lighting one or more bonfires to warn of an invading force. The system of "Watch and Ward" instituted in 1285 by Edward I ("Longshanks") was in this tradition. It established procedures in which each community was required to act collectively to protect itself and the realm. Sheriffs and constables were established to form a *posse comitatus* of local residents whenever a "hue and cry" was raised against someone threatening the stability of the area. Britain had the underpinnings of a militia and a police system, but they did not have an essentially political or intelligence function.

In France, on the other hand, Charles V ("the Wise") instituted a police system that can only be described as despotic. It had its strength in legions of secret informers and spies, operating at all levels and in all communities, to report on anti-monarchical elements and hostile ideas, of which "democracy" and "republicanism" were only two. Essentially an internal security network, rather than a foreign intelligence activity, the informers identified targets for police suppression.

Such systems were soon replicated throughout Europe, except in Britain. There, it took two centuries before internal security mechanisms such as those on the Continent were to appear. During the minority of Henry VI, Cardinal Beaufort instituted the profession of state informer, and Britain made up for the lost time. When established originally in 1434, the primary task of the "King's Espials," as they were called, was to detect and report on the publication of seditious handbills and broadsides, a task for which they were rewarded handsomely. With the murder of Henry VI in 1471, his successor Edward IV expanded the power of the King's Espials to denounce offenders and authorized officers of the court to engage in legalized torture of them. Edward had finally introduced terror to the internal security system.

Henry VII, the first of the Tudors, continued a large force of political spies and informers and directed them personally. But, his claim to fame here is his creation of a foreign espionage service and defining the terms of that service. To Henry, for example, a "secret agent" was "a resident person in a good position," while an "informer" was "anyone, often of low birth, who is paid for information." A spy, he said, was "an intelligencer by profession, having some connection with public calling as a priest, monk, friar, barber-surgeon, scrivener or clerk, and without fixed abode, and sufficiently respectable to be a hanger-on of courts, church, civil, et cetera." [Note particularly his use of the term "intelligencer."]

It was during this time a new senior emerged in the British Army, the "Scoutmaster," a man appointed to "discover the whereabouts and intentions of the enemy." Later Henry VIII would say of the "chief reconnoiterer of the army": "It is the office of the Scoutmaster when he cometh to the field, to set and appoint the scourge; he must also appoint some to the high hills to view and to see if they can discover anything. Also the said Scoutmaster must appoint

one other company of scourgers to search and view every valley thereabouts, that there be no enemies laid privily for the annoyance of said camp, and if they do discover any, they are to advertise the Scoutmaster and he must either bring, or send word, to the high marshal of their advertisement."

Henry VII had reason to recognize the value of espionage. While the pretender was in France, agents of Richard of Gloucester (Richard III) had traced him to his hiding place in Brittany, but Henry's spies learned of it and he was able to escape and later meet and vanquish Richard III at Bosworth in 1485.

Henry VIII's excesses expanded his internal service to police state dimensions. Cardinal Wolsey had his day in commanding it until he was disgraced. Thomas Cromwell, the head of his internal service after Wolsey, employed so many spies that it was said that "a scorpion lay beneath every stone"

Yet, there were foreign intelligence aspects as well. In 1622, Francis Bacon had this description of Henry's intelligence service:

"Hee was careful and liberall to obtaine good Intelligence from all parts abroad. Wherein hee did not onely use his Interest in the Leigers here, and his Pensioners which hee had both in the Court of Rome, and the other Courts of Christendome; but the Industrie and the Vigilancie of his owne Ambassadors in Forraine parts . . . Requiring likewise from his Ambassadors an Answer, in particular distinct Articles, respectively to his Questions. As for his secret Spialls, who hee did imploy both at home and abroad, by them to discover what Practices and Conspiracies were against him, surely his Case required it: He had such Moles perpetually working and casting to undermine him. Neither can it be reprehended. For if Spialls bee lawfull against lawfull Enemies, much more against Conspirators, and Traitors."

Of Henry VIII's son, Edward VI, little is written of his use of intelligence and internal security mechanisms. His daughter Mary, on the other hand, made good use of the system in an English Inquisition to root out the heresy of Protestantism her father had initiated.

The succession of Elizabeth to the throne changed all that. Her secret service under Francis Walsingham, and later William Cecil, was an important political weapon against Catholicism. Walsingham, driven by both a loyalty to the Queen and a hatred of Catholics, was known to stoop to frame-ups and murder, if need be, to serve her. He was successful in neutralizing a succession of plots against the Queen, and his role in the end of the imprisoned Mary Stuart need not be told here. Fortunately, the bulk of the English people were not Walsingham's enemies or targets; broadly speaking, only the Catholics and conspirators against Elizabeth felt his wrath.

His foreign espionage, although based in only a handful of agents, successfully penetrated the courts of the Continent, particularly in Rome and Madrid. Phillip of Spain is said to have complained that all of his secret plans for conquering England were stolen by Walsingham's agents, shown to Elizabeth and sent back to Spain to be circulated as court gossip before he had time to hand them officially to his own ministers. In fact, much that is credited to Walsingham's foreign intelligence organization can be attributed to the efforts of one man, Anthony Standen, the desk officer for Spain.

Standen was a remarkable case officer. In March 1587, he was able to provide Walsingham with a copy of a secret report prepared for Phillip of Spain which gave details of the state of readiness of the Spanish fleet. Standen's analysis of the information was, quite accurately, that the Armada would not sail against England that year. Based on this intelligence, Sir Francis

Drake made a successful attack on Cadiz, inflicting serious damage and destroying stores the Spanish needed for the invasion of Britain. Standen then learned that Phillip of Spain, in need of money to recover from Drake's raid, was approaching money-lenders in Genoa. This enabled Britain to remind the Genoese of the appreciation to be shown by Queen Elizabeth if they withheld the loans.

In 1588, Standen struck again, this time with an accurate prediction that the Spanish Armada would leave Lisbon in the middle of May. Britain's agents tracked the Spanish fleet and, with the unexpected support of fierce weather and coastal rocks, the British Navy was able to end the invasion threat.

Walsingham's powers of organization, observation and analysis--as well as his selection of case officers like Standen--have made him a frequent nominee as the "father of British intelligence." And, indeed, his foreign intelligence successes were significant. Yet, considering the evils of his internal security apparatus, I would hesitate in seconding the nomination.

Yet, Walsingham and Cecil gave Elizabeth a short-lived legacy, some fairly sophisticated internal security, foreign intelligence and military intelligence concepts and organizations, all of which were dissipated with the succession of James I.

When James' son, Charles I, took the throne, the King's Espials were gone, and in their place were a few convenient and questionable political informers. Military intelligence made an immediate comeback in the face of Oliver Cromwell's parliamentary forces. In a letter to his nephew, Prince Maurice, on 28 March 1644, Charles advises "Wee desire you to keep forth scouts and intelligencers to give you timely advertisement . . ."

Sir Samuel Luke, Cromwell's Scoutmaster-General, recruited and trained scouts for military reconnaissance and agents for successful penetration of the Royalist camp. It was said that "he watches the enemy so industriously that they eat, sleep, drink not, whisper not, but he can give us an account of their darkest proceedings." King Charles, on the other hand, was failed frequently. In one instance, one of the King's scoutmasters returned to report that he had seen no trace of the Parliamentary rebels, when actually he had proceeded only part of the distance to enemy lines, hid for a time and returned. The toll for poor intelligence was severe; Charles I was beheaded by Cromwell on 30 January 1649.

Now that Cromwell was Lord Protector of England, he set about consolidating his power. In 1652, he appointed John Thurloe to be Secretary of State and head of intelligence, the same post held earlier by Walsingham, and tasked him to rebuild the intelligence service. Thurloe, blessed with an annual budget of seventy thousand pounds--a staggering sum for the 17th Century--spent the next seven years developing both internal informant networks and foreign intelligence abroad. He also found a new twist for tracking the mails. Heretofore, private couriers had been employed to convey letters from place to place or the King's Messengers had been given small amounts of money to include personal and business mail in the Royal Pouch. Simple. Henceforth there will be a Royal Post, to which all letters shall be committed for delivery, and private messengers are forbidden. Postal censorship became the norm and cryptanalysts became a part of the government service. In fact, one family was to hold the job as an hereditary sinicure for over 100 years.

To control the country, Cromwell and Thurloe appointed major-generals to rule over England's eleven sectors, dealing with unrest and seditious activity and reporting back to Thurloe should problems with the people arise. This "Rule of the Major-Generals" became synonymous with injustice and oppression. The essential nature of Thurloe's organization in the survival of Cromwell's regime is not understated by Thompson and Padover when they

say, in *Secret Diplomacy*, "the French Revolution had its Committee of Public Safety, the Soviets their GPU and Oliver Cromwell his John Thurloe."

Enter George Downing, a young man from America. Downing's family had emigrated to Salem, Massachusetts Bay Colony, in 1629 after Charles I dissolved Parliament. There young Downing attended school--he was the second graduate of Harvard College--and became a Puritan minister. After the defeat of the Royalists, he returned to England and became a padre and intelligencer in the New Model Army. In 1650 he was appointed Scoutmaster-General for Cromwell's army in Scotland, and was elected to Parliament in 1654. (He headed the movement to offer the crown to Cromwell.) Thurloe assigned him to counterintelligence for a time and then sent him to The Hague to keep track of the exiled Royalists. The nature of his work is evidenced by this letter to him from Thurloe:

"I desire you not to spare money for intelligence . . . I pray you endeavour to lay a correspondence, and a good one, in Flanders in the Spanish court there as also with Charles Stuart's party . . ."

When Oliver Cromwell died in 1658, his son Richard had a short reign before fleeing to exile. The Monarchy was restored, and an emboldened Downing made overtures to King Charles II. Because of his reputation as an intelligencer, Downing was given such an appointment, as well as being made a teller of the exchequer. In 1662, Downing located and arrested the three men responsible for the execution of the King's father. The three, including Downing's former commanding officer, were convicted of regicide and executed.

Downing was created a Baronet in 1663, and as Sir George Downing served in a succession of important diplomatic and governmental posts, including Secretary of the Treasury and Ambassador to Holland (where he had been Thurloe's "resident" only a few years before). Unlike his predecessors in the intelligence establishment, Downing was able to retire in luxury in a townhouse he built for himself in London, "the house that intelligence built," which remains in government service today, as No. 10 Downing Street.

A final note about the reign of Charles II: The last reference to the post of Scoutmaster-General appears in the List of General Officers of 1684.

Charles II was succeeded by James II, who was no stranger to the realities of the intelligence business. In 1648, James had been taken prisoner by Cromwell at Oxford. A Royalist agent, Col. Joseph Bampffield, engineered James' escape--the 14-year-old prince was disguised as a girl--and conveyed him to the Continent. It should have helped, but it didn't. In founding the Regular Army, Charles agreed to combining the posts of Scoutmaster-General, Provost Marshal and Harbinger (Quartermaster-General) into one, the Harbinger. For more than 100 years that followed, there was no military intelligence organization and field commanders were responsible for their own intelligence.

James codified the Articles of War in 1688, and there he did not forget the intelligence business. Article VII states: "Whosoever shall hold correspondence with any Rebel or Enemy of His Majesty, or shall give them Advice or Intelligence either by Letters, Messages, Signs, or Tokens, or in any manner whatsoever, shall suffer Death."

What remained of the security and intelligence service was vested by James II in Sir Leoline Jenkins, who failed the King in warning of the so-called "Glorious Revolution" that sent James into exile, facilitated the accession of William and Mary and saw Royal acceptance of a Bill of Rights giving Parliament supremacy.

The new bill of rights was of no help to one intelligence officer, Mathew Smith. He had been a spy for at least three different members of the British government and probably for others of varying shades of affection and disaffection to William of Orange. In 1699, a new book appeared, entitled *Memoirs of Secret Service*, and carrying Smith's name as author. A short quote from the preface shows that Mathew Smith claimed many of the same motives as those of recent years who have elected to abandon an oath of secrecy and turn intelligence knowledge into ready cash:

"It is not without the last reluctancy, that I resolve to publish these Papers, or rather should have said, I am oblig'd to it by the utmost Necessity. It may happen to many to have their Services not rewarded; but in my Case in particular, who am reduced to the unhappy necessity of defending them.

"I shall say the less upon this Occasion, for if the Matters of fact I alleg to not carry Conviction with them, I have little to expect; and I only venture to publish 'em, because notorious Truths must prevail at this time in my favor, or I must for ever despair: And no worse Fate can be procured me by those I may displease than Starving, which is almost my present condition."

Smith was jailed on order of the upper house. "He was effectively silenced in 1700." [Oxford Concise Dictionary of National Biography]

Intelligence appears to have remained in limbo during the reign of William and Mary. It came to the fore again during the reign of Queen Anne, James II's daughter and the last of the Stuart monarchs.

John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, made the difference. He was one of Britain's greatest soldiers and an expert at military intelligence. His intelligence service, ranked as best in Europe at the time, had a clear delineation between military and foreign intelligence. Heading military intelligence, as Quartermaster General, was William Earl of Cadogan, known for his swift and accurate assessments of enemy intentions. Adam de Cardonnel, Marlborough's private secretary, had responsibility for long-range strategic and political foreign intelligence, and his agents and spies extended across Europe producing intelligence of high value. Haswell notes, for example, that one of de Cardonnel's agents obtained campaign plans and the complete order of battle from the French war ministry and delivered them to Marlborough while he was on his famous march to the Danube in 1704. Another Marlborough agent, still unidentified but obviously an influential member of the French court, sent more than 400 reports between 1708 and 1710. The reports were extensive, encompassing military troop movements, political intelligence and court gossip.

Marlborough ultimately fell from grace when he came under an attack for what today would be called "reprogramming funds." His political opponents saw it as misappropriation. Marlborough admitted that he had tapped other funds available to him, but insisted that every penny had gone to "carrying on the secret service," and that the expenditures "had saved the Government near four times the sum this deduction amounts to." He was deprived of office in 1711.

It is in examining Marlborough's intelligence organization, its successes and his understanding of the business, that I give him my nomination as the father of modern British intelligence. To illustrate his depth of understanding, hear this quotation from his defense of the intelligence expenditures:

"I cannot suppose that I need say how essential a part of the Service this [intelligence] is,

that no war can be conducted successfully without early and good intelligence, and that such advices cannot be had but at a very great expense. Nobody can be ignorant of this that knows anything of secret correspondence, or considers the number of persons that must be employed in it, the great hazard they undergo, the variety of places in which the correspondence must be kept, and the constant necessity there is of supporting and feeding this service; not to mention some extraordinary expenses of a higher nature, which ought only to be hinted at."

Three years after Marlborough's departure from government, the first of the "Georges" ascended to the British throne, and for the first time in decades, relative peace existed between Britain and France. Things started heating up a bit in the New World under George II, with New England colonists marching on and capturing Louisbourg Fortress in Canada. Then a young Virginia militia officer and intelligencer opened the first military engagement in what would be called the French and Indian Wars. We'll come back to that young militia officer, a chap called George Washington, in our next session, but before leaving that North American war between Europe's two great powers, it seems appropriate to cite here an important implementation by the British of skilled military intelligence in one of the decisive battles of the conflict.

In 1759, the French commander in Canada, Montcalm, learned from an intercepted letter of the British commander, Wolfe, that the campaign against Quebec was to be by sea and the St. Lawrence River. This enabled Montcalm to assemble his defensive forces at Quebec, which was then considered virtually impregnable. Wolfe, although having lost the element of strategic surprise, turned to intelligence debriefing. He learned that one of his men had once been a prisoner of the French at Quebec, where he learned of a steep trail up the high embankment from the river to the plain behind the fort. The French, considering the trail too steep and narrow for use by significant military forces, left it undefended. Wolfe moved his forces up the trail, took the French by surprise, and won the battle that ensued on the level fields behind the fortified city.

France had lost Canada by the time George III ascended to the throne, and it was apparent--though not to George or Parliament--that the American colonists had a better idea than such things such as the Sugar, Stamp and Townshend Acts. The British Secret Service fund administered by George III found greater success in buying parliamentary seats during elections than it did in gathering a forewarning of what was about to take place in America.

But, before going forward with the story, let's slip back 150 years to the times of James I of England who effectively dismantled the comparatively sophisticated intelligence organization left by Walsingham, and see what was happening across the channel in France.

While England slept during the reign of James I, Armand Jean Duplessis, Cardinal Duke de Richelieu, was patiently building a secret service to protect Louis XIII. Through his agents, Richelieu kept the King supplied with a constant flow of accurate and reliable information about the activities of those at court and the lesser nobility, and they knew it--a sure guarantee of stability in a court accustomed to intrigues. His was a power that equaled or surpassed that of the King himself.

At Richelieu's death in 1642, he was succeeded by Giulio Mazarrini, Cardinal Jules Mazarin, who had been Richelieu's secretary for the preceding five years. Mazarin exercised significant power with Louis XIII's widow, Anne of Austria, during the minority of Louis XIV, and exploited his spy networks to assure that he was needed. Mazarin lost most of his authority when Louis XIV came of age, and, as Haswell notes, Louis became less interested in the fruits of intelligence as he grew older and more absolute.

But France was a military power and it needed military intelligence, a situation remedied by Louis XV who in 1746 appointed Hermann-Maurice, Count de Saxe, commander of the French Army. de Saxe adopted the organizational concepts of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, specifically a command and staff structure which made provision for military intelligence. He is quoted as saying "You cannot give too much attention to spies and guides . . . they are like eyes, and equally necessary to a general." In North America the military reforms had little effect; France was forced to cede Canada to Britain by the treaty of 1763.

The following year the King dispatched an agent, M. de Pontleroy, to make a tour of observation of the British colonies in North America. The agent spent two years touring the land, reporting back that the land was rich and prosperous. He declared that the colonists were beginning to feel their strength and were too opulent to remain long dependent on any foreign power. He anticipated, he told the King, that the American colonists would not only shake off the rule of the mother country but would invade the West Indies and add them to their domain. This coincided with a report out of London in which an agent reported that only arms, a leader and a feeling of self-reliance were required to secure independence of the the American colonies, and that it was the business of France and Spain to bring about that result. Choiseul was pleased to report that the quarrel would have no end, the colonists would soon do without the assistance of the mother country, England would be ruined and her vast possessions in America would prove to be a millstone around her neck.

In the meantime, Choiseul decided to send a new agent to America. Nominated for the task was Baron Johann de Kalb. Kalb, a lieutenant colonel in the French army, was told to investigate the sentiments of the people, how many troops they could raise, their ability to furnish munitions of war and competent officers, and the probability of a revolt against England and its likely outcome. Kalb reached Philadelphia in January 1768; his flow of reports did little to encourage Choiseul. At present, he wrote, he did not think the colonies would be able to repel force with force. He noted that all he spoke to, from the leaders down to the humblest citizens, cherished a strong affection for the mother country, and it would be difficult to induce them to accept assistance from other nations. The Canadians, although expressing a fondness for France as the land of their origins, had no desire to be returned to the evils of French colonial administration, Kalb reported. "At all events," he wrote about the prospect of the colonies severing ties with Britain, "it will certainly come forth in time," but this was not the time.

By June 1768, Kalb was back in Paris. He waited long for an interview with Choiseul, by then occupied with the annexation of Corsica and less inclined to create any disturbance in America. It was a speedy interview, with Choiseul instructing Kalb, "you need not send me any more reports about the country."

[We all know that Kalb returned to America during the American Revolution, a gift of the French Nation, to serve as a general officer in the Continental Army. But, what is little known is that he was tasked by Marshal Duc de Broglie to approach the Americans and seek appointment as a general in the American Army. He was granted two years' military leave of absence with a promise of promotion to brigadier general, and indeed the promotion took place before his departure for America. All were not fooled. Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, a skilled intelligencer in his own right, had this appraisal of Kalb: "We all know that the court of France has been uniformly distinguished by its superior address and management in diving into the secrets of every nation, whether friend or foe, with whom it has relation. The business of espionage has been brought in France to a science, and a regularly trained corps, judiciously organized, is ever in the service of the court. Of this body, there is strong reason to believe the baron (Kalb) was a member, and was probably one of the chief confidants of that

government in the United States. No man was better qualified for the undertaking." To remove all doubt that Kalb's mission was sanctioned by the French Government, Lafayette confirmed it in a letter to a friend written in 1800.]

France was still smarting from defeat at the hands of the British in the Seven Years' War, the American phase of which was the French and Indian War. She had lost Canada, Louisiana, Isle de Royale, and Arcadia in the New World, and at home Dunkirk was under British control. In August 1775, Louis XVI approved a plan to send secretly yet another agent, an unofficial observer, so that the Ministry might be better informed of North American affairs. It was obvious that the British had underestimated the seriousness of the problem, and every effort to bring the colonies under greater domination was provoking the colonists even more. The agent was to provide information about the colonies and their resources, their military strength and potential, and the character and determination of colonial leaders.

Selected for the mission was Archard Bonvouloir, first cousin of the Marquis de Lambert. He was instructed not to compromise the French Ministry in any way and was to have no credentials showing his association with the government. His cipher reports were to be sent to a mail drop in Calais, with an inside address in Antwerp. The reports would then be diverted at Calais and sent on to London, no less, to the French Ambassador there. Among his rewards for undertaking the mission would be an antedated commission in the French Army, a hold-over from a previous secret mission to America in which he posed as a French officer, when in reality he was not; In fact, he had been at Concord during the colonists' engagement with the British.

Bonvouloir arrived in Philadelphia in December 1775, using the cover of "Flemish merchant." Through a French bookseller in that city, he was put in contact with a recently-formed secret committee of the Congress. [More about this next time] The meetings were held at night at a secret rendezvous, each person arriving separately by a different route. He admittedly showed his hand a little, but ducked all commitment by France, reporting to Versailles that the Americans want French assistance and could be depended on to ask for it. He relayed the Americans' interest in obtaining the services of two French engineers and their desire to obtain arms and war materiel. "Everyone here is a soldier," he wrote, "the troops are well dressed, well paid and well commanded. They have 50,000 men under pay and a large number of volunteers who desire none . . . They are stronger than others thought. It surpasses one's imagination, and you would be surprised at it. Nothing frightens them. Take your measures accordingly."

But there's another piece in the puzzle, a secret piece, a King's secret. Let's trace it from the beginning . . .

It had been twenty-two years since Charles was indoctrinated into the secret project. He was only thirty-two at the time, and after an unusually rapid advancement in the military, found himself honored further with appointment as ambassador to Poland. It was known, of course, that his political backers had strong links with that country. It signaled them that there apparently had been no foundation to rumors that the chief of state planned to take a more aggressive stance against the Russian influence there.

Eight days after announcement of the ambassadorial appointment Charles was approached by a confidant of the chief of state. A letter, signed by the chief of state personally, told Charles to put his faith in matters about which the confidant would brief him, and thereafter he "will not speak of it to a living soul."

His diplomatic instructions required he exert himself in sustaining the existing government in Poland, and told him to be vague and reserved when asked his government's attitude toward those who would seek to change Poland's leadership. His secret instructions from the chief of state's confidant clearly were for a Track II operation. He was ordered to cultivate, most secretly, the forces of Polish nationalism who would be expected to be favorably inclined toward his government. He was to oppose the pro-Russian elements in power and to counter increased Russian intervention through the secret funding and other support of the Polish nationalist movement.

Charles was thus ordered not only to implement a secret policy contrary to the instructions of his diplomatic superiors, but one which was in direct conflict with the views of his political backers. These overt connections would serve as cover for what he was actually to do, and would help relieve suspicion if any misstep in his secret maneuvers resulted in unwanted attention. The secret instructions had gone one step further. Not only were his diplomatic superiors to be kept unwitting of the Track II effort, but through his dispatches and other reporting, Charles was to attempt to sway their judgment into accepting the goals of the secret policy as their own.

In the years that followed, the operation grew to include other agents and to encompass secret operations in other nations, yet the operation in Poland, despite successes and failures, remained the crucial linch-pin for Charles. The conflicts between his overt instructions and his secret charge were relieved somewhat in the fifth year of the operation, when the chief of state approved the briefing of the principal desk officer responsible for communicating with the ambassador.

The desk officer, a careerist, could thus receive Charles' enciphered reports though the safety of the diplomatic pouch, remove them and deliver them to the chief of state without the diplomatic hierarchy being aware. Responses from the chief of state could be handled in the same way; they could be inserted into the pouch just before it was sealed by the desk officer. Here too, there was another advantage. Should the ambassador's superiors dictate instructions to him that would bring a strong conflict with Charles' secret instructions, the desk officer could modify them only slightly to blunt their impact. For a while, Charles was shielded from the collision course confrontation which was most certain to come.

The Russians increased their garrisons and Charles' major effort had to be curtailed. He was ordered home, but not before he could arrange for secret subsidies to the Polish nationalists through an agent who was to remain behind in Poland--above all, those forces had to survive.

Although Charles had been relieved of his ambassadorial post and had returned to his military career, he assumed even greater responsibilities for maintenance of the secret operations. Not only did he continue to receive the reporting of the other agents in the network, but to this was added all the diplomatic correspondence between his government and its ambassadors in Poland and Russia. He assumed the role of analyst, providing the chief of state with assessments through other clandestine channels without the knowledge of either his military superiors or the nation's senior diplomats.

The senior diplomatic desk officer was the first to fall. His superiors became suspicious of the man's strange performance of his duties and, lacking any proof, arranged to dismiss him for other causes. Operating in retirement from his home, the desk officer continued his function in the operation, including the all-important link of the net to the chief of state, its only link. The overt diplomatic correspondence which he had obtained previously through his official position continued to pass through the man's hands to Charles. Others in the network,

utilizing their continued access in the nation's embassies abroad would copy it and send it back to him in cipher. It was slow, but it worked.

In Charles' tenth year with the secret operation, it came his turn to fall from grace. He, too, was dismissed for causes unrelated to the secret operation, and retired to his home some distance from the seat of government. The chief of state, however, desired the secret operation to be continued on that basis, even if it was necessary to brief additional people to assure that the secret correspondence to and from Charles could continue unimpaired. Even the death of the former desk officer had little impact on the operation. Secret reporting flowed directly to Charles, in his exile, and his analyses went directly to the chief of state, unopened, through alternate secret channels.

Charles had become the case officer for a wide-ranging government secret operation, yet he was no longer a part of that government. He received his orders and the funds to implement them directly from the chief of state, maintained the two-way communications of the net, and reported the results, with analysis, to the chief of state, with none of the cabinet or departmental heads any the wiser.

Thus it had been for twenty-two years, when the chief of state died. What was to become of the extensive hip-pocket intelligence and covert action operation? That was the situation in 1774 for Charles Francois, Count de Broglie, upon the death of Louis XV and the ascent of Louis XVI, the dead monarch's grandson.

Charles had to confront the problem quickly. Publicly he was perceived as disgraced and dismissed from public service; yet, he was also an important confidant of the late King and the sole channel for the secret network. Three days after Louis XVI's accession, Charles sent him a resume of the operation since its inception, expecting the new King to summon him to explain the curious communication. No such summons was forthcoming.

Instead, by return post he received an unsigned letter indicating that the writer, Louis XVI, had no intention of compromising himself. It read, in part:

"... M. d'Ogny [the Postmaster General] had asked to speak to me on Saturday, when he handed me the letters in cipher. I opened them to see what the cipher was like, never having seen one. He was greatly astonished to learn that I knew already of this correspondence, and he assured me that he did not know whence the letters came, or wither they went... I return the letters by the same way, with your pay for the month of May. You may keep your bureau till the month of July, when I will have more definite commands conveyed to you. But, send me back the cipher, and be assured of the most impenetrable secrecy..."

It was not the reception Charles had anticipated. He made another attempt through the secret channel for permission to brief the new King on the operation and to secure the safe custody of any papers that might be in royal quarters. Fearing particularly that extensive intelligence collection which had been conducted in Britain for a contingency invasion plan would fall into the hands of Britain's spies or friends in court, Charles wrote his sovereign:

"... As for the papers, I do not know whether his late Majesty kept in his desk the whole of the papers, memoranda, maps, and plans, which I sent to him. Certain of them, of the year 1765 or 1766, relating to England, have maps in long tin boxes. All these should be carefully concealed. If M. d'Aiguillon could get possession of them, he would probably communicate their contents to Lord Stormont [the British Ambassador to France], in order to stand well with the Courts of all the foreign Powers, which he is trying his utmost to do."

The King's response six days later provided good news for Charles and his restoration to public life, but bad news for the operation:

" . . . Having maturely examined these correspondences, I have come to the conclusion that they serve no purpose, and indeed may be injurious to my service. This is not on account of M. d'Aiguillon (for he is no longer anything), but in general; they hamper the Minister of Foreign Affairs if he is not acquainted with them, and they give rise to vexations if he is . . . I will send you your pay for the month of June, as the last payment; after that you will dissolve your cabinet, and I require from you not only secrecy on the subject of this former correspondence, but also that you will burn all the documents in any way concerning it. This precaution cannot fail to be useful to you, and by acquitting yourself sincerely of it and not mixing yourself up with any affair in future, you will merit to be permitted to return to Court."

It was clear to Charles that he could win the monarch's favor by destroying the compromising clandestine correspondence, but it was also clear to him that both he and the other members of the net could equally be discarded and forgotten. He advised the King through the secret channel that burning the secret correspondence could be a disadvantage. The papers, stored in a number of places, he said, should be gathered together and a final accounting made. There is also the matter:

" . . . of all those who had pensions and emoluments fixed by the late King, and from whom it is evident that the King, whose benevolence, goodness and justice are well known, would not wish to withdraw them. It must also be observed, that persons employed in affairs of such importance and secrecy, should not be deprived of the recompenses that have been accorded to them, which they have merited by their fidelity, and which most of them would be unable to do without. The late King set aside ten thousand francs a month for this purpose."

It was a bold move, and an exceedingly dangerous one. Charles was challenging the Crown in its desire to distance itself from an activity with serious potential for embarrassment, both internally and with a number of affected foreign governments. Fortunately, it was a successful move. In the interim there had been a shake-up in the bureaucracy. M. de Vergennes, the French Ambassador to Sweden, had been elevated to Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The secret correspondence was now at the helm of foreign affairs. Vergennes was one of the earliest members of the network and, no doubt, its most distinguished member. The changed attitude at Court was reflected in Louis XVI's response to Charles' resettlement appeal:

"I have found in the King's apartments, as you told me I should, several maps and papers, which I have locked up; since then I have inquired about you, and all that I have heard shows me that you have done nothing except by orders of the King. Therefore I permit you to return to Paris, and to the Court at Compiègne. I approve of your writing to the Ministers to tell them to discontinue the correspondence. I send you the formula of the letters, which you must send back to me for signature.

"As for you, on your arrival in Paris, you will collect all your papers, leave them with M. de Vergennes, and afterwards you can take your repose."

The King was true to his word. After a review of the papers by Vergennes and two other confidants, Louis XVI granted generous annuities to all the members of the network. He was particularly gracious to one of the agents who had been confined to the Bastille rather than to explain his conduct by compromising the operation. There were even twenty thousand francs for the fading Polish nationalists. Recognition was granted Charles, Duke de Broglie, in a

letter from his sovereign which said, in part:

" . . . it has been proved to me that you have behaved with all the zeal and fidelity which you owed to him [Louis XV], and which were never slackened by the sometimes embarrassing circumstances in which you found yourself; and, in every respect, you acquitted yourself of this commission in the most prudent manner, and in that most conformable to the wishes of the late King. It has been proved to me, moreover, that during the last few years you have found yourself compromised in a matter in which you had no share, and on suspicions which could only have taken rise in the ignorance that prevailed respecting your relations with the late King and the studies which you undertook by his command, and yet this has never induced you to betray his secret . . . "

The secret correspondence, or the King's Secret as it has been known since, had drawn to a close. But, there was still one matter connected with it that remained undone.

One agent remained to be resettled. He was not only a threat to the Crown, but a security risk as well. The Chevalier d'Eon had been dismissed from the French Embassy in London after a confrontation with an unwitting Ambassador who was offended by his behavior, including a penchant for wearing women's clothing. Banished from polite society, d'Eon's "beat" became the offbeat, particularly the taverns frequented by the press. His colorful reports had detailed the gossip of Parliament and the unpublished scandals of the ruling party. His frequent demands for salary increases and his half-threatening letters would have made him an excellent candidate for separation from the net except for one thing--he held documents proving the nature of the intelligence operation. Particularly incriminating was a set of the contingency plans for the invasion of England to which Louis XV carelessly had affixed his initials.

Earlier efforts to encourage d'Eon to part with the papers and to return to France had failed. He even had told the press of one of the approaches, concealing only the existence of the net and his secret bargaining points. This time the task fell to a secret agent of Vergennes, Caron de Beaumarchais. Beaumarchais, the poet and playwright, was in London attempting the preclusive purchase of a pamphlet scandalizing Marie Antoinette, a task similar to an earlier mission to Britain for Louis XV to prevent publication of a work dealing with Madame du Barry. The playwright and d'Eon struck it off immediately. Said d'Eon, "We were drawn together by the natural curiosity of two extraordinary beings to meet each other."

A deal was concluded. d'Eon would turn the incriminating papers over to Beaumarchais and return to France in exchange for permission to there declare as and dress as a woman, to receive a pension, and to wear the order of a Knight of the Royal and Military Order of St. Louis, awarded for service in the King's Dragoons. In return for d'Eon's agreement not to take male clothing back to France, Beaumarchais also agreed to a demand for two thousand crowns to purchase an expensive feminine wardrobe.

The business of the secret correspondence was at long last finished, but the London affair had not ended. d'Eon had gravitated toward the coterie of John Wilkes, Lord Mayor of London, and Beaumarchais had followed. Wilkes, a radical political intriguer, had gained notoriety for his membership in the orgiastic Hell Fire Club and for his clandestine printing of erotica. He was also a friend of American independence. With little difficulty, Beaumarchais penetrated the circle. At Wilkes' home Beaumarchais met Dr. Arthur Lee of Virginia, a secret agent of the Committee of Secret Correspondence of the Continental Congress. Beaumarchais, whose command of the English language was reportedly limited to "Goddam," was pleased to be cultivated by Lee, an American speaking fluent French. Lee quickly persuaded Beaumarchais of the American will and pointed out that the wealth of

North America currently being siphoned off by Britain could, in victory, be the object of major trade with France. Lee boasted, with little basis at the time, of the American capability to win its revolution, claiming for example that some 80,000 Americans were besieging the British garrison at Boston. Beaumarchais was equal to the task by assuring Lee that Foreign Minister Vergennes would most assuredly support the American rebels through covert means.

But, that's another story, and will have to wait until next week.

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