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CLANDESTINE SERVICES HISTORY

THE BERLIN TUNNEL OPERATION

| - 1956

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE.	i
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.	iii
I. INTRODUCTION.	1
II. PLANNING.	6
III. IMPLEMENTATION.	17
IV. TERMINATION	23
V. PRODUCTION.	25
VI. AFTERMATH	27
Appendix A - Analysis of the Reasons for the Discovery of the Tunnel	
Appendix B - Recapitulation of the Intelli- gence Derived	
Appendix C - Typical American Press Comment	
Appendix D - East German Press Comment	

PREFACE

| (the Berlin Tunnel project) came into being
sometime in | (the exact date cannot be established) and
ceased as an active operation in the summer of 1956. The
writer served as Headquarters case officer on the project from
the winter of | until the summer of | and then as
the field case officer until |

| , were intimately associated with the
planning and implementation of the project at the policy level
and very kindly offered suggestions for the preparation of
this manuscript. Their comments have been incorporated and
are greatly appreciated. Several other individuals, including
| , who were in a position to offer valuable
advice were absent from Headquarters during the period the
paper was being prepared and thus unavailable to assist.

When this project was first discussed with the then .
Director of CIA, Mr. Allen Welsh Dulles, he ordered that, in
the interests of security, as little as possible concerning
the project would be reduced to writing. It is probable that
few orders have been so conscientiously obeyed, and yet there

1

are a great many cubic feet of files connected with this project. These files mainly concern technical and administrative matters. Only those details which, in the opinion of the writer, are necessary to a broad understanding of the manner in which the project's objectives were accomplished have been included in this paper. Those interested in additional data may wish to consult the files.

In addition to setting forth significant developments, the writer has attempted to provide insight into the reasons for certain courses of action. At times this required a speculative approach. The judgments derived from such speculation were shared by all those actively concerned in the management of the project, and it is the writer's hope that they are accurately expressed in the following paper. Any error in this respect, however, is the sole responsibility of the writer.

August, 1967

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	1 -
	2 -
	3 -
	4 -
	5 -
	6 -
	7 -
	8 -
	9 -
	10 -
	11 -
	12 -
	13 -
	14 -
	15 -
	16 -
	17 -
	18 -
	19 -
	20 -
	21 -

I. INTRODUCTION

The exact moment when the idea emerged of digging a tunnel to intercept Soviet and East German communications is somewhat obscure. A number of factors must be considered, among them the following:

a. As early as 1948 U.S. Intelligence Officers became interested in the benefits to be derived from tapping Soviet and Satellite landlines on a scale not previously considered necessary. The loss of certain sources during this period created gaps in our intelligence coverage which were particularly unfortunate during this period of Cold War escalation. It became evident that the tapping of certain selected landlines might produce the information needed to fill a number of the gaps in our overall intelligence picture.

b. In the late 1940's and early 1950's the U.S., through the briefings of "returnee" German scientists (those who were taken by the Soviets after World War II to work in Russia) and other sources, became aware of a new |

c. In the late 1940's the
in the course of its continuing efforts to provide secure communications for the Agency, became aware of a principle which, when applied to target communications, offered certain possibilities. Plans to exploit this technique were immediately formulated.

These factors then served as additional incentives (above and beyond our normal collection requirements) to focus attention on Soviet landline targets. In mid- exploratory discussions were held in Washington to plan the mounting of an attack on Soviet landlines in East Germany with special emphasis to be placed on the Berlin area.

Vital information on the technical details of important Soviet and East German landlines first became available

during the latter part of | , and by | all of the
pertinent technical material had been assembled and sufficient-
ly analyzed to permit the pinpointing of the most important
Soviet circuits. |

Subsequent events proved
this information to be completely correct.

Various methods of tapping these circuits were explored
and one sampling operation was run in the East Zone, unfortu-
nately with negative results. By | , however, the
effectiveness of |

had become such that a | sample
was obtained of the prime target circuit. |

Special mention should be made of the fact that
it was necessary to maintain a 24-hour watch over a |
month period on "our" end of the cable to record these

samples |

Meantime collateral collection effort continued on the
communications systems involved |

At this point (mid-) we knew it could be done - the next
step was the problem of installing a permanent tap on the
target lines.

Precisely at what point the idea of a tunnel for the
purpose of tapping the target cables began to come into focus
cannot be pinpointed. |

While it should perhaps be possible to credit one individual with the initial concept, it appears to be a bit difficult to do so. At any rate,

the idea of a tunnel to tap the target cables began to take definite shape.

II. PLANNING

Inspection of all sites from which it might be possible to tunnel | to the target cables served to narrow the choices to two spots: |

| . The site actually used | was selected after careful deliberation which included, but was not limited to, the following factors:

a. |

b. The length of the tunnel was considered to be not impractical |

c. Land was available | from which to begin the tunnel.

d. Complete collateral information on the area was available, |

At this point the following major questions remained unanswered:

a. Was it indeed possible to dig a tunnel of this magnitude | clandestinely, considering the fact that the border at this point was heavily and constantly patrolled by the East Germans, and hit the targets?

b. |

c. |

in such a remote area (this portion of Berlin was at that time a "squattersville" of shacks and hovels constructed from rubble by refugees from the East German Zone)?

In retrospect the first question, "Could the tunnel be dug?", was never really a debatable one---those concerned more or less decided that given sufficient money and personnel the job could be done. (This judgment fortunately proved sound.) The second question, | , haunted the minds of project personnel for many weeks and a great many ingenious ideas were brought forth and discarded for one reason or another until the suggestion was made |

This in effect was the solution. |



planning for the project continued
and in of that year the Director of
Central Intelligence approved the terms of reference which
covered the implemen-
tation of the project. A series of conferences in late
and early led to the following decisions:

a.

(1) procure a site,
, and drive a tunnel to a point beneath
the target cables;

(2) be responsible for the recording of all
signals produced

and

(3) process in Washington all of the tele-
graphic material received from the project.

b.

(1) drive a vertical shaft from the tunnel's
end to the targets;

(2) effect the cable taps and deliver a usable signal to the head of the tunnel for recording; and

(3) provide for a center to process the voice recordings from the site.

Activity thus proceeded on three fronts - in Berlin steps were taken to lease the necessary land and right-of-way easements for the site

Planning called for the completion of this work on

For assistance in actually digging the tunnel it was decided to request help from the and to this end the

were briefed on the project. The initial contact with was made personally by Mr. Allen Dulles to

Fortunately, a trained engineer, had just been appointed

From the first moment he learned of the operation,

was an enthusiastic supporter of the concept.

selected (the only available member of the with any experience in

tunneling) to head the project. This proved to be an excellent choice for turned in an outstanding job. By

mid-summer of he had firmed up the engineering plans, selected a crew of engineering personnel, and actually constructed a mock-up tunnel some 150 yards long working under operational conditions at a high security base in

Some mention should be made of the actual method of constructing the tunnel. |

It was calculated (and subsequently proven to be true) that this method of construction would not permit settling of the soil and detection of the tunnel from the surface.

Meantime engineers constructed a mock-up of the tunnel's terminal end

Available plans indicated that the cables were buried some inches deep along the side of a heavily traveled highway. The top of the vertical shaft then needed to be approximately inches below the surface of the highway in order to give the tapping crew room to work below the ceiling of the shaft, and the whole structure had to be capable of supporting the weight of heavy trucks since the tunnel and tap chamber lay directly beneath the highway.

Considerable care was devoted to insulating the

tap chamber to prevent its acting like a huge drum. ^{3/}

Considerable thought was given to the quantity and content of the material available from the target and the manner in which it was to be processed. |

^{3/}In spite of the insulation, it was a weird sensation to be in the chamber when an iron-shod horse trotted across it. We also suffered some anxious moments one foggy morning when the microphone in the tap chamber gave forth with a continuous series of dull thuds. After the sun burned away the fog, visual observation showed that the East German police had set up a temporary automobile checkpoint directly over the chamber. The "thuds" the microphone picked up were caused by the police officer in charge stomping his feet on the road surface to keep warm.

III. IMPLEMENTATION

By | things were beginning to take shape
and the situation was as follows:

a. |

b. All of the basic supplies, equipment, and
personnel were in Berlin ready to start construction
on the tunnel. |

c. Space at Headquarters was secured and the
| had assembled a crew and was
well under way in fabricating the unique equipment
necessary to process the anticipated telegraphic traffic.

d. Initial personnel had been selected and were
being processed |

It should be noted that personnel and equipment were programmed initially to exploit approximately percent of the anticipated take. In retrospect, perhaps this could be considered overly cautious. In justification of this decision it should be said that no one had ever tunneled under clandestine conditions with the expectation of fitting a target two inches in diameter and inches below a main German/Soviet highway. There were those who manifested certain reservations on the feasibility of so doing, and it is greatly to the credit of those senior officials, , that, in spite of these reservations, the project was permitted to proceed.

Careful visual observation was maintained and tunneling operations stopped each time the German guards walked over the tunnel on their regular patrols. Pumps were installed to take care of the excess water. Observation logs were maintained, and since the highway under observation was the main road from East Berlin to the Schoenfeld Airport, considerable Order of Battle information was obtained. It was also possible to estimate quite accurately the relative importance of individuals visiting East Berlin by observing the security precautions taken by the East Germans and the Soviets.

Cool air was supplied to the face of the tunnel through ductwork from an air conditioning unit |

The tunnel was completed on | . Construction of the tap chamber commenced | and was completed, with the | target cables exposed, on |

To appreciate this accomplishment it is necessary to remember that the tunnel was | long |

The lack of an adequate base line made the surveying problem especially difficult. The engineers decided at one point that an object of known size in the East Zone would be useful as a reference point, so a baseball game was organized with the objective of knocking a baseball as far into the East Zone as possible. This scheme was frustrated by the friendliness of the East German guards who kept returning the baseball. Nonetheless, the engineers expressed confidence that they knew their position when the tunnel was completed to a point which could be contained in a six-inch cube. They were correct.

Excess humidity is probably one of the greatest enemies of electronic equipment. To guard against this problem the section of the tunnel immediately adjacent to the tap chamber was insulated and sealed to form, in effect, a closed room. Vapor barriers were erected and, in addition, a heavy "anti-personnel" door of steel and concrete was constructed to seal off the tunnel some 15 yards from its terminal end. From the beginning it was realized that the duration of this operation was finite. Considerable thought was given to the posture the U.S. Government would adopt upon the tunnel's discovery and to those

measures which would be taken at the site. The following position was finally approved:

a. |

b. |

c. The "anti-Personnel" door described above was installed. ^{4/}

d. |

All equipment for isolating and preamplifying the signals and passing them down the tunnel for recording was in place before each tap was made so that monitoring of each pair could begin as soon as it was tapped. |

Careful check was kept of the temperature and

^{4/}This door bore the following inscription neatly lettered in German and Cyrillic: "Entry is forbidden by order of the Commanding General." It was reasoned that this sign might give pause to Soviet and/or German officials and gain time. As a matter of fact, there were those Communist individuals who considered the posting of this sign as one of the most audacious aspects of the entire undertaking.

1

humidity in the tap chamber to prevent the possibility of the introduction of moisture into the target cables thus causing faults. The moisture in the air caused by the breathing and perspiration of the technicians doing the tapping operation forced the suspension of the operation several times to permit the air conditioning equipment to dehumidify the chamber. All the components in the electrical isolation networks were individually selected and subjected to rigorous tests to insure maximum reliability, and the lead-away cables were constructed of the best available materials, sheathed in lead, and handled in accordance with the highest telephone company standards. The strictest possible visual watch was maintained with the tap crew. In short, in this, as in all aspects of the operation, every effort was made to guarantee success even though in many instances it meant delay in achieving the objective.

IV. TERMINATION

The tunnel was discovered | 21 April 1956,
after | of operation. A memorandum pre-
pared on 15 August 1956 (reproduced in its entirety as
Appendix A) examines in detail all evidence available as of
that date on the reasons for the discovery. The conclusion
reached was that the loss of this source was purely the result
of unfortunate circumstances beyond our control - a combina-
tion of the fact that one of the cables was in very poor
physical condition (this was known from the beginning) and a
long period of unusually heavy rainfall. It appeared that water
entered the cable in sufficient quantity to make it inopera-
tive, thus necessitating digging up sections of the cable and
causing discovery of the tap.

V. PRODUCTION

The following statistics may be of interest in evaluating the project:

a. |

b. |

c. |

d. A small processing unit |
was maintained at the Berlin site to permit on-the-spot
monitoring of engineering circuits for the protection of
the project and scanning of the more productive circuits
for the "hot" intelligence. Daily reports of sufficient
value to warrant electrical transmission to Washington
| were produced.

e. Processing of the backlogged material con-
tinued until 30 September 1958 |

f. |

The information from this material was disseminated in
a closely controlled system | Appendix B
consists of a summary of the value of the material received
together with typical customer comments. |

VI. AFTERMATH

As previously noted, considerable thought was given during the entire life of the project on the result its discovery would bring. In retrospect it is probably correct to say that, among those most actively concerned with the project's management, a consensus developed that the Soviets would probably suppress knowledge of the tunnel's existence rather than admit to the world that Free World intelligence organs had the capability of successfully mounting an operation of this magnitude. In other words, it was felt that for the Soviets to admit that the U.S. had been reading their high level communications circuits would cause the Soviets to lose face. Perhaps fortunately, fate intervened, and as a possible consequence the Soviet course of action was exactly contrary to expectation.

The Commandant of the Soviet Berlin Garrison, who would normally have controlled the handling of the situation when the tunnel was discovered, was absent from Berlin and the Acting Commandant, Colonel Ivan A. Kotsyuba, was in charge. There is some reason to believe that he (for whatever reason) was forced to make a personal decision on a course of action without benefit of advice from Moscow. At any rate his reaction was unexpected in that he invited the entire Berlin

press corps to a briefing and tour of the tunnel and its facilities. As a result the tunnel was undoubtedly the most highly publicized peacetime espionage enterprise in modern times prior to the "U-2 incident." Worldwide reaction was outstandingly favorable in terms of enhancement of U.S. prestige. Non-Soviet Bloc sentiment can be generally summarized as follows:

a. There was universal admiration (and this included informed Soviets) on the technical excellence of the installation and the imaginative nature of the undertaking.

b. The non-Communist world reacted with surprise and unconcealed delight to this indication that the U.S., almost universally regarded as a stumbling neophyte in espionage matters, was capable of a coup against the Soviet Union, which had long been the acknowledged master in such matters.

c. Coupled with regret that the Cold War necessitated such measures, thoughtful editorial comment applauded this indication that the U.S. was capable of fulfilling its role of Free World leadership in the struggle.

Appendix C contains a sampling of typical U.S. press accounts and editorial comment on the tunnel. Predictably the Communist press treated the tunnel as an outrage and an

intolerable indecency. Appendix D consists of a study of East German press reaction to the incident.

For their contributions to Project | awards
were made to the following individuals: 5/

Distinguished Intelligence Medal
Intelligence Medal of Merit
Intelligence Medal of Merit
Intelligence Medal of Merit
Distinguished Intelligence Medal
Intelligence Medal of Merit
Intelligence Medal of Merit
Distinguished Intelligence Medal
Intelligence Medal of Merit

5/ Unfortunately the writer has been unable to locate an exact record of those persons who received other recognition from the Agency for their participation in this project and any omissions are regretted. It should also be noted that approximately | people participated wittingly or unwittingly in this undertaking. In fact there are very few, if any, of the elements of CIA that were not called upon for assistance, either directly or indirectly (such as providing manpower), during the life of the project.

APPENDIX A

NOTE: This assessment was prepared by the | staff
immediately after the discovery of the tunnel and is based
on pertinent information available. |

15 August 1956

DISCOVERY BY THE SOVIETS OF |

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 | was
purely fortuitous |

A descrip-
tion of the events leading to these conclusions is contained
in this paper.

APPENDIX B.

RECAPITULATION OF THE INTELLIGENCE DERIVED

Set forth below are a recapitulation of intelligence derived from the | material and some typical consumer comments.

APPENDIX C

TYPICAL AMERICAN PRESS COMMENT

1 May 1956

The Tunnel of Love

The United States Government has not yet made any official reply to the Soviet and East German allegations and protests concerning the 300-yard tunnel that American intelligence operatives are said to have built underneath the border between West and East Berlin for espionage purposes. Meanwhile, assuming the story to be correct—we cannot help thinking the Communists have made a grievous mistake to raise so much fuss about their discovery. They are even said to have conducted special propaganda tours through the tunnel and to have exhibited the wiretapping and other recording apparatus that the Americans are supposed to have installed inside it.

The probable result of all this has been to give the anti-Communist resistance in East Germany a good deal of amusement and encouragement. Certainly it must have served to strengthen the impression of American resourcefulness and thereby to restore some measure of our prestige—which apparently had been deteriorating since the equivocal attitude taken by the American authorities in the East German uprisings of June, 1954—among the captive population. The reaction of their kinsmen in West Germany is probably a pretty good index to their own.

In West Germany the story has been accepted at face value with astonishment and delight as an evidence that the tradition of Yankee resourcefulness and ingenuity is not a myth after all. Espionage is one game in which the Communists were deemed, even by their enemies, to be particularly expert and our own side to be dismally inept. Very few Germans, as the *Frankfurter Neue Presse* exultantly observed, even suspected that the Americans "were capable of so much cleverness"; and it would be even more devastating to Communist prestige if it were disclosed that the espionage tunnel had been in operation for some time before the Communists became aware of it.

Indeed, if the tunnel episode turns out to have been the product of Yankee ingenuity, there is an interesting parallel in American history. During the siege of Petersburg in 1864, an enterprising Union officer from the Pennsylvania coal fields conceived the idea of mining the Confederate positions from a tunnel under them. The tunnel was dug and the mines were finally set off; and though the operation was a fiasco in part because of the failure of Union commanders to execute orders, the boldness of the stroke has compelled admiration ever since.

7 May 1956

BERLIN

Wonderful Tunnel

Berlin, city of rubble, refugees, and occasional patches of glitter, is an Alfred Hitchcock dream of subterfuge and suspicion. In back streets, darkly mysterious houses lurk behind high wire fences suggestive of darker and more mysterious doings within. Newsmen recently counted 27 separate agencies of Western intelligence known to be at work in Berlin.

Their operatives—some fashionably clothed in the grey flannel of New York's Madison Avenue, some with armpit holsters bulging under blue serge—report to different headquarters, and rarely know what their colleagues are up to.

In all Berlin there is no spot better suited to the Hitchcock scheme of things than a rustic, semi-deserted corner known on the U.S. side as Rudow and in the Russian zone, just over the way, as Alt-Gliencke. Self-important ducks and chickens strut like commissars in Alt-Gliencke's cobbled street. Berlin's only working windmill turns lazily in the breeze near by, and close to the boundary separating East and West stands a U.S. radar station, bending its reticular ear to the operations at East Berlin's busy Schöenefeld Airport. Two rings of barbed wire guard the lonely radar post, and

behind them a detachment of uniformed Signal Corps men live a life as secret and isolated as monks.

The Big Celler. For many a month, the super-secrecy surrounding the construction and operation of Rudow's radar station had fed the gossip of bored Americans in the occupied city. There were those who remembered a civilian engineer hired to supervise the job; he had quit in disgust because the blueprints seemed so crazy. "Why build a cellar big enough to drive through with a dump truck?" he asked, and was told to mind his own business. Others recalled seeing friends whom they knew to be engineers suddenly appearing at the station wearing the insignia of the U.S. Army Signal Corps. Why? An amused snig was the only answer questioners ever got—but last week the Russians thought they had found a better one. One night at 7 o'clock, an angry, chunky Soviet colonel named Ivan Kotsiuba called a press conference in East Ber-

lin. Purpose: to protest the building by "American organizations" of a secret tunnel under East German territory, "with the criminal intent of spying." Offered a chance to see for themselves, the Western newsmen were taken to a site some 500 yards from the radar station at Rudow.

A Lot of Money. Truckloads of Red army troops and squad cars crowded with Volkspolizei stood by. Mobile generators were humming to provide lights for the occasion, and at the entrance to a hole dug in the ground, a colonel of the Russian signal corps was on hand to explain it all. Ten feet below, its entrance a hole cut in the roof by the Russians, lay the tunnel itself: a cast-iron tube about six feet in diameter and 500-600 yards long, crammed with electronic equipment, cables, tape recorders, ventilating apparatus and pumps of both British and American make. At the East German end, cables led out of the main body of the tunnel to a separate chamber where they were linked to two East German cables and a third used by the Russians. What was at the American end? The newsmen were not permitted to know. As they crawled westward, a sandbag barrier barred the way, its purpose emphasized by a sign reading in English and German: "You are now entering the American sector."

"This tunnel," said the Russian expert, with a note of admiration, "was built to last years. The party responsible must have had a lot of money."

Who was responsible? Nobody, neither the Pentagon, the State Department, nor the Central Intelligence Agency, was saying. But as Berlin's papers erupted gleefully with the news, one Berlin editor told a ranking U.S. official: "I don't know whether your people dug that wonderful tunnel or not, but whoever it was, let me say I think it was too bad it was found. It's the best publicity the U.S. has had in Berlin for a long time."

BOSTON POST

MAY 4 1956

Circ.: m. 267,872
S. 196,496

Front Page Ed. Page Other Page

MAY 4 1956
D.C.S.

Hope It Is True

Soviet charges that American intelligence agents dug a tunnel in Berlin, tapped a telephone cable, and recorded conversations over the Red communication network, which the Reds made with considerable fanfare, and during a conducted tour of the spy tunnel for correspondents, gives us some faint hope.

Frankly, we didn't know that American intelligence agents were that smart. In fact, we were beginning to think that what the Central Intelligence Agency needed was a few lessons on the fundamentals of espionage from some defected Russian agent. But, now we take it all back. If the Soviet charges are true, American intelligence agents have actually collected some important information concerning Soviet military operations and installations in East Germany.

We hope that American intelligence agents have infiltrated the Soviet department of foreign affairs, planted western sympathizers in the heart of the Soviet bureaucracy and started a stream of microfilmed copies of important Soviet documents towards the CIA in Washington.

We hope all this because that is precisely what the Soviet spy network did and is probably doing right now in the United States. This is not just tit for tat—but a stark necessity in the world of cynical power politics.

Circ.: c. 23,166

Front Page Ed. Page Other Page

Date:

MAY 12 1950

Money Well Spent ³

There is only one agency in Washington which does not account for the money it spends. The Central Intelligence Agency, headed by Allen W. Dulles, has never reported to Congress. A special committee, appointed by the President, did make a survey of the agency's activities and was apparently satisfied that it was efficient. So secret are the activities of this group that even the amount of money it spends is unknown. Accountants have estimated that there is roughly \$2 billion in budgets of other departments which is diverted to the CIA.

Naturally enough, Congress worries from time to time that this money may not be well spent. Last week some news came out of Berlin which should calm such fears:

The Russians discovered that their three main telephone cables from East Berlin to points east were tapped. A tunnel from the western zone, connected with the tapped lines and wires, led to sandbags at the zone boundary. The Russians were greatly disturbed. They claim that all messages for several years have been intercepted. They blame this violation of privacy on American Intelligence.

Our officials have expressed horror at the charge. They haven't, they say, the slightest idea of where the lines lead or by whom they were laid. The Russians are just old meanies to claim we wire-tapped.

West Berliners are laughing. Good for American Intelligence, they say. They hope, and so do we, that the Russians have only discovered one of several taps. At least, the expose shows that some of the money spent by CIA may have been very well spent indeed.

CIA MAY HAVE ORDERED WIRETAP TUNNEL -- DREIER

Alex Dreier at 6:00 P.M. over WMAQ (Chicago) and the NEC
Radio Network:

"And now under the heading, special report, part one.

~~"Great Britain with its Frogman spy who turned out to be not so successful in his secretiveness has nothing on us.~~ We have a tunnel we dug under the communist sector of Berlin and which the reds exposed to the light of day, as you probably know, a short while ago. Well, our NEC correspondent, good friend and colleague, (Frank Burkholzer) has investigated the story of the wiretap tunnel and he says there's just one conclusion -- it's ours. We dug it, we equipped it with electronic equipment to listen in on communist East German conversations for a whole year before they found us out.

"Presumably we should be embarrassed but nobody in Berlin is. In fact, there is a hint of American and West German pride in knowing that we pulled off an espionage trick on the Reds for a change. Of course, the East Germans are making a good thing of it by conducting tours through the tunnel to impress their people with the dastardliness of the American spies, but that may backfire on them because the East Germans are not beyond getting a quiet chuckle at this outwitting of their communist rulers.

Burkholzer tells us that the United States is stamped all over the listening post tunnel. Now, the tunnel is on the outskirts of town with our end being located under a so-called experimental radar station beside a garbage dump. It runs straight under a plowed field that has white border marking posts above it. The Russians have made three openings for the tourists. One is near the wiretap, another at a point about 150 yards out in the field. When anyone asks an American why there isn't any radar at the experimental radar station, the usual answer, according to Burkholzer, is, we said it was experimental, didn't we? Want to make something of it?"

"Naturally the army and the government in Washington aren't going to admit anything unless they have to. No one tells who ordered the eavesdropping tunnel built or who paid for it or who did the listening and the digging. Perhaps it was the work of a local Berlin outfit, just a curious bunch of boys. Or perhaps it was done secretly on orders direct from the Pentagon or the CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY. Anyway, it was done well because it wasn't discovered for a year and now the Russians may be wondering how much we learned from recording all the phone talks, possibly including everything that went through the switchboard of the nearby Soviet airfield. So thanks for the information, Frank Burkholzer, and now we have a question for you. Why don't we open a tourist entrance at our end of the tunnel and cash in on the publicity? Step up, one and all. Only a quarter. See modern espionage in electronic form and all underground, and who knows? Perhaps you will meet an occasional communist tourist."

Berlin Reds Flock to See 'U. S. Wire - Tap Tunnel'

By Gaston Coblenz

By Wire to the Herald Tribune
© 1950, N. Y. Herald Tribune Inc.

BERLIN, May 26.—One of the greatest sights of the cold war is the "American spy tunnel" now on exhibition in East Berlin.

The 500-yard tunnel represents a venture of extraordinary audacity—the stuff of which thriller films are made. If it was dug by American Intelligence forces—and that is the general assumption—it is a striking example of their capacity for daring undertakings.

Seldom has an intelligence organization executed a more skillful and difficult operation than that accomplished by the tunnel's diggers: the tapping of 259 Communist long-distance telephone lines running underground in Berlin. The lines apparently included some running to Soviet satellite state in Eastern Europe, as well as Soviet Army circuits in Germany.

Snack Bar Thrives

The tunnel, discovered by the Communists a month ago and now the main sightseeing attraction in Berlin, can be visited by making a twenty-minute drive from the center of Berlin to the southeast corner of the city.

A mobile snack bar is doing a thriving business near the eastern end of the tunnel, catering to East German factory delegations brought to see the work of "American Imperialists."

After inspecting the tunnel, the factory workers record their "indignation" in a visitors' book. The book contains the signatures of foreigners on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Even a Sudanese official is listed.

The tunnel, six feet in diameter and with its floor twelve feet below the surface, was dug from a point 200 yards inside the American sector of West Berlin. It runs eastward to a point 300 yards inside the Russian sector. The western entrance lies in a sparsely-populated locality called Rudow.

Only the eastern end of the tunnel is open for visitors. A detachment of Communist People's Police and a communications expert are on hand to explain every detail. They readily express their admiration for the skill of the project's builders.

Sandbag Barricade

"We have no fault whatsoever to find with the technique," one attendant said.

From the eastern entrance, a visitor can walk westward for perhaps 100 yards past the point where the tunnel crosses under the sector border. Then a sandbag barricade is encountered, and a voice calls out "halt" in German.

It is clear that if the visitor could continue westward past the barricade he would emerge soon at a low but prominent American building with radar equipment on the roof. The building is surrounded by barbed wire and guarded constantly by American soldiers. Signs in German warn: "Entry most strictly forbidden."

A study of the area suggests no possibility other than that the radar building encloses the western end of the tunnel.

Clay Hauled Away

The men who dug the tunnel obviously labored under two major handicaps. They had to work very silently to avoid detection, and they had to haul away secretly the thousands of tons of clay they dug out, since big piles of earth near the sector border would have alerted the Communists.

Apparently the excavated earth was hauled away in closed trucks brought into the radar building. Possibly the same trucks bought in the sections of corrugated iron tubing which line the tunnel. The utmost secrecy must have been used to avoid stirring up local talk.

The Communists estimate that this part of the work took several months.

With the tunnel completed there came the job of installing the monitoring equipment. Apparently this had to be done before the Communist lines could be tapped, because part of this equipment had the primary task of preventing detection of the phone taps. The mass of equipment was painstakingly dragged through the tunnel along two wooden rails and housed in a special ninety-foot-long compartment at the eastern end of the tunnel.

This compartment begins with a thick steel door at its western entrance. On the door—one of the tunnel's nicest touches—is written in Russian and German: "Entry forbidden by order of the Commanding General."

Complex Equipment

Beyond the door is a compartment seven feet long housing equipment to maintain certain levels of temperature and humidity. The Communists say this was necessary to protect delicate equipment in the otherwise dark and cold tunnel.

Finally, there is the complex tapping equipment, all of American or British manufacture. This includes eight racks of boosters to carry the tapped conversation back to the western end of the tunnel and also to help prevent detection of the taps.

There are three power-control units near two long racks of equipment into which the 259 Communist lines lead from three main cables. Here the individual monitoring taps are made. Along the opposite wall of the tunnel is a row of benches, with fluorescent lighting overhead. The compartment is painted a battleship gray.

Considered Great Experts

At the very end of the eastern compartment there is another steel door. On the eastern side of it is one more important item

—an ultra-sensitive microphone which would have reported any activity by the Communists at the point where their lines were tapped. Any activity there would have meant that the tunnel had been discovered.

The men who did the actual tapping must have been among the great experts in the field. They did a remarkably tidy piece of work.

The Communists say the installation apparently operated for several months before it was discovered. There is no explanation of how it was detected.

AT 'SPY TUNNEL' OUTSIDE BERLIN

Let 3 U. S. Reporters Tour Eerie Bore

BY JOHN H. THOMPSON
(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

BERLIN, May 20 — Three American newsmen today sized 20 feet underground in the alleged "American spy tunnel," burrowed 300 yards under Berlin's little Iron Curtain, and peered into the gloom of the American sector over the shoulders of two German communist tommy gunners.

Our host in as eerie a setting as was ever devised by a mystery writer, was a jack-booted officer of the East German communist police, the "Vopos," or Volkspolizei.

Our tour was the third permitted western reporters since the night of April 21 when the Russian high command here announced discovery of the tunnel and equipment it said was used for wire tapping.

Since then the "spy tunnel," so labeled by the Russians and East Germans, has been visited by more than 15,000 East German worker delegations, the Communists said.

Germans Admire Feat

Situated in line with an experimental American army radar station, [the Russians say it is a dummy], ownership of the tunnel has not been officially admitted by the American command here or in Washington.

West Berliners are convinced the Americans built the tunnel, equipped it with expensive apparatus, and then listened in on Red army telephone conversations since the summer of 1954.

To them, it was an astounding feat, which has greatly enhanced American prestige. The boldness of burrowing under the Russian noses, and its technical accomplishment, have captured the imagination of many Germans.

No one expected a sight of the tunnel today when War-

by Robert Luckman, Associated Press bureau chief. Barbed wire surrounded the station and its permanent type buildings.

Watched by Yanks

American soldiers in sentry boxes watched us, thru field glasses as we sauntered toward the clearly marked communist border, down a dirt road, bordering an open field. We could see knots of Vopos around mounds of earth excavated to reveal two sections of the tunnel.

Across the border, Vopos took us to their commander, post men and women waiting to tour the tunnel after watching a communist movie of its discovery. The commander examined our passports, smiled, and led us down a flight of dirt stairs into the tunnel.

Encased in steel and concrete was the alleged wire tap "laboratory," directly under a paved road leading from Berlin to the Russian air base at Schoenfeld. The commander, who declined to give his name, said that 216 telephone lines in three big cables were tapped.

Fluorescent Lighting Illumi-

minated a switchboard, banks of current boosters, amplifiers, and cables. All instructions on the equipment were in English. Some items bore the labels of British, or American manufactureres.

Reds Man Guns

Pumps sent hot and cold water to an air conditioning unit. Other long pipes held oil or air. The tunnel was made of bolted sections of corrugated steel, lined on the sides with sandbags.

Walking back 300 yards, we reached the east-west border. There behind sandbags two young Vopos crouched with their guns and a powerful searchlight, aimed up the tunnel under the American sector.

Outside again, the commander asked us what would be the reaction in the United States if the Canadians or Mexicans drove such a "spy tunnel" under our borders. We said the Americans would be "unhappy" about it.

"Is it right or wrong for Americans to do this under

the borders of the western democratic republic?" he asked.

Pens a Thank You

Our answer, in halting German, explained that ownership of the tunnel has not been established, but that in a time of "tension," the rightness or wrongness depended upon the side of the fence from which the operation was viewed.

He showed us a book in which tunnel visitors were asked to inscribe their opinions, asserting it held signatures of Chinese, Koreans, British, Americans, and others, and asked us to sign.

Just to keep the record straight, in case the East Germans attempt to use our statements for propoganda, we wrote, in my handwriting:

"We wish to thank the volkspolizei very much for being kind enough to show us the tunnel."

Chicago Tribune
29 May 55

APPENDIX D

NOTE: This analysis was prepared by the staff as part of the wrap-up of the operation.

ROUND-UP OF EAST GERMAN PRESS REACTION TO THE DISCOVERY OF THE WIRETAP TUNNEL AT THE BERLIN SECTOR BORDER

(Sources as Indicated)

The following is an analysis of the East German press reaction to the discovery of the wiretap tunnel at the sector border between West and East Berlin. During the period under review - 24 to 26 April 1956 - a total of 31 dailies per day and four weeklies were available for scrutiny; however, only the dailies reported and commented on the incident.

Mostly concerned with reporting and commenting on the incident were the East Berlin papers which, in some instances, devoted full pages of their local sections to reports and pictures on the tunnel in addition to their front-page or second-page accounts of developments. The provincial press gave front-page treatment to the matter only in few instances, generally refrained from large articles or commentaries, and often carried pictorial material with only brief explanations. The least coverage was noted in the provincial press of other

than SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands - Communist Party Germany) affiliation; none of these papers published any commentary, or any cartoon of their own, on the subject up to 26 April, in fact.

Describing the tunnel as inspected by the journalists after the Soviet press conference, the papers pointed out that the installation was well designed and constructed, that the installation was costly and equivalent to a modern telephone exchange, and that the material - of British and American origin - used in the installation was of such quality as to guarantee long service.

The East Berlin papers, which were leading in the reports on the issue, treated the matter as a "bitterly serious incident" which represents an "international scandal" and a "breach of the norms of international law." The papers, in their commentaries, addressed the West Berlin Senat, demanding an all-Berlin understanding and stressing the necessity for united action, and insinuated that Berlin is being kept divided merely for the purpose of providing the espionage centers in West Berlin with a base for launching provocations against the GDR. Other commentaries by central and provincial papers contained calls for vigilance and for defense preparedness. Only one paper printed an editorial on the incident. In commenting on the incident the press did not draw a line

between the different developments, such as the press conference, the Soviet protest, the GDR Government protest, etc., but, as a rule, the commentaries dealt with the incident as a whole. Later, when the first reaction of the West Berlin press was available, the central press swooped down upon the West Berlin press for attempting to belittle the incident and to divert attention from the "seriousness of the matter."

The few caricatures published by the papers were designed to slander the Americans.

Day by Day Reaction

24 April 1956

On 24 April 1956 six East Berlin papers printed the ADN (Allgemeines Deutsches Nachrichten Bureau - General German News Office) release of individual reports on the Soviet press conference, reported on the inspection of the tunnel by the journalists, and carried excerpts from General Zarenko's letter of protest (1 - 6). DER MORGEN and BERLINER ZEITUNG (5 and 6) printed only the abbreviated version of the ADN release. Six provincial SED papers (7 - 12) carried announcements of the discovery, brief reports on the press conference, and merely an announcement to the effect that a letter of protest has been sent to the American Chief of Staff. Only NEUER TAG, Frankfurt/Oder, printed the long version of the ADN release(12).

Provincial papers of other party affiliations carried no reports.

25 April 1956

On 25 April 22 provincial papers came out with the ADN version of the report on the discovery of the tunnel (13 - 34); the six provincial SED papers which had carried a brief announcement the day before followed up their reports by more extensive accounts of the press conference, the letter of protest, and the inspection of the tunnel (13 - 18). Papers of other party affiliations joined in the reporting campaign on this day. Only MAERKISCHE VOLKSSTIMME, of all provincial papers, published an "eye-witness" report containing a description of the tunnel and quoting individuals who had voiced their "outrage at such a thing" which produces new material for conflicts in foreign policy (16). SCHWERINER VOLKSZEITUNG, which printed the long version of the ADN release, reproduced the first picture of the tunnel (22).

Meanwhile the central press, in addition to supplementary reports on the discovery of the tunnel, descriptions of the tunnel, and pictorial material showing sections of the tunnel such as the amplifier station, etc., came out with the first commentaries. A total of five commentaries appeared on this day. The press treated the matter as a "bitterly serious affair" which represents an "international scandal" and a

"breach of the norms of international law," pointing out that the United States violated the Buenos Aires Treaty on Telecommunications on the one hand and the GDR's sovereignty on the other hand (35 - 39). NEUES DEUTSCHLAND spoke of a new, hitherto unsurpassed "gangster act" of the U.S. secret service (35), NATIONAL ZEITUNG termed the incident as a "sensational international scandal" (36), NEUE ZEIT stressed that there is no word "strong enough to brand such wickedness" (38), and JUNGE WELT declared that "this had to happen just to those who always babble about Communist infiltration but can never prove it" (39). All commentaries were addressed to the West Berlin Senat, demanding an all-Berlin understanding for the purpose of discontinuing the "stubborn adherence to NATO policy," achieving the withdrawal of the "cold war experts of all shades," dissolving the espionage centers in the "frontier city," and achieving a "normalization in the situation in Berlin." Three papers reported on a meeting held by the National Front at Alt-Glienicke, at which the population adopted a resolution protesting against this "provocation." Franz Fischer, First Secretary of the Kreis Treptow SED Executive Board, was reported to have said at the meeting that the people of West Germany and West Berlin have to pay for this installation through the occupation costs and to have termed the tunnel as "an appendix of the cold war" (38, 40, and 41).

TRIBUENE, moreover, referred to a report by the HAMBURGER ANZEIGER to underscore the fact that the installations in the tunnel were not of provisional nature but designed for long service (40). DER MORGEN, describing the tunnel, added that West German correspondents who inspected the tunnel noted with satisfaction the declaration of the Soviet Lieutenant Colonel that "quite obviously, German quarters have no part in this" (41), while NATIONAL ZEITUNG briefly referred to an announcement made at the Alt-Glienicke meeting to the effect that the tunnel was open for public inspection (36).

NEUES DEUTSCHLAND reproduced the first caricature on the issue. The cartoon showed a garden which is divided into two parts by a sign indicating the "Democratic Sector" - full of flowers, and the opposite side - a barren piece of land with a molehill topped by a flag with the dollar sign. A strong arm is pulling out of a hole in the Democratic Sector a mole wearing "U.S."-marked earphones, some sort of Army trousers with plugs and pliers showing from the pocket, and a U.S. Army cap bearing the legend "Espionage." The cartoon is captioned, "Do Not Burrow in Other People's Yards" (35).

26 April 1956

On 26 April 27 papers continued reporting on the issue (42 - 68). In 17 instances the reports were supplemented with pictures as outlined above. A total of 15 papers

printed the text of, or large excerpts from, the press release on the GDR Government protest (42 - 56). Six papers reported on the inspection of the tunnel by the population, the press, and representatives of the diplomatic corps (42, 49, 59, 60, 65, and 67). Four papers referred to a report carried by the West Berlin TAGESSPIEGEL according to which Western journalists were prohibited from inspecting the mouth of the tunnel on the Western side (42, 43, 51, and 58), and four papers referred to FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE which had spoken of an "eloquent silence" about the affair on the part of the Americans (42, 51, 55, and 58). A total of four papers reported on the Alt-Glienicke meeting (51, 60, 61, and 67). NEUES DEUTSCHLAND gave excerpts from Fisher's speech, quoting him to the effect that the people of West Berlin, in particular the SPD members, will be invited to inspect the tunnel (51). Three papers reproduced caricatures (51, 52, and 56), six papers carried commentaries (51, 52, 53, 54, 57, and 58), and one paper came out with an editorial (55). Three East Berlin papers, through their commentaries, swooped down upon the West Berlin press for its attitude toward the incident. NEUES DEUTSCHLAND accused the West Berlin papers of attempting to belittle the incident and of lauding the efficiency of the American "goblins," adding that the West Berlin press is thus making vain attempts to divert attention from the seriousness of the matter (51).

JUNGE WELT lashed out at the West Berlin DER TAG, saying that, by its opinion, the West Berlin paper manifests its total loss of any sense of decency. Besides, DER TAG is not in the least disturbed about the violation also of West Berlin's territory (52). NATIONAL ZEITUNG held that DER TAG now admitted what it has been denying at all times, namely that West Berlin is a de facto part of NATO, adding that DER TAG now regards as "customary" the military espionage of the United States on GDR territory in addition to the "customary frontier-city policy," the "customary" partition, and the "customary" diversionist activities of the KGU and other underworld organizations. The paper stressed that all Berliners fully agree with the FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE which said that the people must demand the discontinuation of "such things" (58). NEUE ZEIT, carrying the only editorial, said that the wire-tapping post is a feature of West Berlin's misuse as a NATO base. The paper emphasized that GDR policy will continue to serve all-German understanding and relaxation of international tensions. "But it must be kept in mind that the success of this policy will not only depend on the volume of the appeal for peace but also on our preparedness to defend our homeland as well as on our vigilance regarding the prevention of dangers resulting from the fact that one part of Berlin has become a frontier city against peace," the paper added. "What

we need are contact points above the ground and in full light, namely all-German talks, and not underground trenches in the cold war" (55).

The first commentaries carried by provincial papers dealt with the incident as an example of proof for East German press reports on hostile espionage. VOLKSSTIMME, Karl-Marx-Stadt, pointed out that the tunnel represents "a document" which is quite apt to dispel all doubts of those who have hitherto been inclined to regard East German press reports about the underground activities of Western espionage services as "exaggerated" (57). MAERKISCHE VOLKSSTIMME quoted several workers who voiced their indignation over "such a vileness" which makes German unity more difficult to demonstrate that the "Western side" is just as quiet about this "unpleasant affair" as the population is outraged (53). And LEIPZIGER VOLKSZEITUNG stressed that anyone reading about the discovery of the tunnel will inevitably weigh the Soviet attempts at maintaining peace against the efforts made by the U.S. espionage service, adding that this "breach of international law" also places the West Berlin administration "in a peculiar light." The paper reminded its readers that war preparation, which "formerly marched on Prussian Army boots," is now marching on "American rubber soles, chewing gum, and tapping telephone lines" (54).

NEUES DEUTSCHLAND's caricature showed an American soldier trying in vain to "milk" a disconnected, oversized telephone receiver into a bucket marked "CIC" while another soldier is thoughtfully standing by (51). JUNGE WELT reproduced a cartoon showing a mole wearing a U.S. Army cap on its head and a telephone receiver on its back halting before a sign which warns that "spies are now facing danger." The cartoon is captioned, "The Underworld that Shuns the Light," and footnoted, "Damned, we did not put up that sign" (52). FREIES WORT showed rats wearing U.S. Army caps being disturbed by a Russian soldier in the operation of what looks like a communication center. Two rats are shown facing the soldier in surprise, another standing with arms raised, and still another escaping through an opening in the wall. The caricature is entitled, "Unpleasant Surprise," and footnoted, "It is an Effrontery of the Russians to Disturb Us in Our (Burrowing) Work" (56).

SOURCES

1956

1.	NEUES DEUTSCHLAND	24 Apr
2.	NEUE ZEIT	24 Apr
3.	TRIBUENE	24 Apr
4.	NATIONAL ZEITUNG	24 Apr
5.	DER MORGEN	24 Apr
6.	BERLINER ZEITUNG	24 Apr
7.	FREIHEIT	24 Apr
8.	SAECHSISCHE ZEITUNG	24 Apr
9.	VOLKSSTIMME, Karl-Marx-Stadt	24 Apr
10.	MAERKISCHE VOLKSSTIMME	24 Apr
11.	LEIPZIGER VOLKSZEITUNG	24 Apr
12.	NEUER TAG	24 Apr
13.	FREIHEIT	25 Apr
14.	SAECHSISCHE ZEITUNG	25 Apr
15.	VOLKSSTIMME, Karl-Marx-Stadt	25 Apr
16.	MAERKISCHE VOLKSSTIMME	25 Apr
17.	LEIPZIGER VOLKSZEITUNG	25 Apr
18.	NEUER TAG	25 Apr
19.	LAUSITZER RUNDSCHAU	25 Apr
20.	VOLKSSTIMME, Magdeburg	25 Apr
21.	DAS VOLK, Erfurt	25 Apr
22.	SCHWERINER VOLKSZEITUNG	25 Apr
23.	FREIE ERDE	25 Apr
24.	OSTSEE ZEITUNG	25 Apr
25.	VOLKSWACHT	25 Apr
26.	FREIES WORT	25 Apr
27.	SAECHSISCHES TAGEBLATT	25 Apr
28.	DIE UNION	25 Apr
29.	NORDDEUTSCHE NEUESTE NACHRICHTEN	25 Apr
30.	MAERKISCHE UNION	25 Apr
31.	BRANDENBURGISCHE NEUESTE NABBR.	25 Apr
32.	BAUERN ECHO	25 Apr
33.	DER NEUE WEG	25 Apr
34.	LIBERAL DEMOKRATISCHE ZEITUNG	25 Apr
35.	NEUES DEUTSCHLAND	25 Apr
36.	NATIONAL ZEITUNG	25 Apr
37.	BERLINER ZEITUNG	25 Apr
38.	NEUE ZEIT	25 Apr
39.	JUNGE WELT	25 Apr
40.	TRIBUENE	25 Apr
41.	DER MORGEN	25 Apr

1956

42.	BERLINER ZEITUNG	26	Apr
43.	SAECHSISCHE ZEITUNG	26	Apr
44.	DAS VOLK, Erfurt	26	Apr
45.	NEUER TAG	26	Apr
46.	FREIHEIT	26	Apr
47.	DER MORGEN	26	Apr
48.	TRIBUENE	26	Apr
49.	BAUERN ECHO	26	Apr
50.	DER NEUE WEG	26	Apr
51.	NEUES DEUTSCHLAND	26	Apr
52.	JUNGE WELT	26	Apr
53.	MAERKISCHE VOLKSSTIMME	26	Apr
54.	LEIPZIGER VOLKSZEITUNG	26	Apr
55.	NEUE ZEIT	26	Apr
56.	FREIES WORT	26	Apr
57.	VOLKSSTIMME, Karl-Marx-Stadt	26	Apr
58.	NATIONAL ZEITUNG	26	Apr
59.	VOLKSSTIMME, Magdeburg	26	Apr
60.	MAERKISCHE UNION	26	Apr
61.	FREIE ERDE	26	Apr
62.	LEIPZIGER VOLKSZEITUNG	26	Apr
63.	VOLKSWACHT	26	Apr
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66.	LAUSITZER RUNDSCHAU	26	Apr
67.	DIE UNION	26	Apr
68.	SCHWERINER VOLKSZEITUNG	26	Apr