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Subject: FLASH-- Jane's on SR-71 Replacement (fwd)

Got back home tonight after the holiday and got a nice present-- the December 17 issue of Jane's Defence Weekly, with a cover story on the SR-71 replacement. The article, quoting "several well-placed military and industry sources" indicates that the projects are defunct. Here is an outline of the details:

- * The followon was to be an unmanned recon aircraft, operating at high altitude at subsonic speeds.
- * The name of the classified program was said to begin with the letter "Q." (And you thought Gene Roddenberry was only kidding.) * There were only to be a few of these "Q"s built, as few as four. * Seven companies submitted designs in 1983-ish, including the Skunk Works.
- * There was separate related research effort on an "extremely fast" aircraft, which was cancelled in the 80s/
- * The "Q" was cancelled at the end of the Cold War or two years ago (the article is confusing in that it uses both phrases) because of its high (to use an understatement) cost of about \$1 billion per aircraft. "Hundreds of millions" were spent on R&D.

The article is in the December 17th issue of Jane's Defence Weekly, and was written by John Boatman.

(And to think I almost didn't renew my subscription in the fall... shudder.)

This still leaves us with a number of other unknowns, though, such as the unusual contrails and witness reports of very strange and unique-sounding engines heard at night a Groom. Hmmmmmmmmm.

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