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Debunking Vs. Counterintelligence: Reflections

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Date: Fri, 7 Oct 1994 19:36:52 -0400
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The following is an article that was published in the HUFON Journal, 1992.

Debunking Versus Counterintelligence:
Reflections of a Pro-Ufologist

by Richard D. Butler

To the pro-ufologist, debunking and counterintelligence (CI) efforts are seen as the greatest hindrances to legitimate research. The two terms are frequently used as synonyms. In fact, they are two very distinct operations. Debunking has two sources: the U.S. government and civilians.

The civilian debunkers are usually professional academics, whose motivation is principally reactionary protection against a challenge to their world view. They see UFOs, and belief in UFOs and even organized study of UFOs as a threat to their own reality system. The protective strategy is, in psychological terms, the well-known process called "denial." We see it in alcoholics, and we see it in UFO-bashers. It is also quite an efficient way to handle complex data and hypotheses. Simply deny it, make a joke, and move on and away from the challenge. Ridicule is an almost essential part of the denial process. The debunker strives to convince not only his audience that the subject is nonsense, but he must also convince himself. The self-imposed wall of denial is enforced by ridicule. There is nothing new about the debunking process. The history of science is, in a sense, the history of debunking.

Clearly, every important advance in science has been met with ridicule. A recent example is the development of the atomic bomb. Top scientists were skeptical that the bomb would work. President Roosevelt's military aide stated that, as an expert in explosives, he could assure the President that the atomic bomb would never, and could never, explode! Yet in the early morning hours over the Trinity Site, a tiny flower of hell blossomed in the desert. The impossible had become awesomely real. Physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer was heard intoning, "Behold I become death, a shatterer of worlds." This was an apt epitaph for the debunkers, whose psychological world was shattered. Debunking has been with us since the first debunker laughed at the man who decided to move

out of the cave. In a particularly difficult field of research like ufology, the debunker must be accepted as something that simply comes with the territory. We must groan, but accept the old saying, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen."³

The second category of debunking is the official U.S. government version. This brings us into the deep waters of counterintelligence. CI is defined as specific and planned activities conducted to destroy the effectiveness of a foreign intelligence operation. There are various sub-operations within the heading of CI. The one of most importance to this discussion is counterespionage, which is those activities carried out to neutralize another intelligence gathering group. Its operational parameters include penetration, deception, and manipulation of those suspected of conducting espionage activities. And it's all perfectly legal: presidential executive orders have made it so. Because these activities are necessarily covert, not much is known about them by the general public.

CI operations are staffed by highly skilled and dedicated personnel. Their goal is to deny an enemy information which could be used to destroy our lives, property, and way of life. But how does the UFO business tie in? National Intelligence is the key term. This is defined as any intelligence information produced by the CIA (or other equivalent agency) that bears on the broad aspects of national policy and the national security of the United States. This intelligence is then analyzed to determine if a threat condition exists. If the answer is "yes," a Threat Analysis Report is prepared. The report identifies and locates the threat, and estimates the potential damage levels which the threat could inflict. The Threat Analysis Report is sent to the National Security Council (NSC) for review. The Council, in turn, advises the President with respect to formulation and integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies. Once the threat is confirmed by the NSC, various agencies will be tasked to perform both the intelligence and counterintelligence functions, as well as accelerated defensive weapons programs.

It is time to look at the UFO intelligence gathering program. Most ufologists will probably be shocked by the nature and dimensions of this operation. Every ufologist and UFO organization in the world is an overt intelligence-gathering asset of the United States. Your job as a ufologist is to monitor all UFO activities, including sightings, landings and abductions. This information is published, providing an intelligence channel back into the system.

The CIA has the mission of collecting all published civilian UFO intelligence data. An Air Force public information release (still in use) tells us that their investigation of UFOs ended with the deactivation of Project Blue Book. Further, it says that UFO investigations have been turned over to academic institutions and civilian UFO research organizations. In practice, this means that information of genuine scientific value will not be overlooked. In other words, Blue Book never really ended, it just changed hands. And, whether you know it or not, or like it or not, you are part of the intelligence-gathering network, feeding straight to the CIA's UFO files. But this particular brand of intelligence data is perfectly open to the public, in the form of UFO books, journals and public meetings. And this presents the government with a unique problem. As a UFO researcher, you are simultaneously gathering data for the government, and trying to break through the wall of secrecy to discover what the government knows. You are spying for them, and spying on them. By spying on your own government and, in fact, doing so in a very aggressive manner, you automatically trigger the counter-intelligence machinery.

The task of screwing you up, meaning the official CI operation against ufologists, is assigned to Security and Counter-intelligence Special Operations departments within various intelligence agencies. Note the three main mission criteria: (1) Denial to ufologists of the government's offensive and defensive weapons capabilities; (2) Denial to ufologists of the government's intelligence gathering capabilities and level of analysis; and (3) Prevention of direct or indirect Psychological Warfare effect. Are these measures justifiable? In the balance are our rights as U.S. citizens versus the degradation of America's national security caused by release of the UFO information? With this in mind, let's review the three criteria in detail. Item (1) is fairly obvious. If a potential enemy learns our weapons technology, he can develop countermeasures. This in turn would render the weapons system useless, and make us vulnerable to attack. So the answer is a

clear and resounding "No!" to release. Item (2) is the reverse side of item (1). We are gathering information in order to make the enemy's weapons ineffective. Here is a purely hypothetical example. Suppose we are successful through FOIA, or through what you must admit amounts to standard espionage techniques which we call "UFO research," and discover that the government has photos of a UFO hovering above a submarine. Moreover, the information we have obtained tells us that the submarine is at a depth of 50 fathoms. We also get pictures taken at 100 and 200 fathoms, and quickly publish all the facts. The Soviet submarine commanders would get the message at once. The U.S. anti-submarine surveillance technology is only capable of imaging down to 200 fathoms. So they would design attack strategies in which they would cruise without worry at depths below that level. Bad news for our side, and it puts ufologists on the wrong end of the logic of item (2). Item (3) is by far the most complex issue. Psychological Warfare is accomplished by two main methods. First, direct aggressive efforts aimed at the enemy, and second, indirect damage caused by release of information regarding the enemy's capabilities and intentions. The purpose of "Psy War" is to erode the will of the enemy nation, and it can have a devastating impact on military effectiveness. A battle lost in the mind usually translates directly to military defeat.

But the effects of Psy War go beyond military targets. Both government and private institutions can be severely damaged. An example is the stock market crash which took place just before the Gulf War. This is minor compared with the psychological shock waves that would be produced by release of certain UFO information. In fact, the harm would almost certainly be unprecedented in terms of damage levels, with major impact on basic religious and economic institutions.

The major methods employed by UFO counterintelligence are debunking and disinformation. Debunking can be as simple as using the technique of over-simplification of analysis. For example, the time-honored quick answer to a UFO sighting, such as "weather balloon," or "swamp gas." Disinformation, however, should be our main area of concern. It uses a technique known in the trade as "plausible denial." One way to view this is that the information is 2% truth and 98% nonsense, of some mixture of the two, but never the whole truth. It must appear legitimate on the surface, but have enough bunk in it to send you off in a totally wrong direction.

By far the most powerful weapon in the UFO counter-intelligence arsenal is the ufologists themselves. A former CI officer once remarked to me about a prominent New York City ufologist, "If he didn't exist, we'd have to invent him." There is nothing that counterintelligence operators appreciate more than a gullible ufologist i.e. born again lesbian lizards from Antares, seven-foot alien cockroaches with hyperactive libidos, etc. The result is that the credibility of the entire UFO research community is debased. Little wonder that the press treats the subject as a joke. That's what the CI people work so hard to accomplish. The "aliens are eating us" crowd is the answer to the CI prayers. This brings us to the question of whether the government is justified in withholding certain information from the public based in its psychological impact alone. The first NSC meeting was held in September, 1947. One of the main topics is rumored to have been the retrieval of a crashed alien aircraft at Roswell. We might know if this rumor is true, but the minutes of that meeting have been removed by the CIA from the National Archives. Interestingly, they were removed in February, 1979. This is when intelligence operatives discovered that a book telling the truth about the Roswell crash was about to be published. It then became necessary to clean up the "paper trail," among other CI moves to protect the Roswell secret. The NSC had to consider the Roswell UFO crash only eight years after the Orson Welles "War of the Worlds" broadcast, in which panic ensued when the public thought Martians were invading. Little wonder that President Truman kept mum. Was this a sound policy? I believe it was in 1947, and on through to today. At least in the sense that the public was not ready for the stunning revelation of aliens in our midst. But the public will never be ready! Nor is there any way to prepare the public. Therefore, further concealment is futile, as well as morally unjustifiable.

In terms of national security, when a government is forced to treat its own populace as an enemy, then that government is already defeated and has lost its right to exist. Abductees are

the only directly affected portion of the population. Granted, it is a very tiny fraction. But have we decided to write them off, to list them as an acceptable loss in this shadowy but nevertheless very real War of the Worlds?

In closing, I wish to express my sympathy for those in government who are faced with these terrible decisions. I know you desire to do the right thing. To my colleagues in ufology, my advice is: be very careful what you ask for, because sometimes your wishes are granted. If your fervent wishes are granted, our whole civilization will suddenly have a new, revolutionary set of ideas about who and what we are. Can you take responsibility for the cataclysm? Although I have used the term "threat" in this discussion, it should be obvious that if the aliens are truly hostile, we would have learned that the very, very hard way long ago.

That there are great changes in store for mankind is certain. How we as a people handle those changes will determine the level of loss to our social and spiritual realities. There is much to lose but equally as much to gain. Or, as the alien may have said, "Lose a planet, gain a galaxy."

Think about it.

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