Nazi UFOs again Column April, 2014

It is not uncommon for old themes in ufology to recur. It has been 25 years since Las Vegas journalist George Knapp broke the Bob Lazar story around the time of the 1989 MUFON Conference in Las Vegas. I am still often asked about Bob and George is still trying to get Bob, now based in Michigan, to fill in a number of holes in the story. The notion that UFOs are really made by a hidden offshoot of the Nazi society and technology of World War 2 also keeps being resurrected, despite a serious lack of real evidence, but the presence of a lot of conspiracy theories. Four years ago I wrote a column about Joseph P. Farrell’s 520 Page, 2010 book: “Roswell and the Third Reich”. I found it totally unconvincing even though I am quoted a lot in the book.

I am sure there will be more discussion because of a new book from Annie Jacobsen “Operation Paperclip: The Secret Intelligence Program That Brought Nazi Scientists to America”, Little Brown and Company. There have been a number of other books about Paperclip. But Annie stirred up a load of discussion with her book about Area 51. She linked it to Roswell, a Soviet plot to cause panic ala War of the Worlds by crashing a saucer with deformed bodies produced by Dr. Death, Joseph Mengele, in New Mexico. To say the least there were a number of false claims though she did talk to many people from Area 51.

One can ,I suppose, make a plausibility argument. There is no question that German Science in the 30’s was among the best in the world. Many physicists from the UK and the US studied at German Universities. Physics and Aeronautics were certainly strong there. Just note the V-1 and V-2 Rockets which later bombarded the UK. The Allies had nothing comparable. German aircraft were often able to outfight English and American planes. The first jet powered fighters were German and advanced vehicles, both rockets and planes, were certainly on the drawing board. German submarines were powerful in the Atlantic. One of the major reasons that the USA pushed to develop the atomic bomb was the real fear that the Germans would get there first with their outstanding scientists and their access to the uranium ores of Czechoslovakia. It turned out that a major effort (ALSOS) to ascertain the state of their nuclear art in early 1945 was made to determine how far along they had been. They really had a relatively minor effort and could not devote the effort the US could to the development of means for enriching Uranium 235. In Tennessee the USA built, in secret, the gaseous diffusion plant. That facility was one mile long and when in operation used 5% of the total electricity being produced in the USA to pump a uranium gas compound through barriers with tiny holes. Not much of the manufacturing capabilities in Germany were left unbombed by massive air raids during the war. No bombing of any US city or facility happened during WW 2.

Operation Paperclip had two major goals … to obtain a host of talented scientists and engineers to help propel the US forward as the cold war was going full tilt and to keep those valuable resources from being grabbed by the Soviet Union as it advanced towards Germany from the East. It is easy to forget that Stalin had trusted Hitler and was betrayed when Hitler attacked. How the Russians managed to hold off the Nazis at Leningrad losing a million lives in the protracted struggle, I will never know. I was impressed during a visit to the Balkan states and Russia a few years ago. It is important to note that Soviet losses during the war were about 20 million people. They would have no scruples about taking as much technology and personnel back from Hitler as they could. We certainly did, including 300 rockets. Americans tend to forget that, if the Nazis had not been so strongly resisted by the Russians, their troops would have been sent to the Western front and our invasion of Europe could well have been stopped cold and pushed back. The joke in the early days of the space age was that our Germans were in great competition with the Germans brought to the Soviet Union. Remember that Russia launched the first satellite, the first animal, the first man, and made the first rocket to go around the moon. Despite America not being directly damaged by the war, until President Kennedy pushed the lunar landing mission, the Soviets were leading in the race to convince other nations that they were the top dog in advanced technology.

An interesting sidelight in this discussion about German aviation technology is that Charles Lindbergh, who was truly one of the first World Heroes ,because of his incredible 33 Hour solo non-stop flight from New York to Paris in 1927, and barnstorming subsequently almost everywhere, made three trips to Germany starting in 1936. He visited primary aviation facilities. He was so impressed that he pushed to keep the USA out of the looming war because he was so favorably impressed with the German capabilities.

I have seen no evidence that Lindbergh saw anything that could be construed as pre flying saucer flight capability. If the leading German engineers and scientists who were brought to the USA or Russia had any such inkling it would have seemed natural that the host countries would have learned of it and built them. Which of the leaders such as Von Braun could have resisted the opportunity to develop such capabilities in the peaceful circumstances of the USA post war?

Some have wanted to claim that the famed Horton Brothers of Germany who developed the first flying wings including a 2 engine bomber may have developed a saucer. After all Kenneth Arnold’s UFO looked like a flying wing. But Arnold timed the flight of his 9 craft between 2 mountains and showed that the speed was well over 1200mph. But the speed record at that time was around 700 miles per hour. Our first supersonic flight by Chuck Yeagher took place on October 14, 1947, using the Bell X-1 rocket plane which was not a flying wing or shaped like a saucer. I personally met with John Northrop, founder of Northrop Aircraft and inventor of the flying wing, The YB-49. He was very interested in flying saucers and told me how one of his top test pilots reported seeing a high performance flying saucer and it was not a flying wing.

For some, an important part of the Nazi flying saucer story theory is that Hitler didn’t really commit suicide in that bunker in 1945, but managed to flee the country secretly to a secret base in Antarctica or Argentina or at the center of the Earth, supposedly visited by explorer Admiral Byrd through a hole at the North Pole. This story was repeatedly told by a man named Harley Byrd claiming to be the Admiral’s nephew. The Byrds are a well known family including Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia. I spoke with his office. They checked.He had no nephew or other relative named Harley. In addition I checked the college from which he claimed to the Roswell Museum that he had received a degree. Another lie. I also spoke with the Admiral’s pilot, Bernet Balchen. No flight into a hole at the pole. I think it should be obvious that manufacturing facilities are limited in Antarctica. The development of advanced flight technology requires talented people, sophisticated research and development and manufacturing capabilities. Now it should also be obvious that if Hitler’s people had developed flying saucer technology during the war, he would have used it. The US developed Stealth aircraft and atomic weaponry in secret. We used them in war time.

Other suggestions, besides Paperclip and/or nazi technology include anti-Gravity or time travel also supposedly developed in secret. Or “interdimensional”, whatever that means. These are interesting concepts appearing often in science fiction. But where is there any evidence? Converting an idea into multiple high performance operating systems is not easy or cheap. Certainly the U.S. government let many contracts for gravity research in the 1950s. But where are the results? Where are the pieces of manufactured equipment that would produce the reports we have from all over the world of vehicles able to fly silently at very high speed and to hover? Of vehicles able to make right angle turns and move rapidly vertically up and down; Of vehicles that typically have no visible external engines, no wings and no tail and are able to land and take off from spaces not much bigger than themselves??

It has been my experience in answering more than 50,000 questions after lectures, in classes, during interviews over the years, that most people really don’t appreciate that most high technology improvements and developments are done in industry and the national labs such as Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, Sandia, etc. They involve many people and are not done in academia by a few professors and a bunch of grad students. An example I like to use was the Aircraft Nuclear Propulsion program at General Electric which, when I was employed there as a nuclear physicist in 1958, spent 100 Million dollars that year and employed 3500 people of whom 1100 were engineers and scientists. We did operate jet engines on nuclear power. But we did not operate a flying nuclear powered aircraft. Many programs were in place because it was hoped we could beat the Soviets to new and better technology. Most programs were not successful. Fortunately, some were.

In summary, then, I expect nothing will satisfy that small group of ABA (Anything But Alien) cultists on the one hand who refuse to look at the evidence or the believers in any exotica. They also refuse to seriously examine the use of the primary source of all energy produced in the universe namely nuclear fusion. It powers all the stars and H-Bombs, even though we first conceived of it in 1938 and didn’t test our first H bomb until 1952. I was working on a study of Fusion Propulsion for deep space travel at Aerojet General Nucleonics in 1962 under John Luce who had headed Oak Ridge’s fusion work earlier. It looked good. It will cost a great deal of money and we have no goal of interstellar travel… yet.

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