

RADIO FREE EUROPE
MUNICH

OUTGOING CIPHER MESSAGE

TO: 

1965 OCT 25

18:52

MUN 114 25 OCT 65

TO: RICHARDSON COPY AUGUSTINE KINYON
FM: SMITH

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THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS WRITTEN AT HOME ON SUNDAY. WHEN I FINISHED IT I WAS APPALLED AT HOW LONG IT TURNED OUT TO BE. NEVERTHELESS I HOPE YOU ARE ABLE TO TAKE THE TIME TO READ IT ANYWAY, AS IT MAY PROVIDE SOME USEFUL BACKGROUND IN DEALING WITH SOME OF OUR KIBITZERS REGARDING THE SO MUCH MISUNDERSTOOD MATTER OF OPEN SPACES.

AT HOME THIS WEEKEND, STUDYING THE BUDGET DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED WHILE I WAS AWAY FROM THE OFFICE, AND BEFORE I AM ABLE TO GET ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS I HAVE WHICH WILL ENABLE ME TO FURNISH A SPECIFIC REPLY TO NYC 109, I HAVE BEEN THINKING HOW TO EXPLAIN IN CLEAR AND HOPEFULLY PERSUASIVE TERMS WHY THE NUMBER OF OPEN SPACES ON ANY GIVEN DATE MAY VARY CONSIDERABLY FROM THOSE ON SOME OTHER PARTICULAR DATE, WHY THE FIGURES ON ANY ONE DATE MAY GIVE A VERY DISTORTED PICTURE OF THE TRUE SITUATION OVERALL, AND WHY OPEN SPACES EXISTING AT ONE TIME MAY BE FILLED AS OTHER OPEN SPACES ARE DEVELOPED. AT FIRST LOOK IT MIGHT SEEM THAT PLUCKING OFF FIGURES ON OPEN SPACES WOULD BE A SIMPLE AND VALID YARDSTICK BY WHICH TO MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS IN CONTROLLING NEW HIRES AND IN EXERCISING ECONOMIES IN MANPOWER, BUT IT DEFINITELY ISN'T UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A STUDY OF ALL THE INS AND OUTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED AND ARE IN PROCESS. IT IS MISLEADING TO MAKE INTERIM, SHORT TERM COMPARISONS SUCH AS COMPARING OPEN SPACE FIGURES ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FISCAL YEAR WITH THE NUMBER OF THOSE PARTICULAR SPACES STILL OPEN THREE MONTHS LATER, WITHOUT AT THE SAME TIME ANALYZING THE WHYS, AND WHAT NEW OPEN SPACES HAVE MEANWHILE BEEN CREATED. FIGURES FOR ANY PARTICULAR CUT-OFF DATE ARE MEANINGLESS IN THEMSELVES AS A YARDSTICK, MIGHT MAKE THE PICTURE LOOK FAR TOO GOOD OR MUCH TOO BAD. AND TRYING TO MAKE A MEANINGFUL ANALYSIS JUST FROM FIGURES IS AN ENDLESS, WELL NIGH HOPELESS TASK.

THE FIGURE OF 70 OPEN SPACES ON THE 1 JULY T/O RUN IS TO

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BEGIN WITH A MISLEADING STARTING POINT. THE FACT THAT 47 OF THESE PARTICULAR 70 HAD BEEN FILLED BY 30 SEPTEMBER HAS LITTLE SIGNIFICANCE WITHOUT EXAMINING WHAT OTHER SPACES WERE OPENED UP MEANWHILE. OUR MESSAGE MUN 80 WAS AT FAULT IN NOT PROVIDING MORE EXPLANATION BUT IT WOULD BE A COLOSSAL JOB TO RECONSTRUCT THE MULTITUDINOUS ACTIONS COVERING 90 DAYS. AS OF FRIDAY LAST WE HAD 55 OPEN SPACES IN MUNICH (NOT COUNTING NEW YORK) AND 20 IN RARET. THIS FIGURE OF 55 MIGHT NOT ON ANALYSIS PROVE TO BE MUCH BETTER A REFLECTION OF OUR TRUE SITUATION THAN THE 70 ON 1 JULY, SINCE WE WERE THEN AND ARE NOW TRYING TO FILL AND BADLY NEED TO FILL MANY OF THESE SPACES, AND AT THE SAME TIME ARE IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSFERS, TERMINATIONS, AND OTHER SWITCHING AROUND SO AS TO WORK AS MANY AS POSSIBLE OF THE OPEN SPACES AROUND INTO SLOTS WHICH ARE THE MOST MARGINAL AND LEAST CRITICAL TO OUR OPERATION, AND THUS CAN BE KEPT MORE OR LESS PERMANENTLY OPEN. (INCIDENTALLY MUN 80 SHOULD HAVE MADE THE DISTINCTION THAT A NUMBER OF THE 47 POSITIONS FILLED WERE INTERNAL TRANSFERS, NOT ACTUALLY NEW HIRES, OPENING UP OTHER OPEN POSITIONS WHEN TRANSFERRED.)

MEANWHILE, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A CERTAIN NUMBER OF CONSTANTLY CHANGING OPEN SPACES IN POSITIONS WE URGENTLY NEED TO FILL. THE VERY NATURE AND VOLUME OF THE PERSONNEL TURNOVER IN AN ORGANIZATION OF THE SIZE AND COMPLEXITY OF RFE, COMPRISED OF MANY DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS DOING SO MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORK INVOLVING A HUGE VARIETY OF SKILLS, AND SEPARATED INTO TWENTY DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS RESULTS IN A CONSTANT VOLUME OF SPACES BEING OPENED AND THEN FILLED. IF OUR 1731 T/O SPACES AND THEIR INCUMBENTS WERE ALL THE SAME STANDARD TYPES, LIKE PEAS IN A POD OR A FORCE OF STREET SWEEPERS, THE NUMBER OF OPEN SPACES ON ANY GIVEN DAY WOULD HAVE A VALID RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONTROL BEING EXERCISED OVER MANPOWER. BUT UNFORTUNATELY,

ON ANY GIVEN DAY WOULD HAVE A VALID RELATIONSHIP TO THE CONTROL BEING EXERCISED OVER MANPOWER. BUT UNFORTUNATELY, OUR COMPLICATED BUSINESS INVOLVES SUCH A WIDE VARIETY OF TALENTS AND TYPES: WRITERS, VOICERS, PRODUCERS, TYPISTS, TECHNICIANS, TRAINED NEWSMEN, TRANSLATORS, MANAGERS, PAINTERS, SINGERS, TELETYPE OPERATORS, MUSICIANS, LINGUISTS, RESEARCHERS, MACHINISTS, ECONOMISTS, CHARWOMEN, RADIO REPAIRMEN, RESEARCHERS, AND MANY OTHER KINDS OF SPECIALISTS OF

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WIDELY DIFFERING TRAINING AND TALENTS, THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AUTOMATICALLY FREEZING JUST ANY OPEN SPACE THAT HAPPENS TO OCCUR, OR SIMPLY INTERCHANGING SPACE FOR SPACE EITHER STATISTICALLY OR ACTUALLY.

AS OPEN SPACES ARE CREATED BY VARIOUS FORMS OF ATTRITION, A WHOLE COMPLEX OF "MUSICAL CHAIRS" IS SET OFF. WHEN EMPLOYEES RESIGN, DIE, RETIRE, ARE TRANSFERRED, PROMOTED, FIRED OR WHAT HAVE YOU, THOSE PARTICULAR SPACES CAN NOT NECESSARILY BE THE ONES LEFT OPEN FOR A LONG PERIOD. IN FACT, TWO OR THREE SHIRTS IN TURN MAY BE REQUIRED TO MEET OUR NEEDS MOST EFFICIENTLY AND ECONOMICALLY, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE PUTTING ON PRESSURE TOWARD A MINIMUM LONG RUN WORK-FORCE. IN ONE CASE OF A RESIGNATION, WE MAY HAVE TO OVERLAP A NEW INCUMBENT FOR SOME DAYS OR EVEN WEEKS TO KEEP THE SHOW GOING EFFICIENTLY, THUS MOMENTARILY RAISING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ON BOARD AND TEMPORARILY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF OPEN SPACES. SEVERAL SUCH CASES MAY OCCUR SIMULTANEOUSLY. OR THE OPPOSITE MAY HAPPEN: THE LOSSES MAY BE SUCH THAT WE WILL HAVE EXTENDED GAPS IN FILLING EVEN ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL SPACES, MAKING THE STATISTICS TEMPORARILY LOOK FALSELY LOVELY BUT ACTUALLY THE OPERATION IS IN TROUBLE AND SAVED ONLY BY DOUBLING UP KEY PEOPLE, USING OVERTIME, ETC.

MANY PERMUTATIONS AND COMBINATIONS OF ALL THIS TAKE PLACE IN THE COURSE OF RUNNING RFE. IT IS OF PARTICULAR NOTE THAT AT THE VERY TIME WHEN TERMINATIONS ARE BEING MADE FOR LONG RUN SAVINGS THE TOTAL NUMBER ON BOARD MAY SHOW UP AS FALSELY HIGH. AN INCOMPETENT OR MARGINAL EMPLOYEE WHO IS BEING TERMINATED (JUST AS IN THE CASE OF A MAN WHO RESIGNS) MAY BE OCCUPYING A POSITION WE HAVE TO FILL AT ONCE, EVEN WHILE THE TERMINATED EMPLOYEE IS STILL BEING CARRIED DURING HIS NOTICE PERIOD, OR ACCURED LEAVE PERIOD, ETC. IF ONE OF OUR TELETYPE OPERATORS QUILTS, WE CAN NOT SIMPLY CLOSE DOWN A MACHINE COMMUNICATING WITH NEW YORK DURING THE THREE WEEKS THE MAN MAY STILL OCCUPY A SPACE WHILE USING THE THREE WEEKS ACCURED LEAVE HE WAS COMING TO HIM.

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THUS WE MOMENTARILY WOULD HAVE AN EXTRA NUMBER ON BOARD FOR THE SAME SLOT.

ALL OF WHICH IS SIMPLY TO SAY THAT THERE ARE SO MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR MATHEMATICAL ABERRATIONS INHERENT IN TRYING TO JUDGE OUR TRUE LEVEL OF OPEN SLOTS, OR THE EFFECT OF MANPOWER MANAGEMENT, BY COMPARING FIGURES FOR ONE GIVEN CUT-OFF DATE AGAINST THOSE FOR ANOTHER DATE, THAT IT BECOMES SPECIOUS TO BASE CONCLUSIONS ON SUCH FIGURES ALONE.

TO GIVE A HYPOTHETICAL MATHEMATICAL EXAMPLE, EVEN AT THE RISK OF UNDULY BELABORING THE POINT, SUPPOSE WE HAVE A DEPARTMENT OF 20 PEOPLE IN WHICH WE HAVE DECIDED TO ABOLISH ONE SLOT AS A PERMANENT CUT AND TO HOLD ONE SLOT OPEN FOR AN INDEFINITE FREEZE PERIOD AS AN ONAVOIDABLE ECONOMY MEASURE IN ORDER TO MEET THE REDUCED BUDGET. THUS, OVER THE COMING MONTHS, OUR GOAL WOULD BE TO MAINTAIN TWO OPEN SLOTS, OR TEN PERCENT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S T/O. NEAR THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR, ONE MAN IN KEY POSITION (A) WAS RETIRED AND ANOTHER RESIGNED FROM POSITION (B). THUS ON 1 JULY THERE WERE TWO OPEN SLOTS AND ON PAPER IT WOULD APPEAR THAT WE HAD IT MADE. HOWEVER, BOTH OF THESE PARTICULAR SLOTS (A) AND (B) WERE ESSENTIAL POSITIONS WHICH HAD TO BE FILLED. THEREFORE TWO OTHER POSITIONS (C) AND (D) HAD TO BE FOUND TO LEAVE OPEN. POSITION (A) COULD BE FILLED BY PROMOTION OF A GOOD MAN FROM POSITION (E), BUT FIRST A NEW HIRE HAD TO BE MADE FOR A SHORT TRAINING OVERLAP IN POSITION (E). THUS FOR A SHORT TIME THE STRENGTH WENT UP TO 19, AND THE UNDERSTRENGTH SLOTS WERE MOMENTARILY REDUCED TO ONLY ONE INSTEAD OF THE TWO EXISTING ON 1 JULY. THEN IT WAS DETERMINED TO TERMINATE THE INCUMBENT OF POSITION (F), AND MOVE THE INCUMBENT OF POSITIONS (C) TO TAKE OVER POSITION (F), THUS VACATING (C) AS ONE OF THE POSITIONS WE HAD DECIDED TO LEAVE OPEN INDEFINITELY ON A FROZEN BASIS. HOWEVER, THE STRENGTH WAS STILL 19. ANOTHER PROMOTION AND TRANSFER IS WORKED OUT SO AS TO VACATE POSITION (D). FINALLY, AS SOON AS THE NOTICE AND SEVERANCE

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PERIOD IS OVER FOR THE MAN TERMINATED FROM (F), WE WILL AGAIN HAVE THE TWO OPEN SLOTS NOW PLACED WHERE WE CAN KEEP THEM OPEN. MEANWHILE, WE HAD MADE ONE NEW HIRE AND FOR A WHILE HAD ONLY ONE OPEN SLOT ON PAPER, EVEN THOUGH TWO VACANCIES IN PEOPLE ACTUALLY ON THE JOB. MORE MONTHS WOULD UNAVOIDABLE ELAPSE (NOTICE PERIOD, LEAVE, ETC) BEFORE THE SECOND OPEN SLOT WOULD SHOW UP ON PAPER, EVEN THOUGH THE MAN TERMINATED FROM POSITION (F) WAS NOT PHYSICALLY PRESENT FROM THE DAY HE WAS GIVEN NOTICE. SOUNDS LIKE A COMPLICATED TANGLE? IT IS!

THE FIGURE OF 70 OPEN SLOTS ON 1 JULY WAS ABNORMAL. IT WOULD BE WISHFUL THINKING INDEED TO ASSUME THAT RFE COULD CONTINUE ITS EXISTING LEVEL OF OPERATIONS EFFECTIVELY OR EFFICIENTLY FOR LONGER THAN A SHORT PERIOD WITH 70 PERMANENTLY OPEN SLOTS. THE HAPPENSTANCE OF HAVING SO MANY OPEN SLOTS MOMENTARILY AS OF 1 JULY IS EASILY EXPLAINED. IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE END OF THE FISCAL YEAR ALL HIRING ACTIONS WERE MOMENTARILY PRACTICALLY AT A STANDSTILL UNDER THE SHADOW OF UNCERTAINTY AS TO WHETHER THE SERIOUSLY INADEQUATE BUDGET MIGHT MEAN THAT MAJOR REDUCTIONS IN FORCE WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE REGARDLESS OF THE RESULTING IMPAIRMENT OF OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OR DAMAGE TO MORALE. MANY OF THESE POSITIONS WERE OF A NATURE THAT THEY COULD NOT BE LEFT OPEN LONG WITHOUT DAMAGE TO THE OPERATION, EVEN THOUGH OTHER LESS ESSENTIAL POSITIONS MIGHT GRADUALLY BE WORKED OPEN. THIS SITUATION WAS MADE ALL THE MORE PRONOUNCED BY THE SEVERAL TERMINATIONS THAT HAD BEEN MADE AS THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED, NOT NECESSARILY IN SLOTS THAT COULD BE KEPT UNFILLED LONG AND STILL OPERATE EFFECTIVELY.

IN SHORT, THE 1 JULY FIGURE OF 70 OPEN SLOTS, THE 30 SEPTEMBER FIGURE SHOWING THESE PARTICULAR 70 REDUCED TO 23, OR OUR PRESENT FIGURE OF 55 OPEN SLOTS ARE NOT ACTUALLY INCONSISTENT NOR ARE THEY NECESSARILY INDICATIVE OF WHAT THE AVERAGE WILL BE. IT WILL BE JUST AS HIGH AS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY EVENTS AND OUR JUDGEMENT OF HOW TIGHT A REIN CAN BE IMPOSED WITHOUT CAUSING TOO MUCH DAMAGE TO OPERATIONS.

ONE ALSO SHOULD NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN

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AN ADVANCE "BUDGET ESTIMATE" OR "BUDGET ALLOCATIONS" AND AN AFTER-THE-FACT ACCOUNTING RECORD OF ACTUAL EXPENDITURES. ALL OF OUR BUDGET ALLOCATIONS, INCLUDING OUR T/O BUDGET RUN WHEN WE GET THE REAL ONE OUT BASED ON THE NEW SALARY SCALES, ARE ESTIMATES, REPEAT ESTIMATES. THEY ARE BOUND TO COME OUT IN THE ACTUAL EVENT WITH DIFFERENCES, SOME PLUS AND SOME MINUS. WE USE WELL PROVEN EXPERIENCE FACTORS IN ESTIMATING PROBABLY PROMOTIONS, STEP INCREASES, RATES FOR NEW HIRES, MERIT INCREASES, ETC., BUT NO ONE CAN PREDICT WHO WILL RESIGN OR DIE, JUST WHAT SHIFTS WILL BE NEEDED OR WHAT PROMOTIONS WILL BE APPROPRIATE, OR AT JUST WHAT FIGURE A NEW HIRE CAN BE NEGOTIATED, OR EXACTLY WHAT MERIT INCREASE MAY TURN OUT TO BE DESERVED. EHNCCE, ANY IDEA THAT OUR IBM T/O BUDGET RUN EARLY IN THE FISCAL YEAR IS OR CAN BE A MATHEMATICALLY PRECISE DOCUMENT IS UTTER NONSENSE. IT IS A REMARKABLY FINE COMPILATION FOR BUDGET CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT USE (ORIGINATED BY US, ON OUR OWN) BUT IT DOES NOT AND CANNOT FULFILL ANY PURPOSE OF PRECISE ACCOUNTANT'S ACCURACY.

UNFORTUNATELY, WHENEVER PEOPLE REMOTE FROM AN OPERATION BEGIN TO TRY TO MAKE DETAILED JUDGMENTS OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS BASED ON STATISTICAL DATA, THE EXPLANATIONS WHICH CAN BE MADE ON PAPER, AND THE TIME WHICH CAN BE TAKEN AWAY FROM ACTUAL OPERATIONS TO MAKE SUCH EXPLANATIONS IS SO LIMITED IF THE OPERATIONS ARE NOT TO SUFFER, THAT IT ALWAYS SEEMS TO TURN OUT THAT THE EXPLANATIONS SOUND DEFENSIVE, AND ARE LIKELY TO BE GIVEN LITTLE WEIGHT OR BRUSHED ASIDE AS MERE ALIBIS, SELF PLEADING, EXCUSES, EFFORTS TO WHITEWASH, ETC. IF IT WERE NOT FOR MY CONCERN THAT MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE TRUE SITUATION MIGHT CASE SOME PERMANENT HURT TO RFE'S FUTURE, I WOULD BE TEMPTED TO LIMIT EXPLANATIONS, SIMPLY FURNISH FACTUAL DATA, AND LET NATURE TAKE ITS COURSE. I HAVE NOT THE SLIGHTEST INTEREST IN MAKING DEFENSIVE EXPLANATIONS. BUT WHAT I WOULD HATE TO SEE WOULD BE MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE REAL SITUATION RESULT FROM SUPERFICIAL REVIEW OF COLD FIGURES.

END MSG