

Psychological Warfare & The Majestic Documents: Little Evidence of Deception

By Ryan S. Wood

AN UNKNOWN AUTHOR on International Space Sciences Organization web site (www.issso.org) has proposed the theory that the professional hands of psychological warfare and propaganda experts were involved with the Majestic documents — be it modern day covert planning and leaking or old psychological warfare documents that have leaked “out of the garage” into mailboxes and personal meetings. This paper seeks to examine these theories and other relevant probabilities along with expert testimony as they relate to psychological warfare and propaganda operations. Let’s begin with a couple of modern definitions of psychological warfare and psychological operations both from the Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 1, 1987.

- *PSYWAR*: The planned use of propaganda and other psychological actions having the primary purpose of influencing the opinions, emotions, attitudes and behavior of hostile foreign groups in such a way as to support achievement of national objectives.
- *PSYOP*: Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning and ultimately the behavior of foreign government, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator’s objectives.

Most experienced corporate citizens will recognize the above basic principles of marketing, “spin” and salesmanship. What is different is the focus on national objectives and foreign audiences. The reader should feel comfortable that these are not exotic, exclusive, expert-only skills: it is really just standard marketing practices, except the stakes may be higher and the tools to deliver the message may be forged documents delivered by covert means.

If you give a man the correct information for seven years, he may believe the incorrect information on the first day of the eighth year when it is necessary, from your point of view, that he should do so. Your first job is to build credibility and the authenticity of your propaganda, and persuade the enemy to trust you although you are his enemy.”
—*Psychological Warfare Casebook, Operations Research John Hopkins University, 1958*

Do the Majestic documents show any evidence of a history of building credibility, let alone a long one, with potential targets of deception, such as the Soviet Union or China? If so, for what purpose? Is there any specific evidence in the papers themselves that proves they are fakes? The goal of this paper is answer these questions and determine the extent to which there is any hard and specific evidence that covert psychological warfare techniques were used in conjunction with the Majestic documents.

It is generally conceded that only a foreign or domestic intelligence agency has the resources, intelligence and sophistication to deliver an alleged psychological warfare deception using the comprehensive, often-sophisticated, intertwined Majestic documents. Such an undertaking, if true, would have started at least as early as 1981 (Air Force Office of Special Investigations Telex¹) and used six different sources, as well as physically planted documents in government archives and mailboxes. They would have had numerous trained psywar experts thoughtfully creating an expensive, clever deception targeted at a foreign power for the past 19 years. Does that sound credible?

It is certainly not beyond modern intelligence service capabilities to have fabricated some or all these documents, and it is not beyond thinking they would mount such an effort for marginal or even illogical reasons. Even that a psywar team would intentionally or carelessly include some anachronistic “ringers” is believable.

However, there are sharp disconnects between the wide scope, possible purpose(s), presumed target(s), likely risk(s), and extended duration of this alleged psywar operation.

The real question is how do we test for the use of psychological warfare and propaganda? Ask yourself the following questions.

Criteria For Determining Psychological Warfare In Documents

1. Is there low risk of attracting foreign intelligence organizations to the targeted topic? What is the extent of the risk involved with such a deception? Is it worth the tradeoffs?
2. Has there been a long multi-year history of credible relationship between the target of deception and the authors of the deception?
3. Is the reaction of the target predictable; will they swallow the bait and move in the desired direction for some length of time?
4. Is there a specific purpose, goal, objective or intent of the deception; can it be clearly stated?
5. Does the phrase, sentence or document establish believability in the eye of the target of deception?
6. Is there any direct evidence that the documents were ever launched at the target?
7. Are there a credible number of unique language words to draw suspicion about authorship?
8. Do the historically competent experts in Psychological Warfare agree with the answers to these questions?

How Does Reason Stand Up To These Questions?

First, if we are intellectually honest, we cannot discard the possibility that the documents are genuine and represent the intent of the authors at the time they were written, even with their misspellings, currently unresolved “anachronisms-” and occasional errors. It is important not to think that discrepancies — such as the misspelling of “celestial,” (Einstein, Oppenheimer June 1947²) or “several B-36’s on arctic patrol” (Majestic Annual Report, 1952³) instead of the current evidence of “one” on arctic patrol — are evidence of psychological warfare. To date there is not a single anachronism or other error that has been raised and then thoroughly researched that clearly shows the documents to be false. An error may be misleading or it

may be incomplete, but the examples are not outside the scope of reasonable error in human bureaucracies.

Now who might be the authors and who might be their target? We know, by analysis yet to be published that SOM 1-01 is on *original 1954 paper* and that other documents are on original paper with watermarks from the proper period. Thus, if there were a psywar operation, it could have been created and launched on its target during the cold war of the 50's by someone with access to such materials. Using the law of Occam's razor, the simplest source for such materials is the United States. Targeted against whom? Naturally, the only believable target is the Soviet Union: they had nuclear capability and so did we. The alleged deception foisted on them via the documents could be, "Don't mess with the United States — we have extraterrestrials and their technology and amazing advanced weaponry." Is creating an elaborate series of mutually reinforcing, incredible documents over nearly two decades necessary to accomplish credible deterrence? Hardly.

Is North Korea a viable target of deception for the Majestic documents dated before 1951? No, not really. It defies most military historians to believe that any leaked UFO document, even something as intriguing as, "SOM 1-01: Extraterrestrial Entities and Technology Recovery and Disposal" would have changed any tactical or strategic objective, troop movement or anti-aircraft battery. Psywar was certainly used during the Korean conflict — with typical operations involving dropping leaflets out of airplanes urging surrender. "Genuine" UFO reports from soldiers during military action seemed to have had no impact on the course of battles.

Again, how do these documents serve a valid, officially authorized Cold War purpose, assuming they were U.S.-produced. Would they desensitize Soviet air defenses to the meaning of sudden unexplained radar returns? If so, how does that square with the Robertson Panel's public report available to the Soviets, which debunked UFO reports as a valid input to air defense calculations? Would they conceal experimental aircraft development — as if anyone would doubt that we are proceeding in this direction anyway? Would they mask some other terrestrial but overwhelming American super-technology? This would stimulate greater espionage to acquire it, clearly undesirable.

Or do the documents create a "fire break" against learning an even deeper secret? Suppose that any one of the explicit and controversial sentences, let alone entire documents, of the MJ-12 material is genuine in the sense that it was produced by a real psywar organization. It is conceivable to concoct a very closely similar, but intentionally different, project as a smokescreen or firebreak against a deeper secret. Is the secret being concealed one of those truths so precious that a "bodyguard of lies" must protect it? What would warrant such an effort? Is the current Majestic discussion of crashed extraterrestrial discs and technology a smokescreen for *live* ETs and fully functional lines of communication and technology transfer? This argument leads deeper than the debunkers can dare imagine.

If the Majestic documents are mere fabrications, how far must we go to rationalize creation of such documents? Is it credible that a crack psywar disinformation team — whether operating out of the bowels of the NSA, the underground Groom Lake mine or elsewhere — would decide to be "really clever" and try to hide some super secret, or divert the enemy's attention by taking an existing highly secure project (MJ-12), use its actual name, along with identifying scores of living personnel, then change presumably key details and reveal this alleged deception to a target, and potentially the public? As one fellow researcher said to me, "it's — like doing the dance of the seven veils with wet Kleenex."

A logical conclusion might be that one of the most highly protected super secrets of our time was intentionally revealed (whether to a wider public, or to foreign intelligence — it does not matter). The initial disclosure would be very risky, as it would draw attention to the general nature of the UFO and ET matter — or at least some highly provocative presumed secret irrespective of clouding the details, and would certainly prompt more intensive and sophisticated targeting by foreign intelligence assets. In short, if it is a psywar operation, revealing the MJ-12 documents is inept because it will attract — and has attracted — much new attention. I can say this based on just looking at where the www.majesticdocuments.com website visitors come from.

Alternatively, did the Soviets or Chinese create these materials, insert some in the files of the National Archives and Records Administration, then release most of them in the 1990s after the fall of the Berlin Wall in order to bring the capitalist enemy to its knees? America, your government is hiding UFOs: throw off your chains and embrace the glorious socialist future. Judge for yourself.

From one Senior Government Official

“My gut says they’re real; contain the usual inconsistencies, mistakes and anomalies that derive from government work every day (even at the highest levels, especially where there is no effort to make things ‘credible’ for outside view, since they were never intended for outside view); and correspond to a set of phenomena that have been too consistently reported for too long by too many sane people.” What otherwise do we do with apparently authentic letters like that from Sarbacher⁴? Tools of the same disinformation campaign? Or if from the Soviets (who else?), is it to promote distrust and cynicism toward our ‘government conspiracy’ and foster social unrest? If so, they spent a lot of time and money and incredibly detailed research to little effect, since the vast majority of Americans have no knowledge of these documents, and the few who do are in conflict over them.

“Perhaps now with publication of the Sturrock scientific report and the French defense committee’s findings, there will be more context for considering the Majestic documents sensibly. Bearing in mind Kuhn’s classic model of the structure of scientific revolutions, we might transcend the “urbane sneers” of some interview-show astronomer who has obviously never studied the evidence (the amusing thing is that despite the symbolic idea of star gazing, most astronomers spend little time in their careers scanning the skies, and they know virtually nothing of politico-military discourse in classified channels). We might then conduct honest inquiry on the leading, not the trailing, edge of knowledge. If the Majestic documents are fakes, they’re too damn good to have been done as a hobby by UFO nuts. The external referent of credible observations is there. The internal referent of the documents is there. There’s something there.” [Private correspondence, 1999]

Do the Majestic Documents Specifically Mention Psywar?

What is the internal evidence of the documents themselves? What posture do they assume? The 19-page White Hot⁵ technical report discusses psywar (in military “bureacrat-ese”) in the following way.

“There is a good chance that the Russians may try to make use of the flying saucer scare by public news media and diplomatic means [sic]of a technological breakthrough in aircraft and missile development. We feel that such a disclosure would most certainly cause great embarrassment to our elected officials and to the military, not to mention the panic felt by the citizenry. To counter such a threat, it is recommended that a counterintelligence program be drawn up and held in abeyance if at such time the situation should present itself. It might be suggested that we should make a preemptive use of these objects for the purpose of psychological warfare once the true nature of these objects are known and understood. ...It would be advisable for the respective Secretaries of the Armed Forces to devise a security policy of plausible denial, if and when the public becomes aware of the reality of these objects and the interest of the military in such incidents.

In conclusion, for reasons of national security and the public well being, the US must be perceived as being the top of the heap, and every effort must be made to insure that there is [sic], and never has been, a threat to the country.”

So in September of 1947, top military leaders were recommending to the President that the U.S. consider using our existing crashed hardware and proof of the reality of UFOs as a tool to deceive the Soviets once we figured out the technology. If this document is psywar propaganda, why include this paragraph? It just attracts attention to the topic and makes alleged foreign intelligence analysts view the document with greater suspicion.

There is another brief explicit discussion of psychological warfare, from the “Annual Report” of Majestic page 3, IV-Discussion, A. Nature of the Investigation, point 5:

“MAJESTIC SS&P are currently focused on Psy-op development for Cold War CI activities.”

So what does this mean? We know that the National Security Council (NSC) authorized an interdisciplinary Special Studies group consisting of Army, Navy, Air Force and CIA with their May 5, 1948 directive⁶. We also know that Truman made the decision to establish the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) on 4 April 1951. This further relates to UFOs when you consider the high officials of the War Department and the Army who actively promoted the immediate post-war development of the psychological warfare in 1946 through 1950, which include:

- (a) Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Kenneth Royall
- (b) Secretary of War, the Honorable Robert Patterson
- (c) Assistant Secretary of the Army, the Honorable Gordon Gray
- (d) Chief of Staff & General of the Army, Dwight D. Eisenhower

- (e) Lt. General Albert C. Wedemeyer, USA
- (f) Brigadier General Robert McClure, USA
- (g) Lt. General J. Lawton Collins, USA
- (h) Major General Charles Bolte, USA
- (i) Undersecretary of War, the Honorable William Draper
- (j) Major General Stephen Chamberlain, USA (G-2)

Many of these people are deeply involved with MAJESTIC-12 according to other documents. Note the similarity of panel personnel between the November 1952 Eisenhower Briefing Document and the Majestic Annual Report; the team distribution has the same interagency structure. Is this a coincidence, standard procedure, or is it the same MAJESTIC committee just six years later? What is the mission of “Cold War CI activities” as it relates to UFOs? Who is the target and what are the objectives?

The second explicit mention of psychological warfare is from the “Annual Report” on Majestic, page 10, Annex B, point 10:

“MAJCOM-1 with the assistance of the Panel persuades the President to establish a Psychological Strategy Board on 4 April 1951.”⁷

This is an obscure fact that the strategy board was authorized on 4 April 1951. To discover this would take intense digging nowadays and would be known to only a few insiders in 1951. This is powerful evidence in favor of Majestic document authenticity. However, following disinformation theory, why attract attention to the fact (verifiable and known today) that you established a very secret board with staff, plans, and very likely operational capabilities to mislead the enemy. Now consider this, because the sentence does not deliberately misdirect, as it might if this was a psywar document — by saying “MAJCOM-1 was *unable* to persuade the President to establish any sort of Psychological Strategy Board.” Here is a missed opportunity to spring misdirection on the enemy.

Is it logical to believe that if the Majestic Annual Report document was part of psywar deception that it would highlight that very fact to the target of such a deception? I don’t think so. In addition to the examples above, here is more evidence that such a deception is not a factor. Why would the following paragraph be included if the goal were to deceive?

Based on what is known of the technology and intelligence of the visitors, it is fairly certain there will be other sightings and encounters of a spectacular nature.⁸

Wouldn’t it be more logical to change phrases to leave the impression that the July 1947 events were a random miracle so that the Soviets would be less vigilant-for such an intriguing phenomenon? Otherwise, if they believe the document (if this is psywar, aren’t they *supposed* to believe it?), their vigilance is heightened. For what purpose?

Does this relate to the Majestic mention of Nuclear Energy for the Propulsion of Aircraft (NEPA)?⁹ The once highly classified NEPA project, an actual initiative and logical extension of the Manhattan project, was to provide the U.S. with an atomic-powered aircraft. Why specifically mention it in these documents, if they were designed to be “leaked,” thereby encouraging spy activities and intelligence

collection around atomic airplanes? This could be viewed as a far more important secret to keep than telling the Soviets about crashed flying saucers; yet, the statements in the documents are not deceptive (the NEPA initiative was real) and would encourage espionage. Are we to believe that the psywar experts revealed this top secret project, then sought to discredit potential aerial sightings by heightening Soviet surveillance for an even more fascinating presumed aerial phenomenon –“real” UFOs?

Is There Any Evidence Of Official Governmental Falsification In Relation To UFOs?

Speculation about UFOs could offer a powerful tool to the military and intelligence communities. Early on, as evidenced from official declassified documents NASA was ordered by President Kennedy to communicate clearly to the Soviets about known and “unknown” (UFO) aircraft and spacecraft.⁹¹⁰ Some have made the obvious suggestion that we could build military or intelligence craft that “look like” UFOs and will thus be ignored, since it is understood that modern defense systems are looking for specific anticipated targets with established “signatures,” not “erratic” UFOs. There is a recently declassified top secret technical report called Silverbug¹¹ that describes a Mach 3 single seat UFO that was written in 1955. It would be logical to assume that other more modern craft have been made. Elsewhere, the CIA has published that UFO reports were considered a “cover” for high-flying U-2 or other reconnaissance aircraft — these assertions contrary to the disparity between frequency of UFO reports declining at the same time that reconnaissance flights were increasing, as well as the markedly different flight signatures of reported UFOs versus advanced conventional aircraft virtually invisible (except for contrails) at high altitude.

Reference to “psywar” in the Majestic documents is paralleled by a CIA document released under FOIA (www.1999.com/ciauf0/ciadoc.gif) that the UFO phenomenon was indeed of interest in "psychological strategy." The crucial difference between saying the Majestic documents were forged, however, and the above reference is this: the “faking” allegation by debunkers always explicitly posits no real UFO phenomenon, while the CIA reference above depends on acknowledging the phenomenon as the basis for subsequent treatment. Government officials with genuine experience handling issues that draw direct, written comment from the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) for referral to the National Security Council (NSC) know that such issues are too thoroughly reviewed to be trivial or marginal. The phenomenon -- in this case, the otherwise ridiculous subject of “flying saucers” -- had sufficient weight and substance for DCI Walter Bedel Smith¹² himself to refer it to the NSC for strategic consideration.

Other than these recently made CIA references, to date there has not been a single, classified psywar product that has come to light, either through official declassification or through leaks, that justifies the major investment purportedly made in the Majestic documents — documents revealed in the 1990s allegedly as cover for strategic reconnaissance in the 1960s and 1970s. If such were the case, it was an absurd failure! Did the Soviets really think that the U-2 or SR-71 were alien spacecraft? What U.S. military or intelligence officer based his or her career on convincing the Soviets that they were?

Have The Skeptics Raised Any Valid Objections Or Evidence?

Recently posted to the www.issso.org website is a paper from an anonymous author with unknown and unverified credentials titled: *Deceptive UFO Documents: Doubt Debate and Daunting Questions*. The paper states the obvious concerning the polarizing debate in ufology and provides no detailed evidence of deception in the Majestic documents. Take this statement for example, “Ongoing research indicates that many, possibly all, of the so called MJ-12 UFO documents were officially fabricated as instruments of U.S. covert psychological warfare, perhaps beginning in 1950 during the most threatening period of the Korean War.” Whose research? What specifics are being alluded to? Without clear answers, this statement is simply an argument-by-assertion and is just pontificating by an unknown author.

Or the ISSO author’s critical assertion is made: “Document examination and authentication is a science of expert opinion, and are, as other sciences, generally probabilistic; however, it is an empirical and not a statistical science.” To the contrary: document examination and authentication is not a matter of expert opinion according to Dr. James Black, 30-year practitioner in document forensics and past president of the questioned documents professional organization but is a matter of applying key straightforward tests and presenting a logical set of evidence.

Or the critical assertion is made: “If one notices and accepts irregularities and alterations of all the MJ-12 documents as indicative of covert psychological warfare operation, then the deception cannot be adjusted, explained away, trivialized, excused or denied...” This concept is very weak and unsubstantiated, just because there are irregularities does not mean they are psywar. Furthermore, if a crack psywar team had created these documents, would there not be far fewer mistakes? Don’t we want the enemy to believe these documents? What’s the objective? Why attract attention? The psywar theory fails before it even gets to the starting gate. See what an identified, accountable expert has to say.

What Does a Real Psychological Operations Officer Say About The Majestic Documents?

A Lt. Colonel, U.S. Army – Ret, who I met at a meeting of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers (AFIO), spent his entire 24-year career both creating and managing enemy deception in psychological operations and propaganda, had this to say after studying SOM 1-01 and the Majestic documents:

I don’t see the MJ-12 documents as comprising an effective psyop campaign of any sort. What would be the purpose?

If MJ-12 existed and the docs were supposed to be believable, they would just draw more attention to the Majestic program that the government wanted under wraps. If the docs’ occasional format errors were supposed to be deliberate, what would be the point of creating & disseminating such docs? All they would do would be to attract presumably unwanted amateur interest in MJ-12, which again the government would presumably not want.

PSYOP, despite the ‘ooga-booga’ mythology around it, is not a very complicated process. A target audience is thinking about a subject one way, and you want to get them to think about it another way. So an audience analysis is performed to find out how to talk to them, how to gain credibility with them, and how to appeal to their needs and interests. Then phrase your objective accordingly and communicate it. If

you do all this correctly, their minds change and they think/act the way you want them to. That's it.

If MJ-12 were in fact a real, top-secret government operation, which the government intended to keep secret, then anything using its name or orbiting around its business (such as the MJ-12 docs or SOMI-01 manual) would not be remotely appropriate for any advertisement or publicity whatever.

The only situation in which I could see PSYOP resources playing a part would be one in which the cat were out of the bag about MJ-12's existence, and the government then acted to trivialize or minimize it. When I saw Dark Skies on television, it occurred to me that this could be one way of turning the entire topic into a 'science fiction cartoon', in much the same way that the movie Philadelphia Experiment and its even zanier sequel did for that topic."

He further added in a conversation that he would be very surprised if there was not a blue ribbon panel such as the membership of MJ-12 to investigate UFOs. After all there are high-ranking panels on all sorts of threats to national security, such as domestic biological weapons and terrorism.

Why PSYWAR Theory Is Not Credible

Fundamentally the basic discriminates for determining the chance of official government psywar and propaganda fail.

- Are the risks low and the tradeoffs worthwhile? No. If the documents are to be believed, they would engender extraordinary espionage against an extraordinary target. The documents are rich in provocative detail. If they are not to be believed, how could they be worth the intensive investment allegedly made to fake them?
- Is there an established relationship between the purported target(s) and the psywar fakers? Scarcely, unless we think someone in the U.S. wanted to dandle "alien spacecraft" stories in front of Cold War adversaries, possibly to mask other secrets (or to convince the Soviets that the U.S. was incapacitated with hallucinogens and not worth the trouble of overtaking?). What would be the purpose of releasing these documents in the 1990s to deal with Cold War problems that fell with the Berlin Wall?
- Is target reaction predictable and dependable? No, except perhaps guffaws of laughter. If the Majestic documents are not truthful, the debunkers' own arguments that they are ludicrous presumably would not escape the amusement of officers of Soviet State security and military intelligence.
- Is there a purpose that can be clearly stated? No, the content is too varied and a multitude objectives seem to be present — as would be the case with genuine documents written by different authors over a course of years. Most documents were publicly released well after the height of the Cold War and could have had no reasonable effect on the outcome.
- Does the internal quality of the documents establish believability *in the eyes of the deception target?*) Not likely. The same critique of alleged "errors" that debunkers have raised would also have dissuaded intelligence adversaries looking at such inherently incredible material.

Allegations that the Majestic documents are dismissed with the spooky label of “psywar” do not withstand scrutiny. One may speculate, as discussed in the recently published book “Mind Shift,” that there may be a systematic desensitization of the world public to the idea of extraterrestrial contact through a variety of media outlets — with movies such as “Independence Day,” TV programs, print articles, advertisements, and the proliferation of little alien figures in toy stores and popular culture. Psywar and propaganda may well be at play in the public’s mind. Yet, there is no sensible evidence to support the ISSO author’s assertion that the Majestic documents are mere fakes and derive from psywar operations targeting Cold War adversaries.

¹ Air Force Office of Special Investigations, 17, Nov. 1980, Secret – www.majesticdocuments.com

² Relationships with Inhabitants of Celestial Bodies, Top Secret, June 1947,

³ Majestic Twelve Project, Annual Report, page 14, item 5, Top Secret

⁴ Letter from Dr. Robert I Sarbacher, 29, November 1983 to William Steinman – Personal correspondence about MJ-12, Sarbacher was President and COB of the Washington Institute of Technology Oceanographics and Physical Sciences

⁵ Majestic Documents – Top Secret White Hot, page 20-21

⁶ NARA – Record Group 273, NSC 10/2 – Top Secret - declassified

⁷ Ibid. page 10, Annex A item 10 - declassified

⁸ Top Secret Majestic Operation Annual Report, page 6 item K – Intelligence Gathering and Analysis – www.majesticdocuments.com

⁹ NARA - National Security Action Memorandum 271, 12 Nov. 1963, Confidential - declassified

¹⁰ Top Secret Memo to Director CIA and James Webb, NASA, 12 Nov 1963, signed by JFK

¹¹ Project Silverbug No 9961, Declassified 29, March 1995 - Air Technical Intelligence Center TR-AC-47,

15 February 1955, DS55-1272-2, Released 5 October 1997. – www.majesticdocuments.com

¹² Memo from DCI Walter B. Smith ER – 3 –2808 to Executive Sec of NSC, 3 Dec 1952 –www.cufon.org/cufon/cia-52-1.htm