

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Date: May 11, 1950
To: Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2
Department of the Army
The Pentagon
Washington 25, D. C.

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ON 3-7-90
307009

Attention: Chief, Security and Training Group

From: J. Edgar Hoover, Director - Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject: ⁰ BIOLOGICAL WARFARE
SUBSTANCES - ESPIONAGE

RECORDED - 32 / 100-93216-290

There is set forth below for your confidential information the following data which has been furnished to the Bureau relating to the captioned matter.

Dr. Lincoln LaFas, Entomologist, advised that within recent weeks he had occasion to be in the Sandia Mountains near Albuquerque, New Mexico, in connection with his work and that he had noticed that there was an absence of small animal life in the Sandia Mountains. He stated that he and another individual within the past few weeks had found four dead rats. These four rats were brought into Albuquerque and turned over to the State Department of Public Health for examination. However, only one of the rats was in good enough condition for a test. He stated that the State Department of Public Health had reported as follows concerning one of the rats that he had turned over to them:

"The rat was in a very bad condition when it was received, being full of maggots. However, cultures were made and mice were inoculated with material from ground up liver from the rat. In twenty-four hours one of the mice was dead. Cultures were made and sufficient growth was obtained. A guinea pig was inoculated. This animal died in twenty-four hours. The cultures from the mice and the guinea pig were classified as *pasteurella pestis*, indicating that the rats in all probability died of this plague."

Dr. LaFas stated that four of the six rats were found at an altitude of approximately equal to the above test which is approximately

- Tolson _____
- Ladd _____
- Clegg _____
- Glavin _____
- Nichols _____
- Rosen _____
- Tracy _____
- Harbo _____
- Mohr _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Nease _____
- Gandy _____

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toes as high as any of the other cases of bubonic plague that have been discovered in New Mexico. He stated that two of these dead rats had been found in a ditch along the road to the In Kadiya Ski Lodge in the Sandia Mountains. Dr. Lafas stated that he thought this might be some strange type of the plague as the tests conducted by the State Department of Public Health had been unusual in that an agglutination test had not been successful.

Dr. Lafas also pointed out that some Japanese paper balloons had landed in the Sandia Mountains during the war. He furnished a copy of a report written for him by [redacted]

FOIA(b) (7) - (D)

This report

is set out as follows:

"Date: April 6, 1950

"Subject: Bubonic Plague in Alberta, Canada

"1) At your request, I am making a matter of permanent record certain observations, which I have already orally communicated to you.

"2) From January, 1945 until February, 1946, I was in charge of [redacted] investigating the Japanese Paper Balloon offensive in the Edmonton District. While serving in this capacity, I had opportunity to become acquainted with the localities in which paper balloon recoveries were made in Alberta.

FOIA(b) (7) - (D)

FOIA(b)(7) - (D)

"3) In the summer of 1945, [redacted] conducted investigations in the vicinity of Chip Lake, Alberta to ascertain the possibility of survival in the region north and west of Edmonton. This crew discovered at that time an absolute absence of small game (rabbits, squirrels, small rodents, etc.) in the area investigated. The men parachuted into the area were experienced northwesterners who knew normal conditions in this region well enough to be able to recognize with certainty the abnormality of this absence of game, which was so complete that although armed with .22 rifles and wire snares, they were unable to secure one decent meal off the game in the region. *

FOIA(b) (7) - (D)

*It is very abnormal this dearth of small game as can be inferred from statements made by Professor Bogoras in his treatise on circumpolar conditions in northern Siberia and Canada, calling attention to the remarkable abundance of small game throughout this region. (See Elements of the Culture of the Circumpolar Zone, by W. G. Bogoras, Smithsonian Report, 1930, loc. cit., p. 172).

"4) The absence of cases mentioned in (3) above may be referable to a plague among the small game of the region resulting from B.W. agents carried in by a Jap paper balloon, which to my certain knowledge came to earth in the region in which the survival test was made. This concordance came to my mind when, in the summer of 1949, an outbreak of bubonic plague carried by rats and other rodents occurred throughout Alberta, but principally in the northern part of the province, precisely the area most heavily bombarded with Jap paper balloons. In this connection, it seems worth while to point out that as far as I know, the plague had never occurred before in the area in question.

"5) How serious the 1949 outbreak in Alberta was may perhaps be inferred from the widespread and continuous use of posters and radio to disseminate rat plague warnings; and the extensive rat extermination campaigns conducted by the larger cities in Alberta. (For details on these matters, see the July and August, 1949 issues of Canadian-Fish magazine).

"6) In connection with the possibility of B.W. infections set up by Jap paper balloons, I should like to call attention to another observation that I made during flights along the Northwest staging route. In the summer and fall of 1945, many small areas of up to 20 square miles were observable in which spruce tree blight had destroyed the foliage. The spottiness of blight distribution might tie in with the landing of isolated Jap balloons in this area. There was no possibility of searching for balloons in this area because of the inaccessibility of the country.

"7) In case any significance is attached to the information set down in paragraphs (2) to (6) above, I strongly recommend that a check be made by

FOIA(b) (7) - (D)

Signed:

FOIA(b) (7) - (D)

Dr. IAPAs stated that the U. S. Public Health Service and the New Mexico State Department of Public Health are setting out a number of traps in the Sandia Mountains in order to obtain additional information concerning plague conditions there. He stated that the

military authorities at Santa Rosa and Highland Field, Albuquerque, New Mexico, had been advised of this matter. He pointed out that two of the rats found on the east slope of the Santa Mountains were only about three and a half miles from the Atomic Energy installation at Santa Rosa, New Mexico.

Mr. William J. McElureth, Director, Security Division, Santa Fe Operations Office, Los Alamos, New Mexico, has advised that instructions will be issued at Los Alamos to have all dead animals turned in immediately for examination by the Health Division without making any specific reference to the fear of plague conditions in this territory.

In the event any additional information is received by this Bureau relating to the above matter you will be promptly advised.

cc - Director of Naval Intelligence
Department of the Navy
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C.

~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

Director of Special Investigations ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~
The Inspector General
Department of the Air Force
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C.

Director
Central Intelligence Agency
2210 R Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

~~(CONFIDENTIAL - BY SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS)~~

Attention: Colonel Robert E. Schow

Atomic Energy Commission ~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~
Building 9-3
16th and Constitution Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Attention: Mr. Francis R. Harnack
Acting Director
Division of Security