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**To:** Jeffrey Epstein <jeevacation@gmail.com>

**Subject:** FW: A Saturday Evening Historical Footnote

**Date:** Sun, 17 Jul 2011 17:15:07 +0000

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**From:** Lowell Wood

**Sent:** Saturday, July 16, 2011 11:50 PM

**To:** Vicky Wood

**Cc:** Yuki Wood

**Subject:** A Saturday Evening Historical Footnote

The appended item – just dropped into my mailbox by a DC colleague from those far-off days -- decently summarizes some key aspects of the decade before your birth from a geopolitical perspective.

To it, I append a bit of personal perspective:

Bill Casey summoned me in to his office at CIA Headquarters in March '81 to be briefed on the first (successful) x-ray laser experiment that we had done the previous November, barely a week after the election (which timing naturally wasn't accidental – DC bureaucrats never take unnecessary chances!). [Then still in my late '30s and far less sober-&-responsible than you've ever known me, I was already predicting that fall-&-winter to all-&-sundry in National Security-Land that it would make a huge difference in military space matters – after it was extensively developed from its then-nascent capabilities.]

In the later course of our extended discussion, Casey related – in great confidence, of course -- the new President's private decision to definitively confront not just Soviet power "out in the wide world" but the USSR itself. He directed me in the President's name to proceed forthwith to apply not just the x-ray laser technology but also all other possible technical means of fundamentally similar natures to apply pressure to the Soviet politicomilitary decision-making apparatus, naturally, along lines of greatest-attainable leverage-&-cost-efficiency. He assured me that the enabling material means would be made available, and that I'd also have adequate "high cover" – and to come back to him whenever might be necessary in these respects.

In that same season, John Nuckolls became Associate Director for Physics of the Livermore Lab – and still-quite-young "O" Group thereby gained crucial room-to-run. Tom Weaver and Rod Hyde were already seasoned "O" Group veterans – each just short of 30 – and some key others that you don't know so well (e.g., Bruce McWilliams) were just joining the ranks. Tom and Rod both contributed pivotally to the x-ray laser effort, and Rod thereafter to the Brilliant Pebbles one, as well; Bruce personally recruited-&-trained what became most of the "Brilliant..." core-staff.

We thus continued the quantitative-&-qualitative expansion of advanced nuclear means of countering Soviet power and, just when John became Lab Director in '86, we secured (again, completely out-of-official channels, with Uncle Edward and Johnny Foster playing the key roles in DC, in two wildly-probable manners) a sought-after mandate directly from President Reagan to open the second great technological front against Soviet politicomilitary power, the one that resulted in Brilliant Pebbles, then Brilliant Eyes, and...

The feedback loops commenced to close, with Gorbachev complaining in public (in a notable Newsweek interview) about the x-ray laser initiative, against a background of great Soviet agitation being expressed in diplomatic discussions in Geneva, Erice and elsewhere about both directed nuclear energy weaponry *and* the newer technological thrust centered on Brilliant Pebbles. [Of course, the Soviets had called into existence huge-scale "hell bent for leather" competing initiatives in all of these areas but -- as anticipated long since in our choosing of these areas for the final confrontation – they simply couldn't compete effectively, no matter how hard they tried and how much they spent. The overarching strategic concept of course was to both stress them financially and in terms of key personnel *and* to crush their morale-&-

will-to-persist in the process of doing so! After all, we were contesting for the prize of a planet, not for “good sportsmanship” awards – and it was without-a-doubt a classic “No holds barred” situation. 😊]

This set of Soviet ‘responses’ naturally “opened the throttle” on our side along all axes, culminating in my briefings to President Reagan in 1988 and to President Bush I in 1990 (during which the memorable “We ordered you to give Lowell all the money he could possibly use!” command from the President was issued while I was present).

Your mother – who had been in the thick of the fray since she joined “O” Group in the mid-‘80s – was completing her first trimester of gestating you when we watched together (in the living room of our ‘log cabin’ on Windy Ridge) the still-staggering-in-recollection video-in-real-time of the Hammer-&-Sickle being lowered for the final time from Spasskaya Tower of the Kremlin on Christmas ‘91, and the Russian Federation flag being hoisted in its place.

Manifestly, you missed a great show by showing up late! 😊 However, you definitely picked a *distinctly* less tense world in which to “come of age!”

Dad

PS. No good deed goes unpunished, you’ll recall.

When Casey died of a rapidly progressing brain tumor, Meyer was driven from the CIA in ‘87 -- in spite of the already-becoming-visible death agonies of the Evil Empire.

This of course is The Way the World Works: Those who predict the near future successfully are often rewarded handsomely, while those who see unusually clearly the more distant future are nearly invariably pilloried.

PPS. Indeed, in retrospect, at least the second half of the ‘life’ of the Soviet Union had a distinct Moore’s Law characteristic: it continued not due to natural law but because of very widely-held human expectations.

For many reasons – the exact origins and ‘weights’ of which doubtless will be hotly debated for considerable time yet-to-come – the Western intelligentsia had become convinced that the USSR was at least indefinitely-durable (if not “doomed to win” outright), and these confident-&-virtually unanimous expectations sufficed to keep it afloat long after it might have been rationally expected to capsize.

Reagan-&-Co. really-&-truly were deemed profoundly irresponsible – if not utterly stupid or downright mad – for electing to confront Soviet power and moreover confidently expecting to win bloodlessly, merely by doing so in a principled, purposeful -- and resolute-&-implacable -- manner. [In the context of “Pay no attention to the little man behind the green curtain!”, don’t ask what Casey rather singlehandedly did to drain the Soviet treasury drastically when they most desperately needed cash, or what Reagan personally did to demonstrate in a stunningly-audacious manner just how many divisions the Pope *actually* had, or a few other such ‘practical’ details. As Gauss memorably remarked when the *ab initio* rationales of some of his most notable proofs were unsuccessfully demanded of him, “The cathedral spire is forever less splendid if one ever sees the scaffolding employed to erect it!” 😊😊]

Thus, never forget: **“In political affairs, perceptions *are* reality!”** 😊😊 [Or, in Orwell’s memorable phrasing, “Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.”]

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**Predicting the Soviet Collapse: Herb Meyer deduced from solid research what Ronald Reagan had deduced by intuition** – by Paul Kengor, professor of political science at Grove City College and author of *The Crusader: Ronald Reagan and the Fall of Communism* and the newly released *Dupes: How America’s Adversaries Have Manipulated Progressives for a Century*; National Review Online, 7-14-2011 ([www.nationalreview.com/articles/print/271828](http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/print/271828))

It was 20 years ago this summer that the final disintegration of the Soviet Union rapidly unfolded. In June 1991, Boris Yeltsin was freely elected president of the Russian Republic, with Mikhail Gorbachev clinging to power atop the precarious USSR. In August, Communist hardliners attempted a dramatic coup against Gorbachev, prompting a stunning succession of declarations of independence by Soviet republics, with seven of them breaking away in August alone, and four more following through mid-December.

The writing was on the wall — not the Berlin Wall, which had collapsed two years earlier, but the graveyard of history, which would soon register the USSR as deceased. It was December 25, 1991, the day the West celebrates Christmas — a celebration the Communists had tried to ban — that Gorbachev announced his resignation, turning out the lights on an Evil Empire that had produced countless tens of millions of corpses.

Historians debate the credit that goes to various players for that collapse, from Gorbachev to Ronald Reagan, Pope John Paul II, Margaret Thatcher, Lech Walesa, and Vaclav Havel, to name a few. These are the people who get books written about them. But there were many behind-the-scenes players who performed critical roles that have never seen the light of a historian's word processor. Here I'd like to note one such player: Herb Meyer. Specifically, I'd like to highlight a fascinating memo Meyer wrote eight years before the Soviet collapse.

From 1981 to 1985, Meyer was special assistant to the director of central intelligence, Bill Casey, and vice chairman of the CIA's National Intelligence Council. In the fall of 1983, he crafted a classified memo titled, "Why Is the World So Dangerous?" Addressed to Casey and the deputy director, John McMahon, it had a larger (though limited) audience within the intelligence community and the Reagan administration, including President Reagan himself. Later, it would earn Meyer the prestigious National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal. Even so, the memo has eluded historians, which is a shame. It ought to rank among the most remarkable documents of the Cold War.

Meyer began his eight-page memo (see article link: [www.nationalreview.com/articles/print/271828b](http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/print/271828b)) of November 30, 1983, by describing a "new stage" that had opened in the struggle between the free world and the Soviet Union. It was a "direction favorable" to the United States. He listed positive changes in America that suddenly had the USSR "downbeat." Not only was the U.S. economy "recovering," but Meyer foresaw a "boom" ahead, "with the only argument" having to do with its "breadth and duration."

Meyer listed seven signs of America's surge before providing even more symptoms of Soviet decline — a decline that was unrecognized by most pundits and academic Sovietologists. His insights into what he saw as an imminent Soviet collapse were prescient. After 66 years of Communist rule, the USSR had "failed utterly to become a country," with "not one major nationality group that is content with the present, Russian-controlled arrangement." It was "hard to imagine how the world's last empire can survive into the twenty-first century except under highly favorable conditions of economics and demographics — conditions that do not, and will not, exist."

"The Soviet economy," Meyer insisted, "is heading toward calamity."

Meyer nailed not only the Soviet Union's economy but also its "demographic nightmare." Here, he was way ahead of the curve, reporting compelling information on Russian birthrates, which were in free-fall. He recorded an astounding figure: Russian women, "according to recent, highly credible research," "average six abortions."

As for the Soviet Bloc, Meyer didn't miss that either. "The East European satellites are becoming more and more difficult to control," he wrote, emphasizing that it wasn't merely Poland that was in revolt. "[O]ther satellites may be closer to their own political boiling points than we realize."

"In sum," concluded Meyer, "time is not on the Soviet Union's side."

He summed up with two predictions, nearly identically worded, as if to let the reader know he knew the magnitude of what he was saying: (1) "if present trends continue, we're going to win the Cold War;" and (2) "if present trends continue we will win." He quoted President Reagan's May 1981 Notre Dame speech, where

Reagan proclaimed that history would dismiss Soviet Communism as “some bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages are even now being written.” Meyer felt that Reagan was “absolutely correct,” adding that the USSR was “entering its final pages.” His memo projected a window no longer than 20 years.

Herb Meyer was dead on. I know of no other Cold War document as accurate as this one.

I recently talked to Meyer about his memo. He had no idea it had been declassified until someone sent it to him last month. “I was astonished,” Meyer wrote me in an e-mail, “and it’s a weird feeling to read something you’d written decades ago and hadn’t seen since.”

Meyer remembered well certain elements of the memo, particularly the Cold War predictions. He also had not forgotten the memo’s reception. Within the intelligence community, there was a general feeling that Meyer had lost his mind. That was just the start of the backlash.

The memo was leaked to syndicated columnists Evans & Novak, who devoted a column to it. There was subsequent uproar throughout Washington, which made Meyer very nervous. He was summoned to his boss’s office.

“Herb, right now you’ve got the smallest fan club in Washington,” Bill Casey told him grimly. As Meyer turned pale, Casey laughed: “Relax. It’s me and the president.”

Today, Meyer says with a chuckle: “If you’re going to have a small fan club — that’s it.”

CIA director Casey, like President Reagan, was committed to placing a dagger in the chest of Soviet Communism. He was pleased, and he encouraged Meyer. Meyer recalls: “My orders were, in effect, to keep going.”

Meyer particularly remembers Reagan’s being shaken by the statement about Russian women averaging six abortions. To Meyer’s knowledge, Reagan “never went public with that astounding statistic. . . . Come to think of it, no one — except some Russians — ever talked about it.”

Of all the items in the memo, that one remains the most far-reaching. Demographers today foresee Russia plummeting in population from 150 million to possibly 100 million by 2050. Meyer’s memo is a prophetic warning that isn’t finished. For Russians, the internal implosion isn’t over.

When we look back at the Cold War, we remember big names and big statements and documents. There’s nary a college course on the Cold War that excludes George Kennan’s seminal “Long Telegram,” sent from the U.S. embassy in Moscow in February 1946. Kennan’s memo prophetically captured what the free world faced from the USSR at the start of the Cold War, forecasting a long struggle ahead. Herb Meyer’s November 1983 memo likewise prophetically captured what the free world faced from the USSR, but this time nearing the end of the Cold War, uniquely forecasting a long struggle about to close — with victory.

George Kennan’s memo is remembered in our textbooks and our college lectures. Herb Meyer’s memo merits similar treatment.