

# memorandum

Z-043-93

DATE: 9 June 1993

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: Z

*PLS FORWARD TO ADMIRAL  
STUDEMAN FOR INFO.*

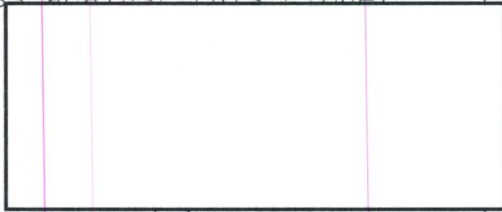
SUBJECT: CIA KRYPTOS Sculpture - Challenge and Resolution ~~(FOUO)~~  
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: DIR *M*  
THRU: D/DIR *MM*, EXEC/DIR *DD*, DDO *MM* *Great Story!*

1. ~~(FOUO)~~ The KRYPTOS sculpture, located at the entrance and in the courtyard of the new CIA headquarters, consists of a series of stone "pages" containing code which begins as International Morse and increases in complexity as the stonework extends into the courtyard. Inserted between these stone "pages" is a flat copper sheet engraved with letters and symbols - the enciphered message - that is the focus of this challenge.

2. ~~(FOUO)~~ In November, a cadre of cryptanalysts assigned to Z Group enthusiastically responded to the challenge. Within one month, three of the four cipher systems used to encrypt the sculpture's plain text had been diagnosed and completely exploited. The cryptographies employed for the encryption of these three parts involved two periodic polyalphabetic substitution ciphers and a keyed columnar transposition cipher. The exploitation of the sculpture's first three parts constitutes a readability of approximately 89%. The final 97 characters continue to elude solution.

3. ~~(FOUO)~~ Attached, for your review, is a brief description of the employed cryptographies and the plain text derived from the three exploited portions of the KRYPTOS sculpture. If your schedule permits, we would be happy to present a 15-minute briefing on the KRYPTOS sculpture solution and introduce you to the cryptanalysts responsible for the success against this cipher.



(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

- 3 Encls:
- 1. Copy of Sculpture Picture
- 2. Copy of Cipher
- 3. Description of Cryptographies

cc: Z4  
Z43

*Derived fm: NSA Class. Guide 342-97  
29 May 1997  
Declassify on: X1, X5*

~~SECRET SPOKE~~  
~~FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10  
MAY 1962 EDITION  
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6  
\*46695\*



*Home Ex Rec 11 June 93*



THE KRYPTOS SCULPTURE CIPHER

~~(S)~~

E M U F P H Z L R F A X Y U S D J K Z L D K R N S H G N F I V J  
 Y Q T Q U X Q B Q V Y U V L L T R E V J Y Q T M K Y R D M F D  
 V F P J U D E E H Z W E T Z Y V G W H K K Q E T G F Q J N C E  
 G G W H K K ? D Q M C P F Q Z D Q M M I A G P F X H Q R L G  
 T I M V M Z J A N Q L V K Q E D A G D V F R P J U N G E U N A  
 Q Z G Z L E C G Y U X U E E N J T B J L B Q C R T B J D F H J R R  
 Y I Z E T K Z E M V D U F K S J H K F W H K U W Q L S Z F T I  
 H H D D D U V H ? D W K B F U F P W N T D F I Y C U Q Z E R E  
 E V L D K F E Z M O Q Q J L T T U G S Y Q P F E U N L A V I D X  
 F L G G T E Z ? F K Z B S F D Q V G O G I P U F X H H D R K F  
 F H Q N T G P U A E C N U V P D J M Q C L Q U M U N E D F Q  
 E L Z Z V R R G K F F V O E E X B D M V P N F Q X E Z L G R E  
 D N Q F M P N Z G L F L P M R J Q Y A L M G N U V P D X V K P  
 D Q U M E B E D M H D A F M J G Z N U P L G E W J L L A E T G  
 E N D Y A H R O H N L S R H E O C P T E O I B I D Y S H N A I A  
 C H T N R E Y U L D S L L S L L N O H S N O S M R W X M N E  
 T P R N G A T I H N R A R P E S L N N E L E B L P I I A C A E  
 W M T W N D I T E E N R A H C T E N E U D R E T N H A E O E  
 T F O L S E D T I W E N H A E I O Y T E Y Q H E E N C T A Y C R  
 E I F T B R S P A M H H E W E N A T A M A T E G Y E E R L B  
 T E E F O A S F I O T U E T U A E O T O A R M A E E R T N R T I  
 B S E D D N I A A H T T M S T E W P I E R O A G R I E W F E B  
 A E C T D D H I L C E I H S I T E G O E A O S D D R Y D L O R I T  
 R K L M L E H A G T D H A R D P N E O H M G F M F E U H E  
 E C D M R I P F F E I M E H N L S S T T R T V D O H W ? O B K R  
 U O X O G H U L B S O L I F B B W F L R V Q Q P R N G K S S O  
 T W T Q S J Q S S E K Z Z W A T J K L U D I A W I N F B N Y P  
 V T T M Z F P K W G D K Z X T J C D I G K U H U A U E K C A R

PART 1

~~(S)~~

Cryptography: Periodic Polyalphabetic Substitution employing  
10 alphabets

Plain component: Keyword mixed sequence based on **KRYPTOS**

Cipher component: Keyword mixed sequence based on **KRYPTOS**

Repeating Key: **PALIMPSEST**

Index letter: **K**

<b>P:</b>	<b>K R Y P T O S A B C D E F G H I J L M N Q U V W X Z</b>
<b>C1:</b>	<b>P T O S A B C D E F G H I J L M N Q U V W X Z K R Y</b>
<b>C2:</b>	<b>A B C D E F G H I J L M N Q U V W X Z K R Y P T O S</b>
<b>C3:</b>	<b>L M N Q U V W X Z K R Y P T O S A B C D E F G H I J</b>
<b>C4:</b>	<b>I J L M N Q U V W X Z K R Y P T O S A B C D E F G H</b>
<b>C5:</b>	<b>M N Q U V W X Z K R Y P T O S A B C D E F G H I J L</b>
<b>C6:</b>	<b>P T O S A B C D E F G H I J L M N Q U V W X Z K R Y</b>
<b>C7:</b>	<b>S A B C D E F G H I J L M N Q U V W X Z K R Y P T O</b>
<b>C8:</b>	<b>E F G H I J L M N Q U V W X Z K R Y P T O S A B C D</b>
<b>C9:</b>	<b>S A B C D E F G H I J L M N Q U V W X Z K R Y P T O</b>
<b>C10:</b>	<b>T O S A B C D E F G H I J L M N Q U V W X Z K R Y P</b>

EMUFPHZLRF AXYUSDJKZL DKRNSHGNEI VJYQTQUXQB  
BETWEENSUB TLESHADING ANDTHABSCE NCEOFLIGHT

QVYUVLLTRE VJYQTMKYRD MFD  
LIESTHENUA NCEOFIQLUS ION

~~(FOUO)~~ Respaced and punctuated, it reads:

"BETWEEN SUBTLE SHADING AND THE ABSENCE OF LIGHT LIES THE NUANCE OF  
ILLUSION"

PART 2

~~(S)~~

Cryptography: Periodic Polyalphabetic Substitution employing  
8 alphabets

Plain component: Keyword mixed sequence based on **KRYPTOS**

Cipher component: Keyword mixed sequence based on **KRYPTOS**

Repeating Key: **ABSCISSA**

Index letter: **K**

**P: KRYPTOSABCDEFGHIJLMNQUVWXZ**  
**C1: ABCDEFGHIJLMNQUVWXZKRYPTOS**  
**C2: BCDEF~~G~~H IJLMNQUVWXZKRYPTOSA**  
**C3: SABCDEF~~G~~H IJLMNQUVWXZKRY~~P~~TO**  
**C4: CDEF~~G~~H IJLMNQUVWXZKRYPTOSAB**  
**C5: IJLMNQ~~U~~VWXZKRYPTOSABCDEFGHI**  
**C6: SABCDEF~~G~~H IJLMNQUVWXZKRYPTO**  
**C7: SABCDEF~~G~~H IJLMNQUVWXZKRYPTO**  
**C8: ABCDEF~~G~~H IJLMNQUVWXZKRYPTOS**

VFPJUDEE	HZWETZYV	GWHKKQET	GFQJNCEG	GWHKK?DQM
ITWASTOT	ALLYINVI	SIBLEHOW	STHATPOS	SIBLE?THE
CPFQZDQM	MIAGPFXH	QRLGTIMV	MZJANQLV	KQEDAGDV
YUSEDTHE	EARTHSMA	GNETICFI	ELDXTHEI	NFORMATI
FRPJUNGE	UNAQZGZL	ECGYUXUE	ENJTBJLB	QCETBJDF
ONWASGAT	HEREDAND	TRANSMIT	TEDUNDER	GROUNDTO
HRRYZET	KZEMVDUF	KSJHKFWH	KUWQLSZF	TIHHDDDU
ANUNKNOW	NLOCATIO	NXDOESLA	NGLEYKNO	WABOUTTH
VH?DWKBFU	FPWNTDKI	YCUQZERE	EVLDKFEZ	MOQQJLTT
IS?THEYSH	OULDITSB	URIEDOUT	THERESOM	EWHEREXW
UGSYQPFE	UNLAVIDX	FLGGTEZ?F	KZBSFDQV	GOGIPUFX
HOKNOWST	HEEXACTL	OCATION?O	NLYWWTHI	SWASHISL
HHDRKFFH	QNTGPUAE	CNUVPDJM	QCLQUMUN	EDFQELZZ
ASTMESSA	GEXTHIRT	YEIGHTDE	GREESFIF	TYSEVENM
VRRGKFFV	OEEXBDMV	PNFQXEZL	GREDNQFM	PNZGLFLP
INUTESSI	XPOINTFI	VESECOND	SNORTHSE	VENTYSEV

~~SECRET SPOKE~~MRJQYALM GNUVPDXV KPDQUMZB EDMHDAFM JGZNUPLG  
ENDEGREE SEIGHTMI NUTESFOR TYFOURSE CONDSWESEWJLLAET G  
TIDBYROW S~~(FOUO)~~ Respaced and punctuated, it reads:

"IT WAS TOTALLY INVISIBLE. HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE? THEY USED THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC FIELD. THE INFORMATION WAS GATHERED AND TRANSMITTED UNDERGROUND TO AN UNKNOWN LOCATION. DOES LANGLEY KNOW ABOUT THIS? THEY SHOULD. ITS BURIED OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. WHO KNOWS THE EXACT LOCATION? ONLY W.W. THIS WAS HIS LAST TRANSMISSION. THIRTY-EIGHT DEGREES, FIFTY-SEVEN MINUTES, SIX POINT FIVE SECONDS NORTH. SEVENTY-SEVEN MINUTES, FORTY-FOUR SECONDS WEST. I.D. BY ROWS."

(S) Note: W.W. is presumed to be William Webster. The coordinates refer to the location of or a location within the Central Intelligence Agency. The significance of I.D: BY ROWS remains undetermined.

~~SECRET SPOKE~~

PART 3

~~(S)~~

Cryptography: Keyed Columnar transposition  
 Matrix size: Incompletely filled 4 X 86  
 Specific key: **KRYPTOS**, numerically keyed and repeated 13 times  
 (first 12 columns listed below)  
 Route: Bottom to top

SLOWLYDESPARATLYSLOWLYTHEREMAINSOFPASSAGEDE  
 ASREMOVEDWITHTREMBLINGHANDSIMADEATINYBREACH  
 OLEALITTLEIINSERTEDTHECANDLEANDPEEREDINTHEH  
 FLICKERBUTPRESENTLYDETAILSOFThEROOMWITHINEM

1	1	1	9	8	7
2	1	0			

BRISTHATENCUMBEREDTHELOWERPARTOFTHEDOORWAYW  
 INTHEUPPERLEFTHANDCORNERANDTHENWIDENINGTHEH  
 OTAIRESCAPINGFROMTHECHAMBERCAUSEDTHEFLAMETO  
 ERGEDFROMTHEMISTXCANYOUSEEANYTHINGO

6	5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---	---

(L) "SLOWLY DESPARATLY SLOWLY THE REMAINS OF PASSAGE DEBRIS THAT ENCUMBERED THE LOWER PART OF THE DOORWAY WAS REMOVED. WITH TREMBLING HANDS I MADE A TINY BREACH IN THE UPPER LEFT HAND CORNER, AND THEN, WIDENING THE HOLE A LITTLE, I INSERTED THE CANDLE AND PEERED IN. THE HOT AIR ESCAPING FROM THE CHAMBER CAUSED THE FLAME TO FLICKER, BUT PRESENTLY, DETAILS OF THE ROOM WITHIN EMERGED FROM THE MIST X CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING Q"

Note: The above is a paraphrase from The Tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amen written by Mr. Howard Carter.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

### NSA STAFF PROCESSING FORM

TO DDO	EXREG CONTROL NUMBER	KCC CONTROL NUMBER	Z CONTROL NUMBER Z-054-98
THRU	ACTION <input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> ACTION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION		EXREG SUSPENSE KCC SUSPENSE ELEMENT SUSPENSE
SUBJECT CIA KRYPTOS Sculpture -- The Challenge and Resolution (U)			
DISTRIBUTION Z4 <input type="text"/> , Z23 <input type="text"/>			

**SUMMARY**

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

1. (U) In response to your request we have put together a package chronologically outlining the events in our decryption (89%) of the CIA courtyard KRYPTOS sculpture. Also attached is a copy of the original memorandum to Adm. McConnell with attachments providing the cipher, the cryptography employed, and the respective decrypts.

2. (U) The initial examination of the cipher revealed that it was likely to consist of three cryptographically distinct sections. Basic computer diagnostic tools confirmed this hypothesis. Subsequent analysis and solution, however, did not require any compute power.

3. (C) Parts 1-3 were solved within two days of receiving the informal tasking from Chief, Z. Another day was spent on the final section and a decision was made to stop any further work. Given the suspected cryptography, the last section is too short to solve without diverting a great deal of effort from operational problems.

(b) (3)-P.L. 86-36

**COORDINATION/APPROVAL**

OFFICE	NAME AND DATE	SECURE PHONE	OFFICE	NAME AND DATE	SECURE PHONE
Z09	<input type="text"/> 7/22	5043s			
			Drafter	<input type="text"/>	4451s

<input type="text"/>	ORG.	PHONE (Secure)	DATE PREPARED
Z Approved for Release by NSA on 05-21-2013, FOIA Case # 61191			