

The Secret Team

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A new edition of L. Fletcher Prouty's landmark 1973 *The Secret Team* has been published, though who has published it is unclear. An A4 format edition has turned up, apparently a reprint of the 2011 edition, with 'Green Farmers Eco-Geo Resources' at the top of the first page. But neither of the search engines I use can find them. *This edition has no page numbers.* And thus no index, of course, even though the book's Contents lists one.

Prouty's book appeared before Philip Agee and the other other CIA whistle-blowers of the 1970s and it is hard to envisage what the impact of Prouty's revelations might have been had the book not been suppressed. And suppressed it was, as Prouty describes in the foreword. The Secret Team (ST from here on) really tried to destroy it – up to the Australian military buying up the copies sent Down Under and it not being allowed into the Library of Congress – but they missed a few. I got a copy through inter-library loan in the late 1970s and photocopied it. It was republished in 2011 by Skyhorse and copies of that edition are still available on-line. That version will at least have page numbers. And the text is on-line.¹ Which is to say: thanks to whoever sent me this edition because it has nudged me into re-reading bits of it.

When he retired in 1964, Prouty was Chief of Special Operations (clandestine activities) with the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and much of *The Secret Team* is taken up with long, intricate discussions of the American military and secret state, their work together – and against each other – in the post WW2 era and their relationships to the formal structures of government and the law. These discussions are interspersed with examples of the ST's activities. Prouty's target audience, I guess, was fellow senior officers for whom the analyses offered here would be readily intelligible. For the non-specialist reader, some of it is not an easy read.

On the other hand, it remains extraordinary to see a senior US military officer write a book subtitled *The CIA and its allies in control of the United States and the world*; and writing paragraphs like the following two.

¹ <<https://shorturl.at/eviRC>> or <<https://archive.org/stream/l.-fletcher-prouty-the-secret-team-the-cia-its-allies-in-control-of-the-united-s/>>

The Cold War has been the most expensive war in history. R. Buckminster Fuller has written in **Grunch of Giants**: We can properly call World War I the million dollar war and World War II the billion dollar and World War III (Cold War) the trillion dollar war.

The power structure that kept the Cold War at that level of intensity had been driven by the Secret Team and its multinational covert operations, to wit: **This is the fundamental game of the Secret Team.** (Emphases in the original.)

Prouty was not offering a crude conspiracy theory about the ST. He writes:

Thus, the Secret Team is not a clandestine super-planning-board or super-general staff. But even more damaging to the coherent conduct of foreign and military affairs, it is a bewildering collection of semi-permanent or temporarily assembled action committee and networks the respond pretty much ad hoc to specific troubles and to flash-intelligence inputs from various parts of the world, sometimes in ways that duplicate the activities of regular American missions, sometimes in ways that undermine those activities, and very often ways that interfere with and muddle them.

The U-2 incident

Prouthy came to the attention of the JFK assassination researchers because he was the most senior ex-intelligence/military figure to write about the Dallas events as an obvious conspiracy and cover-up. The book also drew attention from some students of the Cold War, for the doubts Prouty cast on the official version of the 1960 U-2 incident. Prouty thought that this had been arranged by the ST to kibosh Eisenhower's attempted detente with the Soviets. Which it duly did: the scheduled meeting between Eisenhower and Krushchev was called off.

In a 1996 letter published in *AIR FORCE Magazine* Prouty wrote:

I was responsible for operating a major overflight program into China and Tibet. However, on orders from the White House, all of those operations were grounded during the spring of 1960 because the President was going to meet with Khrushchev and other world leaders in Paris during mid-May. We understood that the U-2 program had received the same orders. Why this U-2 was sent out on May 1, 1960, for a first time flight across the Soviet Union from Pakistan to Norway, we could never understand. It was definitely against Presidential

orders.²

Was it? Eisenhower's aide General A. J. Goodpaster wrote this memo 'for the record'.

After checking with the President, I informed Mr Bissell [of the CIA] that one additional operation may be undertaken, provided it is carried out prior to May 1. No operation is to be carried out after May 1.³

But why did Goodpaster write both 'prior to May 1' and 'after May 1'? There is just a hint of something in the memo's odd wording. For since the Powers' U-2 flight took place on 1 May, it was apparently forbidden (it was not 'prior to May 1'), but it was also permitted (it was not 'after May 1'). Into which crevice – whether deliberately created or not – the CIA inserted the fatal flight.

Prouty did not accept what became the official story of the U-2 shutdown: that the plane was hit by a Soviet missile at 60,000 plus feet. He believed that Power's plane was forced to descend to where it was in range of ground-to-air missiles. Curiously, this was the initial assessment by the CIA. Allen Dulles told the Committee on Foreign Relations of the US Senate just after the shutdown: 'We believe that it was initially forced down to a much lower altitude by some as-yet-undetermined mechanical malfunction.' Prouty quotes Dulles' testimony and thinks he knows what that 'undetermined mechanical malfunction' was and how the CIA arranged it.⁴

Krushchev knew that Eisenhower had been nobbled by the ST and made Eisenhower's public acknowledgement of that a condition of the scheduled meeting. Eisenhower couldn't bring himself to do it and years of working towards detente with Krushchev fell. He had a modicum of revenge when he warned of the dangers presented by the military-industrial complex in his farewell address to the American people seven months later.⁵ A couple of years later, his predecessor, Harry S. Truman, echoed his successor's warnings in a letter to the *Washington Post*.⁶ But the political system did not respond the warnings of two former presidents.

² <<https://shorturl.at/IPCbz>> or <<https://archive.org/details/u-2-shootdowns.-air-force-magazine-vol.-79-no.-4-april-1996/page/n1/mode/2up?view=theater>>

³ <<https://shorturl.at/kcAW5>> or <<https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/online-documents/u2-incident/4-25-60-mfr.pdf>>

In the USSR at the time, 1 May saw military parades through Moscow.

⁴ See note 3.

⁵ Test is at <<https://shorturl.at/2rrNx>> or <<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-dwight-d-eisenhowers-farewell-address>>.

⁶ Text is at <<https://ratical.org/ratville/JFK/Unspeakable/TrumanLimitCIA.html>>.

