

VOLUME 1 NO. 3

NOW

IN IRELAND

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HOW U.S. HELPS MAGGIE LISTEN TO IRISH CALLS



PRESIDENT CARMENCITA?



GAY'S MEMOIRS: READ WHAT'S LEFT OUT

WHITHER THE PDs BY MICHEAL KEATING

FIANNA FAIL'S NAZI SPY SECRET

RIDDLE OF GARRET'S DALI PICTURE

PLANS FOR NEW MORAL CENSORSHIP

SORRY I SAVED CJH SAYS KEVIN BOLAND



Ridiculous as it may seem Maggie's henchmen record every Irish phone call made each year

HOW THE US HELPS MRS THATCHER LISTEN IN ON IRISH PHONE CALLS

Since the Brighton bombing when she and her entire Cabinet were almost wiped out by the IRA Mrs Thatcher has become obsessive about what she calls the Irish terrorism problem. For years, British intelligence struggled to keep in step with the latest threat from the Provos. Now they have been given a Big Brother system which brings in masses of information from every corner of Ireland. Thanks to a secret deal concluded between Mrs Thatcher and President Ronald Reagan, the British eavesdropping service, GCHQ, now has access to phone conversations even in the most remote parts of Ireland, using an American satellite fixed high over the south western Atlantic off the coast of Latin America. NOW brings you inside details of the system, drawing on testimony given in secret by a former Lockheed employee to a U.S. Congressional Committee and on information obtained in Washington, California and England

Phone calls in every part of Ireland are being monitored by the British Government as a result of a secret deal with the United States National Security Agency (NSA). The cooperation is taking place as the first stage in a joint intelligence venture codenamed PROJECT P415, according to information given secretly to the U.S. Congress last year.

The eavesdropping is carried out by an American satellite in a "geostationary" orbit similar to space satellites which now transmit TV pictures to homes throughout Ireland.

The satellite is codenamed Magnum. The computerised analysis system is codenamed ECHELON.

The secret of satellites like MAGNUM is that they can suck up all of these microwaves from a point 22,000 miles above the earth. They then retransmit them on a coded beam back to earth for recording and analysis by computer.

Main target of the phone tapping is the IRA and related groups, but as part of the overall surveillance, tens of thousands of Irish phone calls are intercepted each week, most of which have nothing to do with the IRA or politics.

It operates like this: much of Ireland's newly-updated phone system is carried on microwave radio links, whose dishes can be seen in every large town in the country on top of telephone exchanges. Such links carry hundreds or thousands of conversations simultaneously. These are jumbled up together by a method called multiplexing.

Irish calls picked up by the American satellite are directed to Britain's huge signals intelligence listening centre at Oakley, Cheltenham. More than 10,000 eavesdroppers monitor calls there using the ECHELON system. This consist of a dozen giant VAX computers which can automatically target specific calls.

It is impossible for analysts to listen directly to all but a small fraction of the hundreds of thousands of calls which flow through the Irish phone networks daily. But the computers can sift out particular conversations.

For example, a computerised "target list" contains the numbers of any Irish phone of interest. If a call goes through the system to one of those numbers the Cheltenham computers will automatically isolate it in a special recording track for

possible later analysis by a human listener. Details may then be transcribed into a typescript in a process known as "translation."

The translated script is then sent for further analysis by Special Branch or intelligence officers who attempt to identify the significance of the conversation and those taking part.

The ECHELON computers work at the speed of light to listen to each of the series of individual bleeps which a phone makes when it calls a selected number. Only a limited number of local calls made on old P and T cables within towns are invulnerable to the joint U.S.-British eavesdropping.

The ECHELON system can also compile a computerised dossier on the phone traffic of an individual person. For example, phone numbers of all the contacts and friends of a particular person, pubs they visit or even the numbers of public phone boxes near their home can be logged into the computers. When any of these numbers are dialled from anywhere in the world the computers will extract the call and route a recording of it to the analysis unit. This means that even if a suspect or "target" tries to get around the eavesdropping system by taking a confidential call on a public phone they can still be monitored.

Calls are not listened to directly but are recorded on special "broad band" magnetic tapes similar to video tapes. These are then inspected at high speed by the ECHELON computers for specific calls.

Some Irish phone routes may be low priority until something draws British attention to them. In cases like that all of the calls are merely recorded and stored in Cheltenham, day after day, without analysis. However, if an incident occurs which requires phone tap information about a particular area such tapes can be taken out of the archives and analysed.

For example, if a man from Sligo was arrested in Germany or Britain after an IRA attack, all the tapes of calls in the Sligo area for several months

would be examined to find out what calls he had made, so that his associates possibly still at large could be identified. Special attention would be given to calls made to Britain or Germany. During the controversy

satellite dishes like these mushrooming all over the country.



over Fr Patrick Ryan, all calls in the Tipperary area were monitored by MAGNUM satellite and ECHELON computers.

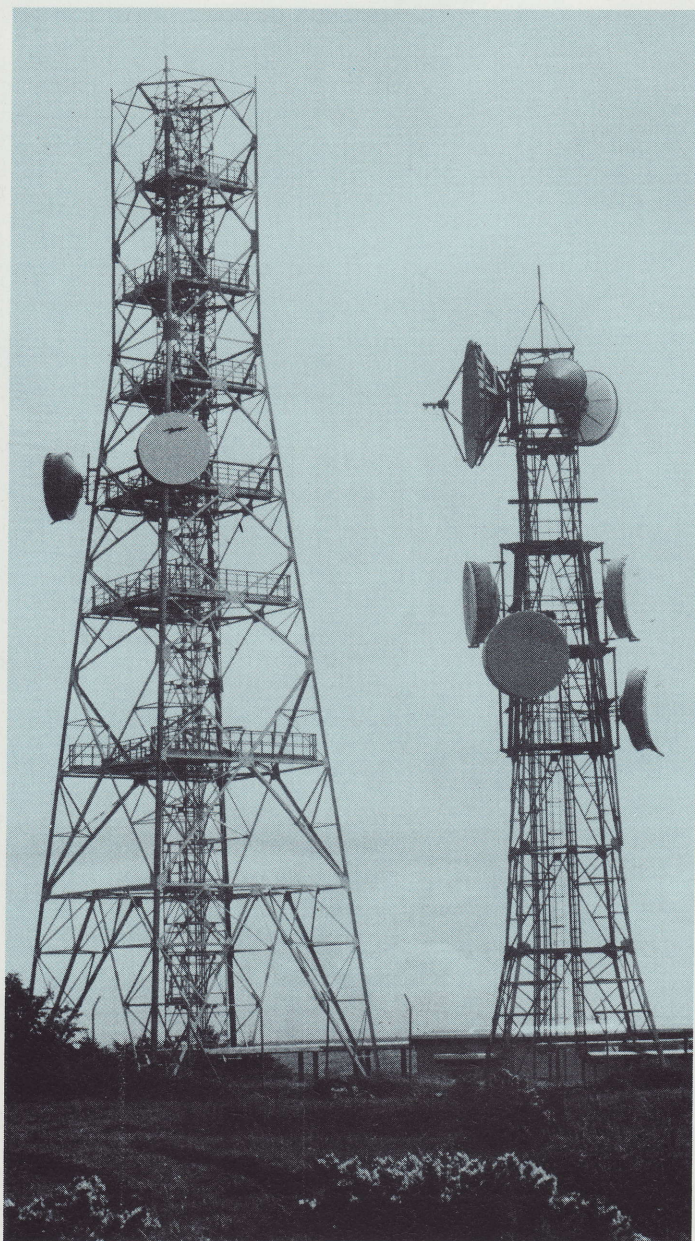
When a specific phone number was sensed by the computers a voice conversation was extracted from the jumble of sounds which make up a multiplex Telecom Eireann phone system. It was then carefully examined for clues about the fugitive priest's whereabouts or other information on him.

Ironically, it was almost certainly American phone tapping which saved Fr. Ryan from being abducted when he was deported from Belgium. A plan by the British to force the Belgian plane

carrying him to Dublin to land in England failed when the aircraft flew over France and out into the Atlantic to avoid British air space.

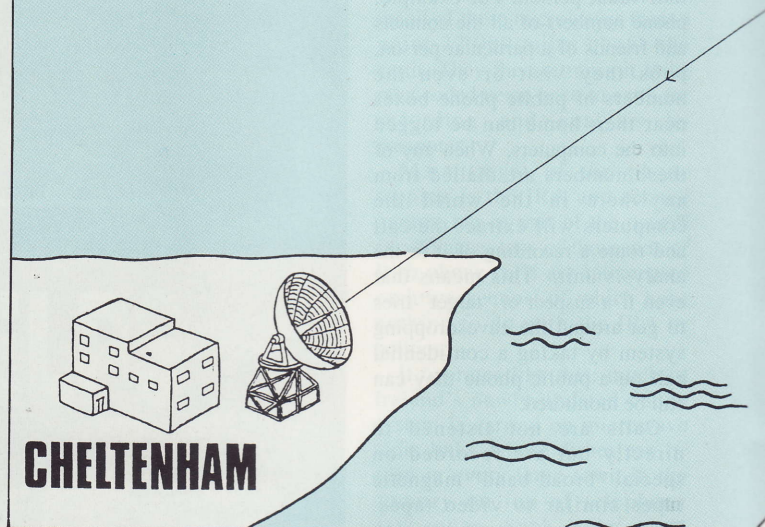
According to reports from Washington, U.S. intelligence tipped off the Belgians about the plan to avoid an incident between Belgium and Britain, who are both key members of NATO. Taking no chances, the Belgians not only ordered the plane to give Britain a wide berth, but put two platoons of armed commando troops on board.

The American information about British intelligence plans, almost certainly came from the U.S. listening station in Yorkshire



Telecom Eireann's massive £1,500 million expansion in recent years has led to microwave dishes like these mushrooming all over the country. They make it easy for British eavesdroppers to listen in on calls. Ironically, the old phone system which brought so many complaints was not capable of being intercepted from space by satellite.

SECRET SATELLITE SYSTEM TARGETS



at Menwith Hill, which also uses MAGNUM to eavesdrop on British phone calls. Despite their habit of spying on each other, the Americans and British have been cooperating closely on eavesdropping since the end of World War II when they signed the secret agreement which has since been revealed as the UKUSA Pact.

This provides for a division of labour between the two so that there is no wasteful overlapping of spying effort. Under the Pact the Americans eavesdrop on Latin America, much of the Pacific and Asia, while Britain listens in on most of Western Europe, including Ireland, parts of the Soviet Bloc and parts of Africa and the Middle East.

But in more recent times the share out of activity has had to be adjusted to take account of new technology. With Britain developing ZIRCON, a novel system for "hacking" into

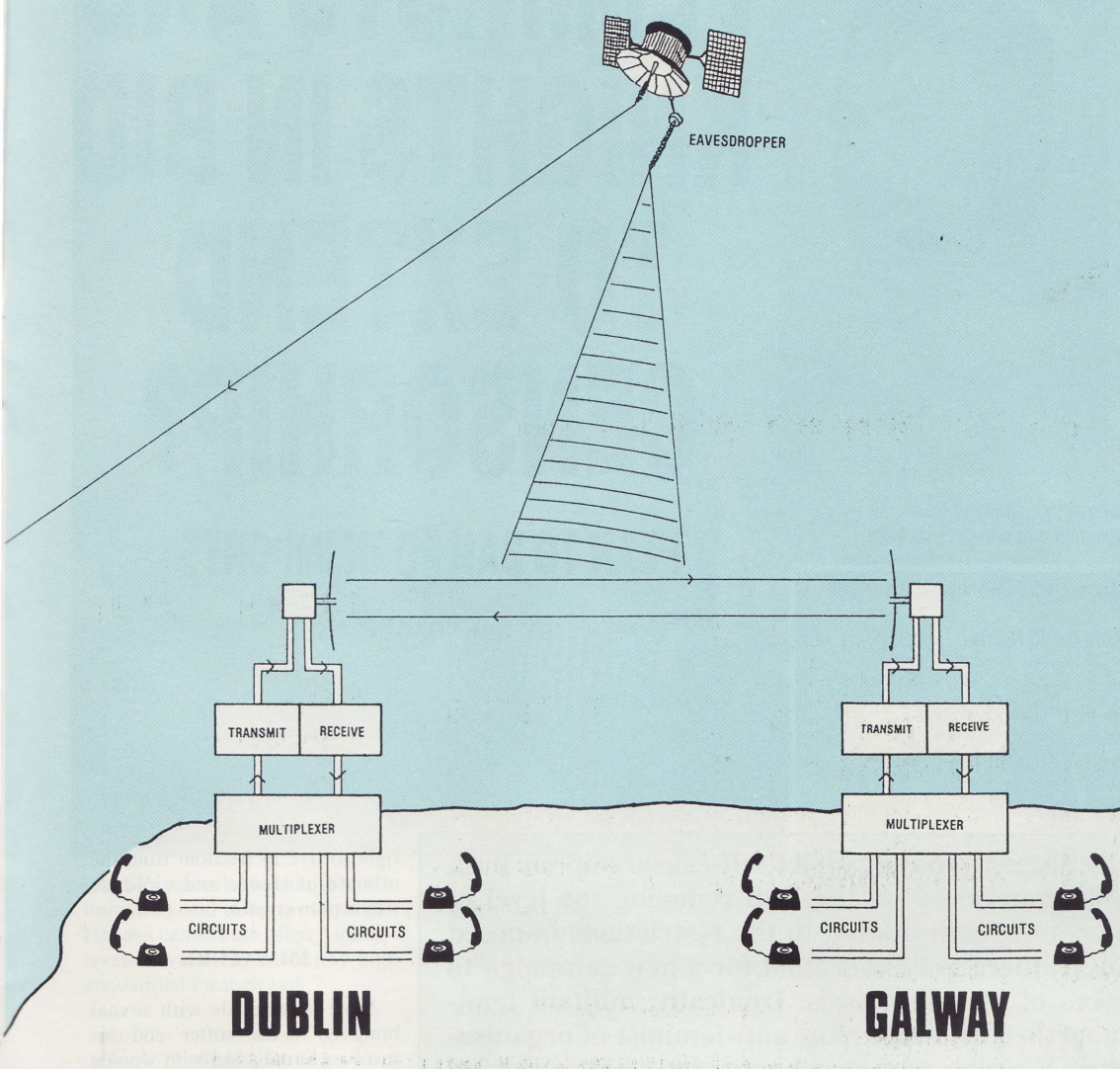
computers on earth from a space satellite, and the Americans finding they have more eavesdropping capacity than they can use, considerable adjustments have been made to the UKUSA Pact in recent times.

One of these has been the changeover from methodical but limited interception of Irish microwave systems to blanket coverage of the entire country, with the intercepted traffic being beamed directly back to Cheltenham.

Details of the secret American-British cooperation were given last year by a woman who had worked on ECHELON, Ms Margaret Newsham, who now lives in Sunnyvale, California. She told Congressional officials that the system had been used to intercept even internal calls made in the U.S., in contravention of American law.

One of those whose calls was monitored was a close friend of

ROUTINE CONVERSATIONS ON TELECOM EIREANN LINES



Rev. Ian Paisley, U.S. Senator Stom Thurmond, according to Ms Newsham. Senator Thurmond, a Southern Republican, was a strong supporter of the Reagan Administration. The fact that his calls were intercepted was taken as a sign that the National Security Agency listens to friends as well as foes on its massive eavesdropping service.

Ms Newsham revealed the existence of the ECHELON computer monitoring system in Congressional testimony. She had worked in the US and Britain for two American sub-contracting corporations, Ford Aerospace and Lockheed. She said that she personally had heard a call of Senator Thurmond's which had been recorded at the American monitoring station in Menwith Hill, Yorkshire. Her secret testimony to a Congressional committee was later leaked to the U.S. newspaper, The Cleveland Plain Dealer.

One reason for the cooperation between the Americans and the British GCHQ (the initials stand for Government Communications HQ, a cover name for the eavesdropping service) is that the Americans now have massive over-capacity in their eavesdropping satellites. There are now scores of eavesdropping satellites, many of them put into orbit secretly by the US space shuttle. As well as sucking up all phone conversations from modern microwave systems, satellites like MAGNUM intercept fax, telex and data transmissions.

But earlier generation satellites targetted on the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries are still in orbit. Some of these like the RHYOLYTE series and the BIG BIRD series launched in the early 1970s have been re-targetted on Third World countries. These early phone-tap satellites have a relatively limited capacity compared with state of the art

space spies like MAGNUM.

Changes in technology have also made it much easier to intercept calls. Telecom Eireann's £1,500 million investment programme over the last five years has made the Irish phone system into an ultra modern service. And that has made it much easier to tap it from space. Ironically, the old "wind-up" phones connected to magneto exchanges in local post offices which were a feature of Irish rural life until about ten years ago were impossible to intercept from space.

Until the changeover to satellite interception Irish calls were monitored from high ground north of the Border, at Divis Mountain near Belfast and from a military station in Armagh. These eavesdropping points were supplemented by a monitoring system in the British Embassy on Merrion Road, Ballsbridge, which could record most of the phone

traffic leaving or coming into Dublin on tapes which were shipped back daily to Cheltenham on a British Airways late afternoon flight. The tapes were carried in "diplomatic bags" - cases which never leave the sight of the "Queen's Messengers" (usually former military officers) who carry them.

The main reason why a blanket eavesdropping system is directed against Ireland is the threat which the IRA poses to Britain and to British forces in Europe. The Americans also have a special interest in Irish contacts between Col. Gaddafi's Libya and between Ireland and the Middle East, Lebanon and Iran.

Mrs Thatcher is especially anxious that maximum intelligence be available on the IRA since they almost assassinated her and wiped out her entire Cabinet in a bomb attack on the Grand Hotel, Brighton, several years ago. But a spin-off effect of listening to Irish phone calls for intelligence on the IRA is that much else is heard, including commercial and political information.

Since the British GCHQ eavesdropping service gets the traffic on the Irish phone system delivered en masse to its Cheltenham HQ it can pick and choose selected areas in which to "trawl" for non-intelligence material. For example, confidential details of oil explorations in Irish waters by American companies might be of interest to the Board of Trade or British Gas.

Similarly, discussions of matters concerned with the European Community or the United Nations between Irish ministers or diplomats might be of use to the British Foreign Office when deciding a particular course of action.

Even if there was no IRA threat it is likely that the joint American-British eavesdropping in Ireland would continue simply because the facilities are there in space to do it.

Most people find it difficult to grasp the enormous effort devoted by the Americans and the British to tapping phones in other countries. But with a staff of 15,000 civilians and a budget of £500 million a year, Britain's GCHQ is capable of a vast throughput of monitored calls. In addition, the British military eavesdropping service has several specialised units dedicated to full-time service in Northern Ireland and West Germany, where they listen to Warsaw Pact phone and telex messages.