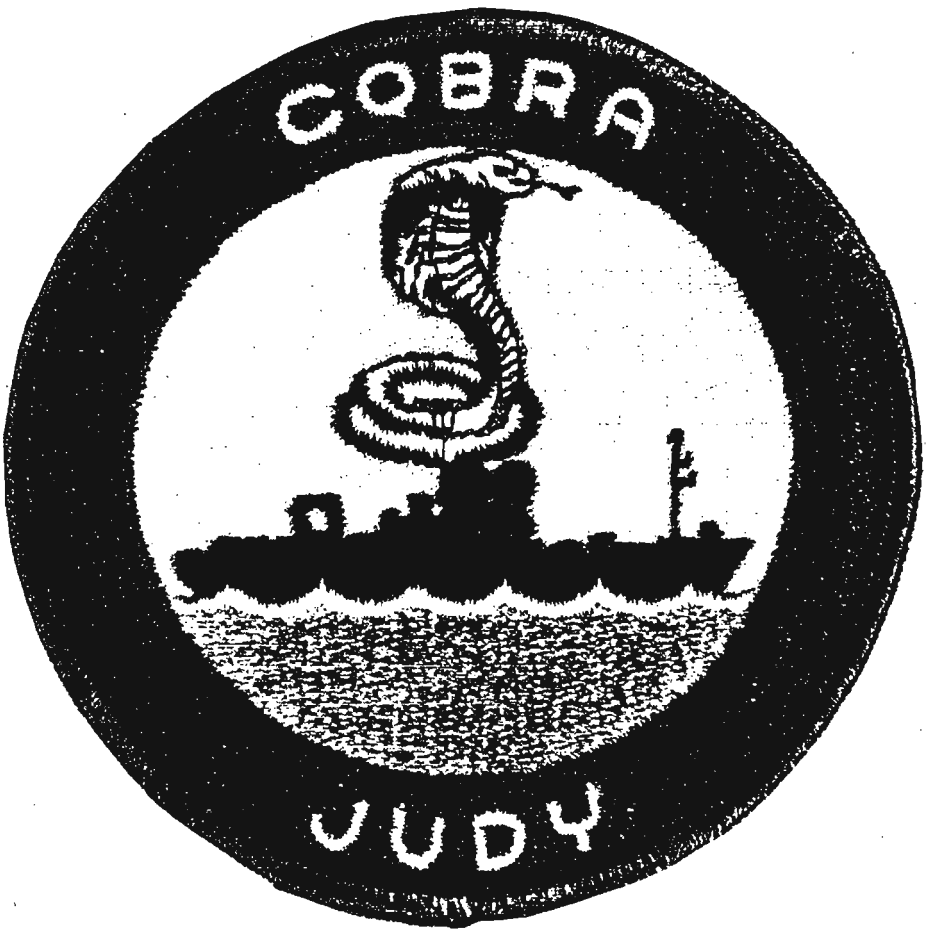

The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not represent the official opinion of NSA/CSS.

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

The *Cobra Judy* Acquisition (U)

[redacted]

~~(S)~~ *In 1973 the Department of Defense recommended the development of a modern multi-sensor collection system to monitor Soviet strategic missile testing. On 10 June 1981, after several years of study and four years of construction, the United States Air Force dedicated that system—the* Cobra Judy *ship.* [redacted] *This account,* [redacted] *supports a number of important "Rules of Engineering."*

~~(S)~~ [redacted] The system, named *Cobra Judy*, would operate near the Kamchatka Peninsula and [redacted] Gerald Ford was President, Lew Allen was Director [redacted]

~~(S)~~ The Air Force Electronic Systems Division (ESD) was given program management responsibility for the *Cobra Judy* effort and the U.S.S. *Observation Island* was selected as the ship to be used. The ship had been in "wet storage" in Oakland for several years and required major overhaul [redacted] During a major acquisition strategy meeting dealing with the overhauling problem, there was a general agreement that Terman's Law of Innovation should guide the overhaul:

> *If you want a track team to win the high jump, you find one person who can jump seven feet, not seven people who can jump one foot.*

So, the Air Force went out and started talking to major U.S. shipyards and came to grips with the task ahead.

[redacted]

~~(S)~~ While the Air Force was negotiating with shipyards regarding overhaul, [redacted]

[redacted]

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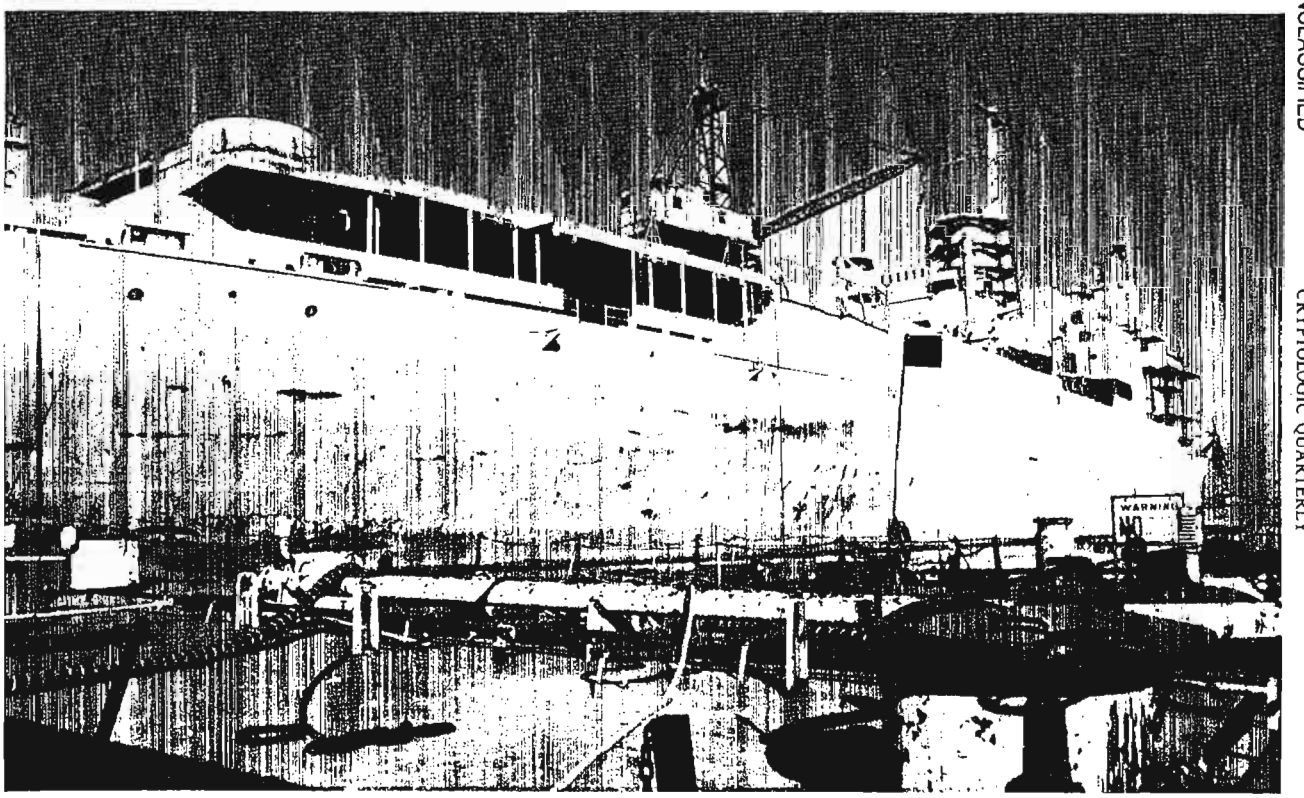

Before: The U.S.S. *Observation Island* during overhaul.

[redacted]

~~(C)~~ ~~(U)~~ Rather than add more money to the program (which probably was not reasonable), [redacted] This milestone was achieved in large part by following Boyle's First Law:

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> *The success of any venture will be helped by prayer, even in the wrong denomination.*

Cobra Judy was back on track. Jimmy Carter was now President and Bobby Inman was Director.

[redacted] This estimate proved to discredit Suhor's Law:

> *A little ambiguity never hurt anyone.*

[redacted]

(U) Calmer minds eventually prevailed, and sufficient funds were restored in the following program years—confirming Zymurgy's First Law of Evolving System Dynamics:

> *Once you open a can of worms, the only way to re-can them is to use a larger can.*

[redacted]

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(U) The list of unique and interesting situations encountered during the 22-month Baltimore shipyard period was endless. A Russian cargo ship with a dead whale impaled on her bow was docked alongside *Cobra Judy*. Six hundred tons of concrete ballast were dynamited from the decks of *Cobra Judy*. A four-hundred-ton floating crane was required to install the phased array radar assembly aboard. Twelve thousand radar elements were hand-wired. The Baltimore harbor was closed to navigation during critical installation work.

(U) When *Cobra Judy* departed in May 1981 for her final installation/testing in Boston, she was a proud lady and only six weeks behind schedule. Clarke's Law was verified:

> *Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.*

Ronald Reagan was President. Lincoln D. Faurer was Director.

[redacted]

~~(S)~~ The initial test cruise for *Cobra Judy* is scheduled for late 1981. [redacted]

~~(S)~~ The prognosis is good. [redacted] The wait has been a long one and the investment has been significant. [redacted]

[redacted]

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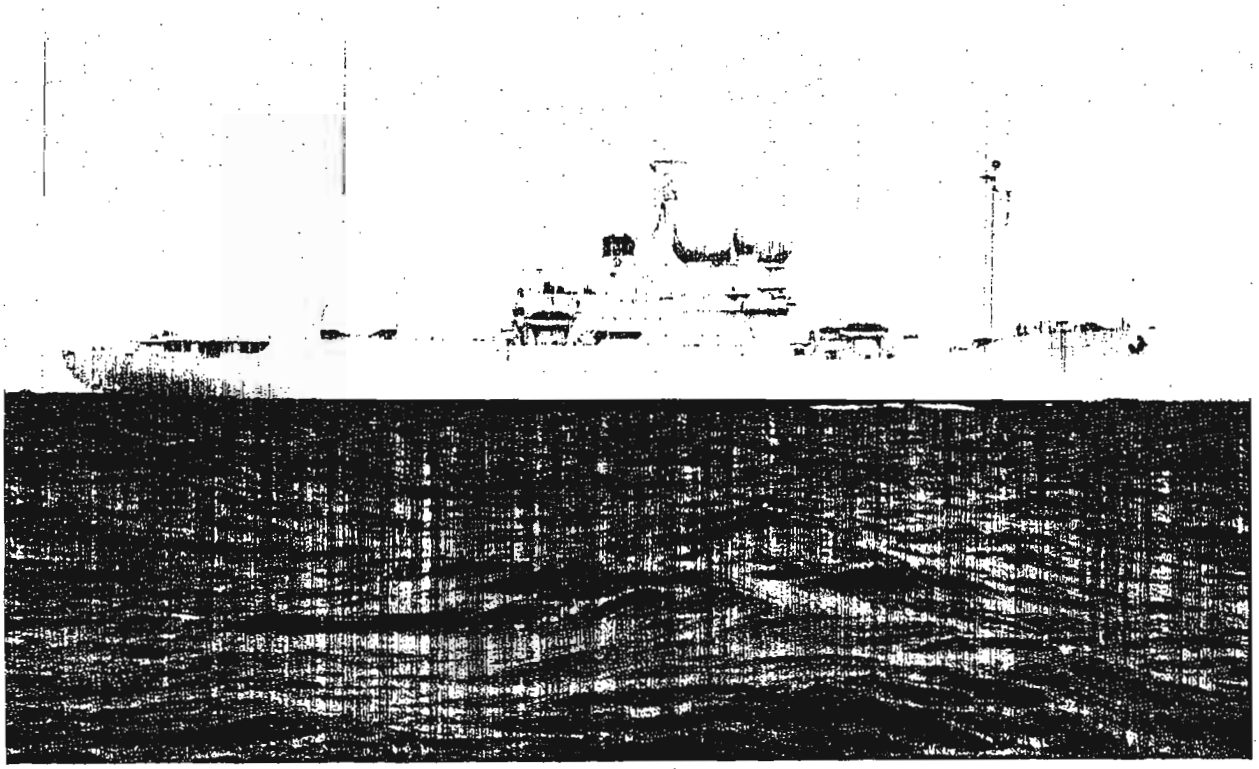

After: The *Cobra Judy* sails the Baltimore Harbor.

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and should take great pride in the results. Any contributions made to the effort by the author can be attributed to Boyle's Third Law:

> Talent in staff work will recurringly be interpreted as managerial ability.

EPILOGUE

~~(S)~~ *Cobra Judy* departed from Baltimore in May 1981 and sailed to Boston, Massachusetts, for "near dockside" testing. This testing took place through December and included short cruises away from the port of Boston to turn on the radar. [redacted]

~~(S)~~ In December, *Cobra Judy* sailed to the Pacific to begin her Initial Operational Test and Evaluation (IOT&E) phase. [redacted] The IOT&E phase was completed in July 1982 when *Cobra Judy* was declared operational. The first operational cruise occurred in August 1982.

~~(S)~~ During *Cobra Judy's* test and operational phases in 1982, [redacted] *Cobra Judy* was delivered as promised.

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[redacted]

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