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Yugoslav space program - Myth or Reality?

Who are Franc Hafner, Major General Retired and his daughter dr. Ana Hafner?

An extraordinary media response to the announcement of the fictiv-documentary *Houston, we have a problem* directed by Žiga Virč is at the center of public interest raised the basic question of whether the "Yugoslav space program" is – myth or reality.

Researchers from the scientific sphere will naturally answer that it is fiction, a myth. Former members of the CIA even deny the existence of the Yugoslav space program, but at thte sometimes it can not be denied that the CIA also in the seventies brought a huge effort to find out what was happening around the village Željava respectively Plješevica under a mountain on the border between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, where YPA built intensive anti-nuclear bunker for supersonic aircraft.

Adherents of "conspiracy theories" will probably ask the question: "What if it was true?"

In my book *Tito's "atomic" bunkers* I wrote on p. 53 the following:

Towards the end of 2011, a video appeared on Youtube titled "Houston, we have a problem!" from Boštjan and Žiga Virč, both with skilful assembling "argued that Yugoslavia had actually a Space Center by Tito which was sold for several milion dollars to the Americans! I answered January 2012 to Mirko Vorkapiću, visitor of my website, the following: "It is fortunate hoax! On Youtube it is possible to publish everything. This center at Željava in Bihać never existed. I was there in 1980 on a study trip with the People's Defence School in Belgrade.

Soon followed the "recognition" of the two protagonists that it was simple fiction.

Attentive readers will certainly find out that I denied the existence of "Space Centre", as shown in Youtube film, but *I did not deny the existence of a "Yugoslav space program"!*

On the contrary! Just in that book I wrote about my neighbor, the late General-Colonel mag. Avgust Vrtar, who was in the period 1981-1987 Assistant Federal Secretary for

National Defense Science and Research in the armed forces of the SFRY. On p. 118 of that book I wrote:

*It is not known to the public that this center (CEOP – Centre for expert evaluation of projects and development programs and research) under the leadership of General Vrtar in the second half of the 80s rejected the **project of Yugoslav "reconnaissance satellite"** in French or Israeli variant as unprofitable, and unrealistic, although suggested by military intelligence and state security authorities.*

In other words – "**Yugoslav space program – satellite**" *really existed*, which will be verified in the archives of the JNA, when they open. Of course, this program included, in addition to intelligence satellite, the construction of launchers and everything else for the launch of the satellite.

Personally, I am convinced that that project would come to life because we have previously addressed the atomic project, the tank M-84, a supersonic fighter "Eagle", updated anti-aircraft (Soviet) missiles S-300 and another. Behind all of these projects was the "army" of 7,000 top professionals dedicated to military production. Only money is always scarce ...

We must not forget that our military researchers read projects from various futurologists and science fiction writers, for example Jules Verne, as well as Slovenian officer in the Austro-Hungarian army Herman Potočnik - Noordung, who in 1928 demonstrated the possibility of traveling across the universe ...

In the current trailer of the film *Houston, we have a problem* it is stated at the beginning that Ivan, scientist at NASA, "along with **Franc, Major General Retired of YPA**, who was in charge of the secrecy of Yugoslav space program, reveals a complex web of secrets, lies, manipulation and dirty games."

Finally, it was presented to Croatian viewers that unnamed "counterintelligence officer in the Yugoslav People's Army, retired, giving interesting and for the story important details", because he was responsible for the security protection of the Yugoslav space program."

My Croatian friend and colleague, Petar Stipetić, Colonel General Retired, these days in Vecernje novosti said that we had no space program, but Josip Manolić, Croatia's most famous informant, replied that in politics everything is possible because Tito was gathered reputable and able scientists.

As a connoisseur and writer lexicographical articles on Slovenian generals and admirals, I was asking, who is this "**general Franc**" because by that name is no Slovenian General on my list.

I answered that it is just necessary to wait for the May premiere in Ljubljana respectively earlier on Tribeca Festival in New York.

Who are Franc Hafner Major General Retired and his daughter dr. Ana Hafner?

We had an agreement that there will be no revealing of the cast before the premiere.

A curious fan guessed however that *I could be the general »Franc«* from the movie, because I always sign my name with an »F« - from my father's name »Franc«

He is correct!

Authors of the film probably had a reason for casting me, and giving me a pseudonym *»Franc Hafner, Major General Retired of YPA«, so they could use me as an expert on the security of the Jugoslavian space program!*

I based my decision to participate in this documentary on three points:

1. If Herman Potočnik – Noordung, a Slovenian officer, in the year 1928 made a scientific prediction that construction of a space rocket and space travel was possible, why couldn't we assume, that our young scientists and experts made that prediction true. Especially because specific projects existed for launching a satellite, a rocket and individual projects in the international space cooperation.

2. As an expert on security issues I had many experiences with enforcing operational actions of counter-intelligence protection (for example OA »Kapela«). One of these actions that I suggested and started in 1986 was even named after me – »Marjan«.



3. And lastly, producers of the movie, Žiga and Boštjan Virc allowed me to mention again the causes for the collapse of the SFRJ, that I publicly presented before in my book *Balkan Military Range*. It was the producers curiosity of why the Jugoslavian space program and Jugoslavia itself collapsed that actually enabled me to say those things.

I proposed to the directors that a woman should be included in the movie for the »Mata Hari« effect. So I suggested my daughter, **dr. Ireno Kranjc** as a counter intelligence expert and experienced movie actress. They

liked the idea and gave her the role of »dr. Ana Hafner« as the »slovenian Mata Hari«.

My daughters movie references are: main role of Jagoda in the movie **Ko zorijo jagode**, the role of Ljudmila in a Belgrade TV show **Svetozar Markovič**, the role of Kovačeva Milka in **Dražgoški bitki** (failed project), the role of Marjetka in **Deseti brat**, the role of Veronika in the TV show **Gorenčev vrag**, the role of Hišnikove hčere in the movie **Učna leta izumitelja Polža** and others.

