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## (I) Hunting for Lost Nazi Uranium

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1944 saw the height of the United States Manhattan Project efforts which was distributed between Los Alamos New Mexico, Oak Ridge Tennessee, and Hanford Washington. Since the Manhattan Project was spurred by the fear that Germany was building her own nuclear weapons, Allied anxiety continuously pondered the Nazi atomic progress. As Germany began to fall to the Allies, Gen. Groves commissioned the military and scientific intelligence mission code-named Alsos. It was to be at the forefront of the defeat so as to immediately assess the German advancement towards an atomic bomb.

Alsos uncovered what the Manhattan Project had feared, and had so rightly launched the American effort years earlier: the Germans had a two-year lead on the American nuclear program and being the birth place of nuclear fission, the Germans began with an incredible sprint of discovery. But then they found, just as the Americans were getting their feet wet, the German program miraculously had slowed to an amateur's pace. In April of 1945 in the sleepy village of Haigerloch, Alsos found the culmination of the German nuclear program: a failed reactor experiment, named B-VIII. It was on the scale of Enrico Fermi's successful Chicago Pile 1.

This incomplete nuclear reactor, built of 664 uranium cubes had come very close to criticality. What had happened? How did Germany miss the mark? The answer is straightforward: unlike the United States' efforts, spearheaded by Groves' singular defining military force, the German atomic program was not administered by a competent manager. Their adequate resources were distributed and not gathered, their superb intellect was competitive and not collaborative. The failure of their atomic program can be pinned to a critical mass of German confidence moderated by ego and arrogance. Had they had more humility and collaboration, history would have taken a different path. Instead, their reactor was scattered to history.

What happened to the German B-VIII reactor? The United States acquired it; and the question remains: what did they do with it?

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