Dr. Gerald Bull was like a figure in a spy novel, designing arms for some of the world's harshest regimes. With no shortage of possible enemies, he died at the hands of an unknown assassin. The Canadian-born artillery expert was a brilliant scientist with a dream: to launch a satellite with a giant gun.

Bull set up Space Research Corporation (SRC) and positioned himself as an international artillery consultant.

Bull was successful in developing for the South African Government a new Howitzer, which was vital to the South African campaign against Cuban military forces in Angola, allowing them to stop any attempt to conduct military actions of any size in the border area.

With the change of administration in 1977, the US's policies on arms sales changed dramatically. The South African system of apartheid became a major concern. Enforcing rules that had always been "on the books", Bull was arrested for illegal arms dealing in violation of the UN arms embargo. Expecting a slap on the wrist, Bull was surprised to find himself spending six months in a US jail in 1980. On his return to Canada he was sued and fined $55,000 for arms dealing.

After his release from jail, an angry Bull soon secured work with Iraq. Bull then convinced the Iraqis that they would never be a real power without the capability for space launches. He offered to build a cannon capable of such launches, basically an even larger version of the original HARP design. Saddam Hussein was interested, and work started on “Project Babylon.”

Bull then started work on a gun that was 150 meters long (almost 500 feet), weighed 2100 tons, with a bore of one meter (39 inches). It was to be capable of placing a 2000-kilogram (4,400 lb) projectile into orbit. The Iraqis then told Bull they would only go ahead with the project if he would also help with development of their longer-ranged Scud-based missile project. Bull agreed.

Construction of the individual sections of the new gun started in England as well as in Spain, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

Bull concurrently worked on the Scud project, making calculations for the new nosecone needed for the higher re-entry speeds and temperatures the missile would face. At this point someone started "warning" him to stop working on the missiles. Over a period of a few months his apartment was broken into several times but nothing was stolen. He nevertheless continued to work on the project, and in March 1990 he was shot five times in the head and back at point blank range while approaching the door of his apartment in Brussels, in what is commonly understood to have been a Mossad assassination.

Gerald Bull had worked for so many parties in so many critical defense projects that he became an asset and a liability for several powerful groups at the same time. The supergun project was stopped in November of 1990, when its parts were seized by customs in the United Kingdom. Most of Bull's staff returned to Canada. The smaller test gun was later broken up after the Gulf War.
Parts of the Supergun

One of Saddam’s Palaces

Saddam’s Underground Rail System