

Full Text

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An E.S.P. gap; exploring psychic weapons. (extra-sensory perception research)

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TEXT:

On the third Tuesday of every month in the fall and winter of 1980, a bizarre rendezvous allegedly took place in Washington, D.C. A Navy officer in a plain civilian suit carried a briefcase handcuffed to his wrist into the parlor of "Madame Zodiac," psychic and palm reader. By looking at top-secret photographs and charts, the clairvoyant attempted to predict the movements of Soviet submarines off the East Coast. Madame Zodiac's payment: \$400 cash.

Ronald McRae, a former investigative reporter for Columnist Jack Anderson, tells of this type of clandestine assignation and of other operations between the Pentagon and the so-called psychic community in his book *Mind Wars*, to be published this spring. It is one of several forthcoming this spring. It is one of several forthcoming works, written by both skeptics and believers, on the military's forays into parapsychology, the quasi-science that studies the interaction of mind and matter. According to McRae, who is skeptical of psychic claims, the Department of Defense has spent \$6 million annually in recent years to research such phenomena as extrasensory perception (E.S.P) and mental telepathy.

The Pentagon denies any interest in parapsychology. A Defense Department spokesman said last week that officials had scrutinized the budgets for fiscal years 1983 and 1984 "and can find no monies that have been spent for E.S.P. or whatever sort of label you want to put on those programs." BUT in an interview with the New York Times, retired Lieut. General Daniel O. Graham, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, indicated that the military had unquestionably been involved in psychic research.

While he considered McRae's \$6 milion, budget figure an exaggeration, he said, "I wouldn't be surprised if the intelligence community were following this. They would be remiss if they didn't."

McRae claims the Pentagon financed psychic research to study the "shell game" basing mode for the Mx missile, a system that would attempt to confuse Soviet military strategist by shifting missiles among a number of concrete shelters. Other esoteric programs uncovered by McRae include titles like "Novel Biological Information Transfer Systems," apparently the Pentagon's way of saying E.S.P.

Back in December 1980, *Military Review*, a journal of the U.S. Army, carried a cover story titled "The New Mental Battlefield." In his quirky essay, Lieut. Colonel John B. Alexander wrote that "there are weapons systems that operate on the power of the mind and whose lethal capacity has already been demonstrated." He equated the first strategic breakthrough in defense E.S.P. with sole possession of nuclear weapons and urged the U.S. to step up its research in the field.

"I know the Government's involved," says Physicist Russell Targ, co-author with Keith Harary of the forthcoming book *The Mind Race*. "I did the work," he contends. Because he was working with special clearances while at SRI International, a California research institute, Targ will not specify whether the Defense Department, the CIA or both funded his psychic

In one test, Targ went to Grant's Tomb in New York City and tried to transmit an image to a clairvoyant in California. The psychic described a high place with a view, which she said "makes me think of a restaurant or museum." Her vision, Targ argues, was remarkably accurate. On a visit to the U.S.S.R. in October, Targ found that the Soviets had replicated some of the experiments he and his colleagues had reported in scientific journals. Says Targ: "In the Soviet Union, psychic research is taken seriously at the highest levels."

Sighting submarines by clairvoyance? Sending signals with E.S.P.? Representative Charlie Rose, a North Carolina Democrat on the House Select Committee on Intelligence, says it may be worth a look. "Some people think this is the work of the devil," says he. "Others think it may be the holy spirit. IF the Soviets, as is evident, feel it is worthwhile, I am willing to spend a few bucks."

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Parapsychology update.

Holden, Constance.

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TEXT:

Parapsychology Update

At least one member of Congress, Senator Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), has publicly expressed an interest in parapsychology, but apparently there are quite a few others sufficiently curious to ask the Congressional Research Service (CRS) to report on the status of such research.* (CRS does not reveal names of requesters.)

* "Research into 'psi' Phenomena: Current Status and Trends of Congressional Concern."

The report, completed last summer, carries on at some length about the potential educational, military, anticrime, and health applications if psychic phenomena are ever understood well enough to be replicable.

Currently, says the report, a paltry \$500,000 a year is going into psi research in the United States, almost all from private sources. In contrast, research is more or less thriving in the Soviet Union where speculation puts the funding at tens of millions of dollars. However, the only recognized application is dowsing, which is taught to mineralogists and geologists at the Omsk Polytechnical Institute. The People's Republic of China is said to have developed a fairly recent interest in parapsychology, including psychic healing.

In the United States, the field has been chiefly explored by psychologists, but physicists have become increasingly involved and are employing the latest technologies in an effort to detect the slightest effects of mind on matter. Most research is devoted either to extrasensory perception (ESP) or telekinesis--the ability to move objects. Currently, extensive efforts are being made to correlate psychic ability with personality variables or with particular altered states of consciousness, according to the report. The prime location for this, says the report's author Christopher Dodge, is the Maimonides Medical Center in New York.

Another major thrust has been the use of random number generators to seek statistically significant psi-induced deviations. Robert Jahn, dean of

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Engineering. Puthoff has been using the same tests for several years, and claims weak but persistent positive results. Jahn and several other engineers are increasingly interested in possible psi interactions with computers, examining, for example, the possible disturbance of the memory functions of single microelectronic chips.

So far, the most striking results appear to be coming from remote viewing experiments. At Stanford Research Institute physicist Harold Puthoff is conducting double-blind experiments where a person is sent out to engage in an activity and the subject is asked to visualize where the person is. The investigators are claiming a 70 percent success rate.

The report notes that there is "no conclusive physical theory of psi' phenomena, but that is not for lack of trying. Theoreticians have found explanations based on electromagnetic or sound waves inadequate and are looking for more 'holistic' paradigms. An extension of quantum mechanics to cover the laws of consciousness is one idea; another extends the concept of hyperspace to postulate an added dimension in human experience.

The report concludes with a glowing catalog of all the fields of human endeavor that could be enhanced by the harnessing of psi abilities. It makes no mention of the appalling social disruption such powers could also bring.