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COUNTRY: International

SUBJECT: Clarification of Soviet Philosophy with Regard to Parapsychology/Use of the Science as an Intelligence Factor

PLACE ACQUIRED: - - -

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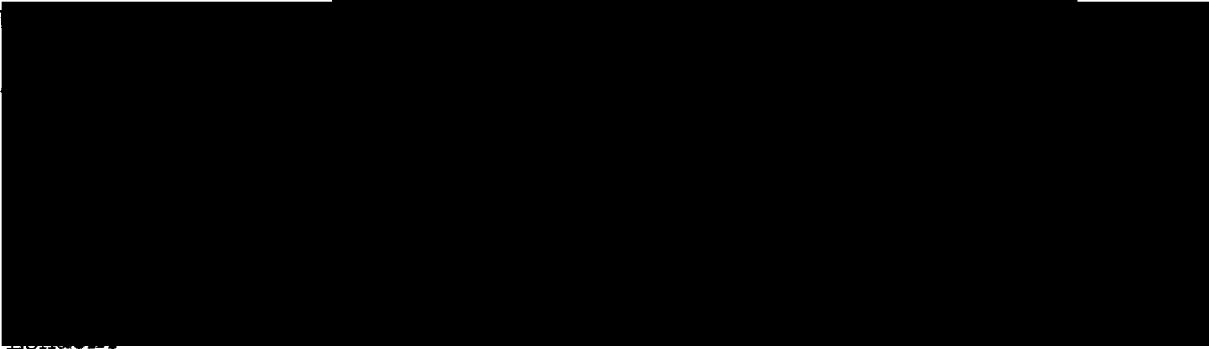
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SOURCE DESCRIPTION:



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- 1. The following two sentences were offered in [redacted] para 5, as a speculative explanation of the fact that the study of parapsychology has been explicitly condemned by the USSR:

25X1A2g

..."Perhaps the cultural authorities fear this science because it deals with strange aspects of the human mind which are often indirectly tied in with religious beliefs (such as that of the Humanist 'soul'). Or perhaps at a more subtle philosophic level they fear that experimental discoveries concerning the nature of the mind will contradict the mechanistic view of man which is basic to dialectical materialism..."

- 2. Further development of these ideas lies outside the scope of an intelligence report. The subject is one of extreme difficulty because it relates to the fundamental nature of man. In these matters there is no consensus of scientific opinion. Nevertheless, because the area embracing this subject is of central importance in the defense of the US, I shall try to delineate the logical path which led me to make the above-quoted suggestions.
- 3. The urge to satisfy ordinary biological needs (for food, protection, propagation, exercise, entertainment) does not suffice to explain much of man's activity. He also exhibits an urge to make patterns. His scientific

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and artistic tendencies can, for example, be subsumed under such a heading.

4. When man directs this urge toward his mental self, it gives rise to religion, in which an essential element is idealization. The kind of religion which results depends upon, among other things, the assumed prior nature of man.
5. Communism, as a religion, begins with the assumption that man is essentially a biological machine, a collection of atoms whose functioning is deterministic. Stated differently, Communism assumes that man is no more than, nor different from, what modern science suggests him to be -- namely, an organism whose behavior is determined by heredity and by observable environmental factors. This beginning would, on the face of it, seem to destroy the possibility of idealization and, with it, the possibility of Communism as an inspirational force. But no, the urge to idealize (justify) himself is so strong in man that if he cannot revere the individual, he will revere society. In this way Communism draws its ideological strength from materialism.
6. Most other religions begin with the assumption that man has a "spiritual" element. Shorn of its mysticism and reduced to minimal terms, this implies that individual man has meaningful reference to other men in a way that is beyond the expectations of present-day physics.
7. To show how this conception could determine moral values, one might consider the hypothesis (made plausible, but by no means proved by the experimental findings of parapsychology) that each man shares with other men a portion of his mental being, so that the inspiration or degradation of one is in some degree shared directly by others. Under these circumstances, the welfare of others may be a matter of direct concern to each of us. The speculative elaboration of this theme must be left to the reader.
8. If, in the manner described, Communism assumes the essential completeness of present day psychology and physics, new discoveries calling for a major reorientation in these sciences cannot fail to alarm the Soviet intelligentsia. The philosopher or scientist in this country who would like to know whether such alarm is justified will study in detail the findings of parapsychology.
9. I stated before [see ██████████ para 9] that under favorable circumstances information of military value might be obtained by psychic means. This idea was developed previously in paras 16 and 22 of 00-B-69118, in which it was suggested that such information might come spontaneously or as the result of a planned effort. Unless there are intelligence problems of the kind mentioned in para 22, further elaboration would appear an unwarranted endeavor.
10. In this connection it may be helpful to consider the immediate, practical application of psi phenomena in a broader perspective. It is not unfair to compare our present knowledge of these phenomena to the knowledge of electricity possessed by the ancient Greeks. The Greeks were aware that

25X1A2g

rubbed amber would attract a pith ball. Had they been pressed for an application of electricity, they might have developed a rather effective dust brush for some specific need. Admittedly "dust brush applications" may be important, but barring an unexpected scientific break-through, the immediate influence of psi phenomena is more likely to be felt on a world scale through the inspiration they afford. The rationally-inclined can know that man's mind is a far more pervasive entity than had been supposed by psychology, and that an area of knowledge hitherto abandoned to faith is properly a part of science.

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