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MKULTRA showed the CIA restrictions

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Shortly after the end of World War II, the U. S. Navy, responding to reports that Soviet military agencies had achieved amazing results in using drugs to alter human behavior, began a program of identifying and testing drugs that might be useful in interrogations and in recruitment of agents.

It began as a defensive effort to detect and counteract drugs and biological agents which might be used by the Soviets or other hostile countries against the United States and its allies.

But, as congressional investigating committees reported a quarter of a century later, the defensive orientation of the program soon became secondary as U. S. intelligence agencies experimented to find how the drugs could be used to get information from, or gain control over, enemy spies.

By 1953, the Central Intelligence Agency began a project with the code name of MKULTRA to determine how chemical and biological materials could be used effectively in clandestine operations. The results, backers of the project said, would "enable us to defend ourselves against a foe who might not be as restrained in the use of those techniques as we are."

MKULTRA began by experimenting with possible uses of LSD and over the next 10 years expanded into a full-blown clandestine operation with "safe houses" in the San Francisco Bay and New York areas, plenty of cash and a range of experiments in which LSD and other drugs were tested on unsuspecting individuals from all levels of society.

MKULTRA was a secret tightly held within the CIA. Few people within the agency knew about it. Even the CIA's inspector general was unaware of it after an inspection in 1957 of the Technical Services Division which operated the project. The congressional investigating committees said there is no evidence that anyone in the White House or in the Congress were told about it.

How many unsuspecting, nonvolunteer persons were given LSD or other drugs is not known as MKULTRA records were destroyed in 1973 on the orders of Richard Helms, then director of the CIA.

It is known, however, that at least one person, Dr. Frank Olson, a civilian employee of the Army, died in November 1953 after he unsuspectingly drank a glass of Coin-treau in which a CIA officer had injected approximately 70 micrograms of LSD as part



Administration plans to ease curbs on the CIA — News Item

of an MKULTRA experiment.

"It might be argued that LSD was thought to be benign," the Senate investigating committee reported in 1976. "After the death of Dr. Olson the dangers of the surreptitious administration of LSD were clear, yet the CIA continued or initiated a project involving the surreptitious administration of LSD to nonvolunteer human subjects.

"This program exposed numerous individuals in the United States to the risk of death or serious injury without their informed consent, without medical supervision and without necessary follow-up to determine any long-term effects."

It was, in brief, an illegal, immoral, secret project carried out by a handful of patriotic, professional intelligence agents who shortcut the democratic process in what they perceived to be the interests of national security.

The congressional committees' disclosures in the mid-1970s about MKULTRA and other secret CIA domestic operations — infiltration of organizations, mail surveillance and spying — shocked the nation and did severe damage to the CIA's reputation

All this happened despite the fact that the National Security Act of 1947 which established the CIA stipulated that the agency was to have no police or domestic intelligence function. That was to be left to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

What happened is that the CIA officials construed the language of the legislation in a way to give them the guise of authority to order MKULTRA and the variety of other domestic operations which infringed upon citizens' constitutional rights.

Now, the Reagan administration is working on an executive order that would put the CIA back in the domestic spying business again. The draft as it stands now, according to reports last week, would allow the CIA to infiltrate domestic organizations and conduct "special activities" in the United States as long as they were not intended to influence official policies or politics.

The executive order would replace one issued in January 1978 in which President Carter sought to prevent recurrence of free-wheeling CIA and FBI intelligence operations such as MKULTRA, by specifically prohibiting some, but not all, illegal covert