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HEADLINE: Study Cites Soviet Progress on Mind Weapons

BYLINE: By BARTON REPPERT, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

The Soviet Union has achieved "significant progress" toward developing mind-control weapons, according to a U.S. Army study disclosed in a new book focusing on military uses of psychic phenomena.

Author Martin Ebon contends that mind-altering effects or "remote monitoring of brain wave activity" are among possible reasons behind the Soviet microwave bombardment of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

"Soviet scientists view the brain as an apparatus available for probing and manipulation," Ebon says. "They are well aware that perfected techniques in ESP and other phenomena would make effective wartime strategies."

Publication of Ebon's book, "Psychic Warfare: Threat or Illusion?" comes amid increased interest in parapsychology research on Capitol Hill as well as within the Pentagon and U.S. intelligence agencies.

A report prepared recently by the Congressional Research Service, an arm of the Library of Congress, concluded that "psi phenomena" could be applied in fields such as education, medicine, geological exploration, and business management.

Mind-control techniques also may prove useful for "military intelligence and police work" along with "crime, persuasion, mischief and disinformation," it said.

Psi phenomena include various forms of extrasensory perception, for example telepathy and "remote viewing" of distant locations. Another form is "psychokinesis," the ability to move or bend solid objects with the mind.

Critics of parapsychology, however, charge that much of the research on those effects is either scientifically unsound or fraudulent. Other skeptics argue that even if the phenomena exist, they are too weak and unpredictable to have military value.

Congressional supporters of psi research include Sen. Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He said he had

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discussed the parapsychology field with Soviet researchers during a visit to the Soviet Union in August.

"I personally have never experienced or seen a psychic event," Pell said in a recent interview. "But it seems to me there have been adequate scientific articles written that would indicate that they do occur."

The 1981 Army study, quoted at length in Ebon's book, analyzed the potential impact of psychic warfare tactics, as well as other battlefield factors, on the stamina and performance of U.S. artillery forces.

It used the word "psychotronics" to describe the "projection or transmission of mental energy by individual or collective mental discipline and control, or by an energy-emitting device a kind of mind jammer."

The report cited "the significant amount of research that has been completed by Warsaw Pact countries during the past decade in the area of psychic phenomena, of which psychotronics is one element."

"The Soviet Union, in particular, appears to have made significant progress toward developing psychotronic weapons," said the Army study, entitled "Fire Support Mission Area Analysis."

To counter that potential threat, it said, the United States should develop special defensive tactics and begin to explore the use of its own mind-control weapons.

The Central Intelligence Agency scaled down its involvement with psychic research during the mid-1970s, when the agency was under intense criticism and scrutiny on Capitol Hill.

But a U.S. government official familiar with the parapsychology field, who spoke on the condition that he not be identified, said that currently "there seems to be somewhat renewed interest at the CIA in psi phenomena, particularly (psychokinetic) metal-bending."

Pentagon units said to be interested in psychic research include the Defense Intelligence Agency and Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

Pell headed a delegation of nine Senate Democrats who met with President Yuri V. Andropov and other Kremlin officials during their Aug. 17-21 visit to Moscow.

In his private discussions with Soviet parapsychologists, Pell said he had been unable to get a "firm handle" on the overall scope of scientific resources Moscow is devoting to this area. "I was just there for too short a time to go into anything in any depth," he said.

The senator said he has been particularly impressed by psychokinesis and remote-viewing research being conducted by Robert G. Jahn, dean of the School of Engineering-Applied Science at Princeton University.

Jahn's laboratory has carried out an intensive series of about 300 remote-perception trials, over geographical distances of up to 11,000 miles. Also, the Princeton researchers are studying possible psychokinetic effects on batches of 9,000 plastic spheres tumbling through a "random mechanical

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cascade."

The Congressional Research Service report said Soviet annual spending on psi research has been "speculated to amount to tens of millions of dollars."

By contrast, total funding for parapsychology studies in the United States "probably does not greatly exceed \$500,000" a year currently, with most of the money coming from foundations and other private sources, it said.

The study, prepared by Christopher H. Dodge of CRS' Science Policy Research Division, said recent experimental results suggest that some mind-control phenomena can be repeated "fairly reliably, if less than ideally," under controlled conditions.

The CRS report was criticized by Paul Kurtz, chairman of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal, a group which is skeptical about parapsychology.

"In no sense is this an adequate account of the status of research, because the whole parapsychological area is rife with controversy," said Kurtz, a philosophy professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

He said that "this particularly focuses on the issue of replication. It is very difficult to find experiments in which you get results in other laboratories it's very elusive."

Ebon, a New York-based professional writer specializing in Soviet affairs, asserted in his book that there was already considerable "circumstantial evidence" pointing to the Soviet KGB's "unorthodox use of electronic means" in an effort to influence human behavior.

Speculation over possible purposes behind the Soviet microwave bombardment of the Moscow embassy believed to have begun as early as 1953 has centered largely on use of the beams for eavesdropping or to try to jam U.S. electronic intelligence-gathering equipment.

However, Ebon said that "another hypothesis is Soviet use of radiation to effect mind-changes in embassy personnel."

An additional possibility, he wrote, is that the beams may have been "used to 'read minds' by tuning microwaves to the level of brain waves."

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