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Did CIA Try to Control Human Behavior?

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Saying CIA Director Stansfield Turner "seriously distorted" the nature of a long-defunct secret project by recently describing it as a study of the effect of drugs, former State Department intelligence analyst John Marks today made public CIA documents that indicate the 1953 project's aim was to "control human behavior."

"The concepts involved in manipulating human behavior are found by many people both within and without the agency to be distasteful and unethical," the agency's inspector

general noted in a memo in 1963, a year before Turner says the project was discontinued.

That document is one of several that author Marks today released as "highlights" of some 1,000 pages of materials he and his attorneys obtained from the CIA in what he described as a two-year-long "pitched Freedom of Information battle."

Other documents, with names of persons and non-CIA institutions virtually all deleted, indicate that:

- In the early 1950s, when the safeguarding of atomic defense secrets and the "brainwashing" of GIs in North Korean prisons were key topics of concern, the agency was conducting drug tests on unspecified subjects to determine the effect of varying amounts and types of drugs — including mescaline and marijuana — on an individual's ability to retain top-secret information. A memo refers to this as "ego control and volitional suppression."

- A proposal for such testing suggests that all persons directly involved, including the testers, be kept in the dark as to the nature of the drugs being used. Reference is made to further testing "under 'field' conditions, i.e., prisoners of war, if possible, federal prisoners, if possible, security officers, etc., under threat conditions beyond the scope of civilian experimentation."

- A summary of a 1953 meeting on Project Artichoke, which apparently was authorized by CIA Director Allen W. Dulles under the cryptu

scientists of the "(deleted) government," since that country allowed experiments with anthrax (a disease contracted from infected cattle and sheep) and other "activities which were not permitted by the United States government."

- Cryptic Artichoke-papers references are made to one device called a "hypospray" ("does not appear to be useful") and to another called the "Sidetone Delay machine."

- One Artichoke participant spoke of the "fine cooperation" of the Agriculture Department in importing experimental botanicals and, along with the Food and Drug Administration, in preparing lab space for the project in 1953.

- Artichoke people spoke of the great need for "controlled amnesias" in CIA operations work, especially for persons leaving the agency. An ex-CIA man awaiting surgery in Dallas alerted Washington that he might spill secrets when anesthetized with sodium pentothal; an agent dispatched to the operating room swore the medical people to secrecy and then listened as the unconscious patient talked "extensively" about "internal problems" of the agency.

- A "Dear Bill" letter from a name-deleted person in 1949 discusses various chemical and physical ways to cause death and confound the physician performing an autopsy.

IN A LETTER last week to the Senate Intelligence Committee, CIA Director Turner disclosed the recent discovery of "fairly voluminous"

MK-ULTRA archives which agency officials had earlier told the committee they felt had been destroyed.

He said they revealed more extensive drug-testing on unsuspecting Americans than had previously been thought, and he volunteered to testify "at the earliest opportunity" about "this unfortunate series of events."

Marks, co-author of "The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence," said today the CIA had known of those documents at least since February and had promised to give him "these

newly found 5,000 pages by July 31."

Accusing Turner of "what used to be called a modified limited hang-out" by mentioning it only as a program of experimentation with the effect of drugs, Marks contend the documents show it to have been "a program to manipulate people's minds."

He (Turner) "neglected to say that MK-ULTRA research was carried on at many American universities and that prisoners in American jails were used as human guinea pigs."

NO INSTITUTIONS are named, though Marks quotes one document as recommending that the CIA covertly endow a department of forensic medicine at "an appropriate university, preferably in the Washington area."

One document reports the CIA's 1952 use of drugs and hypnosis in the interrogation of two suspected Soviet agents, who were then induced with amnesia.

"This research project is a potential threat to our most basic freedoms if it gives the government or anyone else the ability to manipulate human behavior," declared Marks in a statement. "These techniques do not just smack of 1984; they open up the prospect of totalitarian control."