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HEADLINE: U.S. Military Research: From War Games to Mind Games?

BYLINE: By BARTON REPPERT, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

The United States should undertake more research into potential mind-control weapons to counter Soviet advances in "psychotronic warfare," according to a U.S. Army study disclosed in a new book.

The Pentagon study, author Martin Ebon writes, reported that the Soviet Union appears to have made "significant progress" toward developing psychic weaponry that could play a role on future battlefields.

Ebon contended that mind-altering effects or "remote monitoring of brain wave activity" were 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," he said. "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

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military value.

Congressional supporters of psi research include Sen. Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee. He said he had 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, "U.S. resources should be organized and directed at a near-term understanding of the defensive techniques that can be employed against psychotronic energy. ... On a longer-term basis, a program appears necessary to study the offensive potential of psychotronics."

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

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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.

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 wrote that "another hypothesis is Soviet use of radiation to effect mind-changes in embassy personnel."

An additional possibility is that the beams may have been "used to 'read minds' by tuning microwaves to the level of brain waves," said Ebon, a New York-based professional writer specializing in Soviet affairs.

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