

Inside the CIA's psychic program

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Psychic Cold-War battle

The late 1960s and early 1970s were the window in which psychic and occult phenomena moved into the mainstream in American and Western culture. While the Beatles brought the "religion of the East" to Britain, the field of parapsychology began to order itself for more "scientifically-based study."

Parapsychology is divided into several major fields. One is extrasensory perception or ESP, which deals with information obtained by means beyond the five senses. Another is psychokinesis -- the direct mental interaction with inanimate or animate objects. Yet another involves so-called "near-death experiences" or NDEs.

In 1970, during the height of the Cold War and under the growing threat of Soviet world domination, American authors Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder published a startling book called "Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain." They documented how the Soviets had recruited clairvoyants, psychics, psychokinetic wonderkids and telepathic savants to work in the realm of espionage, counter-intelligence and related security applications.

The book got the attention of the U.S. military complex. So much so, that by 1972 the Defense Intelligence Agency had produced a paper called "Controlled Offensive Behavior - USSR."

The paper read in part, "The major impetus behind the Soviet drive to harness the possible capabilities of telepathic communication, telekinetics and bionics are said to come from the Soviet military and the KGB. Soviet knowledge in this field is superior to that of the West."

Fearing that using "asymmetrical" intelligence-gathering personnel like psychic spies might enable the Russians to take a huge lead in the espionage field, the DIA believed the Soviets might be able to learn the whereabouts of U.S. troops and ships, analyze top secret documents, read the thoughts of top U.S. leaders, perform psychic assassinations and even disable spacecraft and satellites.

It was in this climate that the Pentagon launched its own psychic intelligence-gathering program -- headed up by INSCOM, the U.S. Army's Intelligence and Security Command.

Finding the right person to lead a project for such a new frontier was a difficult task. The man chosen was Hal Puthoff, a respected engineer who had the security clearance, background in hard science and training to handle the project.

Working out of Fort Meade, Maryland, Puthoff began recruiting a team of "remote viewers," composed of military personnel, who would participate in the radical new program. The billions of dollars spent on satellites, the labors of the CIA and other agencies, and the intelligence shared with the U.S. by her allies abroad was suddenly jolted by this new, radical approach to espionage.

Nuts and bolts of remote viewing

Remote viewing involves using a "target-response" model. The remote viewer -- also called a "receiver" -- would sit in a room in a building at Fort Meade. He would be assisted by a "monitor." A target would be selected -- for instance, a chemical weapons facility in Libya. The receiver would be given 15 minutes to visualize the target. Then, with the help of the monitor, the viewer would compose a sketch of the target. Later the drawings and information were submitted to an analyst for further study.

Working in Buildings 2560 and 2561 at Fort Meade from 1978 until 1995, the remote viewers were credited with the following intelligence coups:

- * The attack on the U.S.S. Stark on May 15, 1987 -- delivered by a French Exocet missile fired in the Persian Gulf by an Iraqi warplane -- was predicted 48 hours before the attack in which 37 Americans were killed.
- * In the late 1970s, a woman in Ohio located a downed Soviet TU-22 bomber in the jungles of Zaire.
- * A kidnapped Marine officer was located and rescued in Europe.
- * A Soviet Typhoon-class submarine under construction was identified for the first time.
- * A search for stolen nuclear weapons by right-wing Afrikaners in the South African Defense Force was successfully undertaken in Zululand. The weapons were taken during the SADF pullout from Angola. In the mid-1990s, a book on this event was published, entitled "The Mini-Nuke Conspiracy: Mandela's Nuclear Nightmare," by Peter Hounam and Steve McQuillan.
- * A successful search for both biological and nuclear material and weapons in North Korea was undertaken.

Despite the vast successes of the Stargate Project, the program found itself surrounded by hostility from various departments in both the executive branch and the Pentagon.

For example, Frank Carlucci, who served as secretary of defense and national security advisor during Ronald Reagan's second term, dispatched the inspector general to investigate the Stargate Project at Fort Meade. But Senators Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, William Cohen, R-Maine, Daniel Inouye, D-Hawai, Robert Byrd, D-WV and John Glenn, D-Ohio interceded and saved the program -- keeping it going through the first term of Bill Clinton's presidency.

The remote viewers were eventually kicked out of INSCOM and the DIA by Maj. Gen. Harry Soyster, who at various times headed up both INSCOM and the DIA.

A 20-year analysis

The most definitive work by remote viewers was conducted at SRI International at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California.

SRI was recruited by both the U.S. Congress and the CIA to spearhead a 30-year study on remote viewing and psychic spying applications.

Jessica Utts, a professor at the University of California - Davis was selected to serve on the panel to analyze the data collected by the Stargate Project. Utts, who later discussed her findings on 20/20, Larry King Live and CNN -- is only one of a tiny group of U.S. academics to study parapsychology. The field is still in its infancy, although the University of Edinburgh in Scotland now offers a doctoral program in parapsychology. Utts served in Edinburgh at the Koestler Chair of Parapsychology

Speaking of the data collected during the life of the Stargate Project, Utts, writing in a report published in "The Journal of Parapsychology," wrote, "The statistical results of the studies examined are far beyond what is expected by chance." According to Utts, the remote viewers were accurate "around 15 percent of the time."

In an exclusive interview with WorldNetDaily, Professor Utts spoke openly and freely about her involvement with Stargate.

"In 1995, Stargate was supposed to be moved from the Defense Intelligence Agency to the CIA. Some members of Congress and the CIA decided that they wanted to have the program reviewed first. An independent agency called the AIR was hired to put together a review team. Ray Hyman of the University of Oregon and I were asked to review the scientific work. There had also been a classified 'operations' unit, which targeted specific questions of interest to various government agencies," said Utts.

"We were not given access to the data generated by that part of the program and my understanding is that much of it still remains classified. We were given several boxes of reports covering a 20-year period of research sponsored by various government agencies. All of the reports had been declassified at that point. We were also given access to Dr. Edwin May, who had been the project director for the previous 10 years."

Speaking about her interest as an empirical statistics expert and academic, Utts said, "As an academic statistician, part of my research program since the late 1980s has included laboratory parapsychology. I became involved with the research at SRI International at that point. I was on sabbatical leave just down the road at Stanford and decided it was an area to which a statistician could make useful contributions. There are very interesting underlying questions, some of which can be answered with available data and some of which can't.

"The most obvious questions are, 'Why are the results consistently better than would be expected by chance -- what is going on?'"

Concerning the search by the remote viewers for plutonium in North Korea, Utts said that she didn't "know much about this part. I assume that's part of the operational remote viewing work, not the laboratory work."

Addressing the religious, perceived occult or New-Age nature of Stargate, and of the resistance that traditional believers in Christianity, Judaism and Islam who work in the Pentagon might have toward Stargate, Utts was resolute:

"I don't know about the religious perspective. I think any time we humans encounter things we don't understand and can't measure, we tend to put them into religion instead of science. I am trying to look at this work from a scientific perspective and I think that eventually we will understand it from that viewpoint. I've actually become much more

skeptical over the years as I see how people can easily be fooled by seeing what they want to see," she said.

"On the other hand, I have also become much more convinced by the data that there is something unusual going on, that doesn't fit our current understanding of science. But I reserve judgment on what that is. I think those who put this into either a religious or New Age framework are making a leap into what they think the mechanism is. For instance, fundamentalists might think it's the "work of the devil" and New-Agers might think it's that we are all somehow interconnected. Either theory could be right but that's a matter of faith, not science."

In regard to the shutting down of the Stargate Project in the mid-1990s, Utts said, "I think the end of the Cold War changed our priorities. I think the scientific work should be funded by the government -- just like any other exploration into interesting scientific questions. We don't understand the mechanism yet, so I think it's difficult to justify continued use of operational remote viewing."

Utts went on to say that all of the remote viewers were government employees. After Stargate was terminated in 1995, Utts said, "Some of them [viewers] are offering training classes in remote viewing. Others are working as consultants. Some have simply retired and left it altogether."

Those working on Stargate, Utts said, "received their usual salaries. At SRI International, for the research, a few SRI employees who were otherwise unrelated to the program were recruited as participants in the experiments. When I was working there for a year as a visiting scientist, we had a 'mass screening' one day in an auditorium and recruited a few participants who showed promise. I have talked informally with some of them. There is an upcoming conference that many of them are either sponsoring or attending."

After months of searching, WorldNetDaily was able to track down a remote viewer who worked on Stargate. Michelle Heaton, a red-headed 45-year-old Connecticut native who now works as a consultant in the intelligence field, agreed to be interviewed by WND recently in the Hamptons, on Long Island.

"Of course, psychics are used by the police all the time but that doesn't create quite the furor of the Stargate Project.," Heaton said. "Every year, top U.S. corporations like NASA and the U.S. Army spend almost \$10 billion on New Age-type seminars. So it's a growth field," she added.

"My involvement with Stargate came in the 1980s. Of course, I am a patriotic American. I remember watching the Soviet Army hockey team destroy our NHL All-Stars at Madison Square Garden in 1979. The score was like 15 to 2. They destroyed us. The skating, passing, shooting, defense and teamwork made our guys look like high school kids. This was when the Russians were in Afghanistan and Angola. The American hostages were being held in Iran. It was a time of great fear for myself and my family. When I went to work for the DIA, I was happy to use my God-given abilities to work against the Russians."

Heaton said that she was tasked to engage in remote viewing in the Middle East, Southern Africa, Eastern Europe, China, Russia and North Korea.

Speaking about North Korea, she said, "They are one nation that really scares me. They really are puppets of the Russians and China in many ways. They loathe Japan and God knows what they are capable of."

"I've been approached by the South Koreans, the French and the British to come and work for their special intelligence gathering programs," said Heaton. "So have the Russians and the Chinese. Since Stargate was shut down, I've had to work in the private sector and it's well paid. But I am a loyal and patriotic American. I'm an all-American girl and I just have this gut feeling that within a short time Uncle Sam is going to need remote viewers to once again carry out psychic missions vital to our national security interests."

Retired U.S. Army Gen. Albion Knight, Jr., said, "The Stargate project is an edge around mind control -- about which the Russians and the Chinese are experts."

He added, "Journalists should keep digging into this topic."

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