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Soviets Winning the 'Mind' Race

There are new developments on the psychic-warfare front: The Soviets are outspending us by at least 70-to-1 in occult research.

Most scientists take a dim view of such self-proclaimed, parapsychological practitioners as mind readers and psychic spoon-benders.

We've reported in the past on such ludicrous concepts as the "antimissile time-warp machine." The Pentagon once considered developing this contraption to blast incoming missiles into a prehistoric era.

For years the Pentagon psychic warriors were allowed to pursue any will-o'-the-wisp that flew by, with annual budgets reportedly as high as \$6 million. No weapons were ever developed—of course—and now the budget has dwindled to less than \$1 million, for exploration of potential capabilities of the human mind.

The Kremlin has been working overtime to open a military "psycho-gap." The latest top-secret Central Intelligence Agency review of Soviet efforts in parapsychology estimate that it would take \$500 million to \$1 billion for the United States to catch up. Operating at much lower labor costs, the Soviets are probably spending \$70 million to \$80 million a year, but possibly as much as \$350 million.

The delightful irony of the Soviets' parapsychology extravagance is that it began as a response to the perceived threat of U.S. progress in the art. Several years ago, the French reported that U.S. psychics had communicated with the nuclear submarine Nautilus via mental telepathy.

This gave Soviet scientists the ammunition to lobby for research funds—even though the reports were later exposed as a hoax.

Western scientists may chuckle, but the Soviets take their psychic-warfare experiments seriously. In 1977, a Los Angeles Times reporter in Moscow was arrested by the KGB and charged with obtaining a secret state document that revealed the existence of parapsychological research at several laboratories in the Soviet Union.

The CIA estimates that research is being conducted in at least two dozen labs in 10 Soviet cities, 14 in Moscow alone. The experiments range from "dowsing" for minerals to testing "remote psychological monitors" to measure heartbeat and breathing rates of persons thousands of miles away.

From there, according to intelligence reports, Soviet scientists hope to be able to affect the heartbeat and respiration of faraway victims, much in the manner of witch doctors. The Soviets have even claimed, secretly, that several experiments were successful, with targets nearly suffering heart attacks or suffocation.

How serious does U.S. intelligence take all this? In 1972, the Defense Intelligence Agency said the Soviets might one day be able to learn the contents of secret U.S. documents by psychic techniques, make U.S. weapons malfunction by negative thinking and even brainwash or disable American leaders by willpower.

A 1978 CIA study, which cost \$100,000, was more cautious, but it still warned that the Soviets may have tested and deployed second- or third-generation psychic weapons.