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Proposal for Research

14 February 1973

SRI No. ISU 73-

PSYCHOENERGETIC PHENOMENA

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Dear 

We at SRI were happy to have a chance to talk with you and your associates during our recent trip to Washington. We have prepared this informal letter proposal for research in the field of psychoenergetic phenomena in response to a variety of suggestions as to the kind of research program that would yield results of the greatest interest to you.

In the past half year we have had an opportunity to work with two individuals who appear to have unusual abilities both in the area of psychoenergetic effects, and also with regard to their extraordinary perceptual abilities. In other correspondence with you we have described in detail some of the research we have carried out with these individuals. In this letter we will briefly outline those data we consider to be the most significant. Based on this data, we will then go on to describe a program we propose to undertake to shed further light on those phenomena for which we have the greatest evidence in our laboratory.

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Our work in this area began when, based on the reports of successful experiments at the American Society for Psychical Research with Mr. Ingo Swann, we arranged that he come to this laboratory to participate in a series of experiments. In this work using a shielded magnetometer at Stanford University, Mr. Swann apparently demonstrated an ability to increase and decrease at will the magnetic field within a superconducting magnetic shield. This experiment made use of an existing facility in the physics department and we have confidence that Mr. Swann had no prior knowledge of either the apparatus or of our intended experiment. The experimental results have now been scrutinized by the relevant Stanford scientists and found to be apparently free from defects, and unlike any data previously produced with their apparatus.

A second experiment performed by us with another subject entailed the deflection of a slow electron beam by psychoenergetic means. In this experiment a slow electron beam (a few eV) was made to strike a divided collector consisting of inner and outer electrodes. After the electron beam was magnetically balanced to provide a null, the subject was asked to cause the beam to move. He was told that such movement would be indicated by the motion of the pen of the recording galvanometer. In our preliminary work we found a subject who could apparently cause the electron beam to move in accordance with his will. This experiment

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was performed in a screened room with the subject seated six feet from the beam tube.

A third series of experiments was recently concluded at this laboratory with a young Israeli named Mr. Uri Geller. In our five weeks of research with him, he demonstrated a wide range of apparent psychic ability. In particular, he was able to perceive and reproduce drawings in double envelopes with almost error-free performance. Some twenty drawings were reproduced by him under excellent experimental conditions. Double-blind experiments were also performed in which he located small hidden objects in one of ten identical metal containers. He did this on twelve occasions without error. He was also able to identify which face of a die was uppermost, when the die was shaken inside of a metal file box which was not opened until his call was recorded. All of the above perceptual tasks appeared easier for him than the various psychoenergetic effects we asked him to produce. Among these latter, the most consistently achieved and carefully controlled was his increase and decrease in the weight recorded by a laboratory balance under a Bell jar. In this series of experiments, recorded on film and videotape, he caused deflections of up to 1.5 grams. The deflections were more than fifty times the noise level that could be caused by striking the Bell jar, or any other known mechanical or magnetic means.

Mr. Geller was also able to cause deflection of a laboratory magnetometer without having physical contact with it. The instrument gave

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readings corresponding to an apparent magnetic field change of ± 0.3 gauss.

This same instrument was first used to examine carefully his hands and his person to make sure that he did not have any magnets or magnetic material available to him.

All of the above experiments with Mr. Geller were continuously recorded on film and video tape, and no event occurring out of the laboratory was considered to have any scientific relevance apart from suggesting further lines for subsequent investigation.

In addition, we have observed under non-laboratory conditions a) the turning of watch hands without his having any physical contact with the watch, b) deflection of a compass and magnetometer, and c) the deformation of several rings. However, because these effects were not performed under strict laboratory conditions they are not included in the same category as the above-mentioned experiments.

Further experiments are currently underway with Swann in which significant results are being obtained in the area of remote perception.

Based on encouraging results in our initial observations, it is proposed that a more comprehensive one-year program be initiated. The purpose is to investigate, under rigorous and carefully controlled conditions, psychoenergetic and extraordinary perceptual effects of the type discussed above, with the goal of obtaining repeatable results. Specifically, it is planned that the gifted subjects, Mr. Swann

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and Mr. Geller, will participate in experiments.

Of special interest is the fact that Mr. Swann's abilities apparently were not innate, but rather were developed by a set of training procedures. Therefore, during the course of the study, information as to possible training procedures for the development of such abilities will be compiled.

With regard to overall methodology, we shall employ a strong feedback reinforcement technique. As is now well known, psychoenergetic experimentation by naive investigators has often followed the paradigm of a large number of trials without feedback as to results until the experiment was over. Such a paradigm is known by psychologists to constitute an extinction paradigm well suited to eliminate correct task performance. Therefore, real-time feedback as to success or failure of a given task will be made available to the subject whenever possible. Such feedback should then provide the subject with reinforcement appropriate for enhancing performance rather than extinguishing ability.

The proposal program will have three specific aims:

1. Working with gifted subjects we will examine such potentially psychoenergetic effects as:

- 1) Erasure of video tape
- 2) Electron beam deflection
- 3) Magnetic effects on compass and magnetometer
- 4) Generation of effects on NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance)

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- 5) Generation of electrical signals in remote shielded environments
- 6) Generation of infrared signals at remote locations
- 7) Laser beam deflection detectable by changes in interference patterns
- 8) Systematic weight change with recording balance

2. In the area of person-to-person communications, an effort will be made to find frequency correlations between the recorded EEG output of an isolated subject, with the EEG output of a subject undergoing photic driving at low audio frequencies. Based on our preliminary investigation using a real-time spectrum analyzer, between the brain wave output of a person considered as a receiver in a shielded room, and the EEG output of a sender in a remote location, while the sender is stimulated with a flashing strobe light at a randomly selected frequency. This research will make use of SRI's facility for real-time spectrum analysis, which gives a plot of power-spectral-density in 0.1 Hz increments from 1 Hz to 100 Hz. The use of this equipment makes possible retrieval of signals that would be definitely lost to conventional polygraph data analysis. The output from the spectrum analyzer corresponding to the "signal" will be fed back to the "receiver" allowing him to gain awareness of his mental state at those times when he is responding to the mental state of the sender. We will attempt to determine whether this perceptual

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augmentation will cause increased subject awareness of signal even in the absence of feedback.

3. The third area for consideration pertains to the ability of an individual to perceive an object or situation not known to him or any other person. In our double blind experiments with Geller, and in many experiments performed by other researchers, this type of perception has been found to occur. We would investigate this ability both with the gifted participants in the program, and also with other unselected subjects. In working with the unselected subjects, we will make use of feedback and reinforcement techniques to help bring these presumably latent perceptual abilities under conscious and volitional control. To achieve this goal we will make use of an automatic stimulus generator that randomly chooses among four preselected target pictures. This machine gives the subject immediate feedback as to the correct target and rewards him with audio and visual reinforcements for correct responses as to the state of the machine. The device can be used in both a perception-of-machine-state mode and also as an adjunct in a mind-to-mind mode. The machine is entirely free from any known sensory leakage, and its randomness has been carefully investigated. In preliminary experiments with this type of machine we have found definite evidence that learning does take place. We consider it an important part of any research program to try to increase the extraordinary perceptual ability of unselected subjects in addition to working with gifted subjects.

The investigators, Mr. Russell Targ and Dr. Harold Puthoff, are senior research physicists and will devote approximately 75 percent of their time to this program, and Dr. Lawrence Pinneo, a staff neurophysiologist, will be available on a one day per week basis for consultation. They will be assisted by a half-time technical assistant and a half-time electronics technician.

The estimated time required to complete this project and report its results is one year. The Institute could begin work on receipt of a fully executed contract. A cost estimate is attached.

It is requested that any contract resulting from this proposal be written on a cost-plus-fixed-fee basis.

This proposal will remain in effect until 1 April 1973. If consideration of the proposal requires a longer period, the Institute will be glad to consider a request for an extension of time.

If I can supply any further information concerning this proposed program, please telephone me and I will be happy to try to answer your questions.

Yours sincerely,

Russell Targ *H. E. Puthoff*

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