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ON PAGE _____

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
14 August 1977

CIA files reveal some pages from '1984'

From Inquirer Wire Services

WASHINGTON — CIA Director Stansfield Turner testified yesterday that in an attempt to develop thought-control techniques reminiscent of Orwell's "1984," the CIA sponsored 149 projects involving drugs, hypnosis, shock harassment and even magicians.

Turner told a joint hearing of the Senate Intelligence Committee and a health subcommittee that records of the experiments, which he said took place 12 to 25 years ago, indicate that 185 non-government researchers and assistants took part in the projects, and that 80 colleges and universities, research foundations, chemical and pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, clinics and prisons were involved. Turner gave no names of organizations or individuals involved.

The CIA has released documents Tuesday showing that the agency conducted a secret 25-year project in which LSD and other mind-altering drugs were administered to humans to test the ability of the drugs to disturb memory, change sex habits and create aberrant behavior.

Turner testified yesterday that some drug testing was performed on three unwitting individuals in San Francisco, New York and New Jersey.

"We also know that some unwitting testing took place on criminal sexual psychopaths confined at a state hospital and that, additionally, research was done on a knockout or 'K' drug in parallel with research to develop pain killers for cancer patients."

Turner said details of all these CIA experiments were contained in seven boxes of newly discovered documents. He told the congressmen, "I assure you that the CIA is in no way engaged in either witting or unwitting testing of drugs today."

In recent days, newspaper and television reports have described some of the intense, often bizarre attempts by the CIA to learn how to control the human mind.

Those reports, many based on CIA documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, have dis-

closed that the 1949 decision to experiment was made because CIA officials feared that the Soviet Union might have used mind-bending techniques to elicit a treason confession from Hungarian Archbishop Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty.

The tests continued at least until 1973, even though it was known long before then that the Soviets did not have the technique the CIA worried about.

The agency spent about \$25 million on mind-control experiments, channeling some of the money through three private foundations, and never developed the techniques it wanted.

Experiments included attempts to induce amnesia, headaches, earaches, twitches, jerks and staggers.

In addition, the agency conducted studies to see whether all the occupants of a building could be quickly incapacitated by a knockout drug, and whether it was possible to create a food that looked and tasted normal but that would create "confusion-anxiety-fear" when eaten.

According to one somewhat vague document obtained by the New York Times, the CIA once employed a magician to explain what one former CIA official said were matters "they couldn't explain." Turner, asked about that yesterday, said the magician's job was to figure out "how to slip the Mickey into the Finn" by distracting attention.

Turner said he found such mind-control experiments "totally abhorrent," and there were indications in the documents that many CIA employees questioned the ethics and legality of the experiments.

In fact, the program was considered so sensitive that even some top people in the agency were not told about it, according to one former CIA official.

The Times reported that prisoners at the Bordentown Reformatory in New Jersey were used in LSD experiments conducted for the CIA from 1962 to 1964.

Thirty-six inmates at the reformatory were paid 50 cents daily to take

LSD in a "research project" approved by the state in April 1952, state officials said.

But corrections officials would not confirm that the CIA was involved in financing the \$35,000 research project.

Turner said at yesterday's hearing that some drug testing took place on unwitting subjects in "safe-houses" used by undercover agents in San Francisco and New York.

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D., Mass.) said documents show that the one such house in San Francisco had two-way mirrors for observation and was "elaborately decorated" with red bedroom curtains and pictures of French can-can dancers on the walls.

Kennedy said that the CIA agent in charge called the San Francisco operation "midnight climax."

Turner said he did not know what was going on in the safe house. But John Gittinger, a retired CIA psychologist, testified yesterday that he interviewed prostitutes there as part of his studies of brainwashing, interrogation techniques and sexual habits.

Another CIA employee, Philip Goldman, testified that he visited the San Francisco safe house to verify expense vouchers and disburse funds. But Goldman said, "I can't remember substantive parts of the program."

The Times reported on one document detailing how a Canadian doctor at McGill University in Montreal conducted several experiments for the CIA between 1955 and 1960 on behavior control, including the effects of isolation and sensory deprivation.

The doctor also administered powerful tranquilizers and LSD to Canadian mental patients in a 1958 experiment supported by a foundation that was secretly used by the CIA.

A colleague said that the doctor, who died in 1967, was unaware that the money came from the CIA, the Times said.

Some information concerning CIA drug programs was revealed during Senate investigations in 1975 and 1976.

But the newly released information provides far more detail of the activities than had previously been known.

According to the Times, the programs — originally called project Bluebird, then Project Artichoke, and finally

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