



governmentattic.org

"Rummaging in the government's attic"

Description of document:	Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Three Information Reports on Extrasensory Perception and Human Radio, 1964
Requested date:	26-December-2019
Release date:	10-December-2021
Posted date:	27-March-2022
Source of document:	Mandatory Declassification Review Information and Privacy Coordinator Central Intelligence Agency Washington, D.C. 20505

The governmentattic.org web site ("the site") is a First Amendment free speech web site and is noncommercial and free to the public. The site and materials made available on the site, such as this file, are for reference only. The governmentattic.org web site and its principals have made every effort to make this information as complete and as accurate as possible, however, there may be mistakes and omissions, both typographical and in content. The governmentattic.org web site and its principals shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused, or alleged to have been caused, directly or indirectly, by the information provided on the governmentattic.org web site or in this file. The public records published on the site were obtained from government agencies using proper legal channels. Each document is identified as to the source. Any concerns about the contents of the site should be directed to the agency originating the document in question. GovernmentAttic.org is not responsible for the contents of documents published on the website.

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

10 December 2021

Reference: EOM-2020-00223

Dear Requester:

This letter is a final response to your 26 December 2019 Mandatory Declassification Review request referenced above and submitted under Executive Order 13526 (hereafter, "the Order") of:

Information Report 00-B3261161, dated 15 May 1963

Information Report 00-B3904092, dated 4 June 1964

Information Report 00-B321-02171-64, dated 3 August 1964

We completed a thorough search for records responsive to your request and located three enclosed documents that can be released in segregable form with deletions made on the basis of Sections 3.3(h)(2) and 6.2(d) of the Order.

As the CIA Information and Privacy Coordinator, I am the CIA official responsible for this determination. You have the right to appeal this response to the Agency Release Panel within 90 days from the date of this letter. Please explain the basis for your appeal. You may address appellate correspondence to:

Information and Privacy Coordinator
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

If you have any questions regarding this response, you may seek assistance by calling this office at 703-613-1287.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Lilly".

Mark Lilly
Information and Privacy Coordinator

Enclosures

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

COUNTRY USSR

REPORT NO. OO-B-3,261,161

SUBJECT D A Kerimov's Description of the Personnel
and Organization of Soviet Cybernetics
Research/Kerimov's Discussion of
Specific Cybernetics Research Programs/
ESP Research/Comparative Evaluation

DATE DISTR. 15 May 63

NO. PAGES 4

REFERENCES

DATE OF
INFO.
PLACE &
DATE ACQ.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE

1. During the latter part of April 1963, I had an opportunity to meet and converse with Prof D A Kerimov, Chairman of the Department of Law, University of Leningrad.

The report which follows is comprised of the highlights of the conversation I had with Kerimov.

2. My meeting with Kerimov was in the company of two professional colleagues, one of whom is a psychologist interested in the computer simulation of higher mental processes, the other a logician who is interested in computer programming in related areas. Both of these gentlemen speak Russian, and the three of us are familiar with US and Soviet literature in the so-called "cybernetics" area, so we were able to converse with Kerimov quite easily and with a minimum of technical misunderstanding.
3. I should say at the outset that Prof Kerimov's manner was cordial. He answered our questions on Soviet cybernetics research without hesitation, but often, because of his administrative position, he expressed ignorance of the detail of the work. Hence, he was not very specific when it came to describing cybernetic research in the USSR. He may have been concealing information; more likely, he simply did not know much of the detail (it must be remembered that he is a lawyer, not a technical man). In the area of search for legal documents, his own area of specialization, he was not evasive. He had no hesitation in joining in social drinking, and he did not appear to be "on guard".

BEST
COPY
AVAILABLE

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

4. At our request, Kerimov described the organization of cybernetics research in the USSR. He stated that it is headed up by Aksel I Berg, a former admiral in the Soviet Navy, who is currently in poor health. At the next administrative level are two deputies--Kerimov himself, and B V Gnedenko. The latter oversees cybernetics research in mathematics and the physical and biological sciences (including physiological psychology); Kerimov is concerned with the research in social sciences, philosophy, and the other psychology disciplines. Kerimov explained that he and Gdenko had not (as of April 1963) officially been named as deputies to Berg, but he said that the announcement would be forthcoming.
5. In his discussion of cybernetics research at Leningrad University, Kerimov said that he had had three or four full professors working in his area of responsibility (law and the social sciences, I suppose) but that 15 more full professors were being added. There are, or will be, research groups in social psychology, educational psychology, industrial and engineering psychology, economics and philosophy.
6. Kerimov also mentioned such well-known Soviet scientists as A A Markov and A A Lynpunov as being associated with the Soviet cybernetics effort, but he did not place them at Leningrad, nor was he specific as to what he meant by "associated". The names he mentioned were mostly of men in the natural sciences.
7. At several points during our conversation, I asked about the areas of active work in cybernetics, which he thought were important, or rapidly progressing, or "exciting". In the early conversation, he had mentioned economics as an important area, particularly the development of "optimization techniques for planning" (ie, operations research for management science). He had said, "We are a planned economy, so we should have scientific techniques for planning". It was not easy to bring the economists into this picture as far as I was concerned. I wanted to know if this was because they didn't have enough graduate mathematicians. Kerimov replied that this was true, but that all students of economics are now required to study mathematics. I got the impression that, as far as the cybernetics groups were concerned, management science was still more talk than action, like the situation in the US about 1955. (This is consistent with what is in the Russian journals such as Voprosy Ekonomiki.)
8. Kerimov mentioned teaching machines as another active area in which the organization of the Cybernetics Council had brought people from different cities in touch with each other and reduced duplication of effort. He made several comments implying that reduction and duplication of effort was a major reason for the creation of a central interdisciplinary organization for cybernetics. His comments on teaching machines indicated nothing in advance of the state of the art in the US.
9. Kerimov's comments about industrial and engineering psychology were that the Soviets are interested in such questions as the rate at which human beings can accept and handle information (a standard topic in US psychology since World War II). He gave no information on the present status of the work. He described social psychology as being concerned with "how groups influence individual, and how individuals influence groups". He also mentioned work at the University of Leningrad on chess playing machines, but he could give no detailed information.
10. In answer to questions on "interesting" cybernetic research, Kerimov mentioned several projects. He said that someone was trying to build a simulated "frog's eye" as an element in an airport plane detection and control system. He was quite evidently not familiar with the work, and his most specific references were to work in "England" along these lines--by which he probably meant the work at MIT which, I believe, had been reported at Teddington, or one of the other UK cybernetic conferences. Hence, it was not at all clear that such work had progressed very far in the USSR.

CONFIDENTIAL

6.2(d)

6.2(d)

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L 00-B-3,261,161

-3-

11. Another project that he was only able to describe by hearsay (it was going on in Kiev) was "tapping" messages from the central nervous system by placing electrodes on the skin of the forearm; and, conversely, "introducing" messages into the central nervous system at the same point. Signals could be recorded, he said, from the arm of a skilled pianist while he was playing. Then this recording could be played into the arm of another person who could not play the piano well. That person would then be enabled to play difficult music--but also would retain some of this skill as permanent learning. When pressed for further detail, he could not provide it, or refer to publications. This work had only been done just before he left the USSR he said, and he knew of it only second hand.
12. According to Kerimov, another area of "interesting" cybernetic work in the USSR is the research of L L Vasilyev on extra-sensory perception (ESP). Kerimov claimed that Vasilyev has been able to demonstrate very strong ESP with certain subjects, but only certain persons are capable of receiving the "waves". Kerimov stated that Vasilyev has been demonstrating this since 1927, but no one has taken him seriously until recently. Now he has been set up with a research group (he did not say where) whose task it is to show what these waves are, and then to put them to practical use. (Some of the ESP, in which Kerimov admittedly believed, involved not merely guessing events, but the prediction of future random events.)
13. I asked Kerimov how ESP could be reconciled with Marxist materialism and he said that this was the problem facing Vasilyev--to show what comprises these "thought waves" or whatever they are. Kerimov went on to say that he had discussed ESP with Dr E M Purcell, the Nobel Laureate at Harvard University, and learned that similar things had been achieved in the UK and a book on the topic had been published.
14. It was interesting to me that although I teased Kerimov quite a bit about ESP and its relation to materialism, he remained unperturbed. He obviously harbors very little skepticism about it.
15. I also asked Kerimov whether there was any work in his part of the cybernetics organization on design of computer programming languages. His first answer was that this topic was handled by one of the groups under Gdenko--essentially people like A F Yershov, etc. Then he added that he didn't think designing a universal computing language was a profitable direction (he was skeptical of ALGOL). He felt that many specialized languages would be needed. The discussion then turned to language translation. He thought developments in the USSR and US were at about the same stage--that the researchers in the USSR were always announcing that they had an operative translating system, but didn't; and the US researchers were also making such announcements and failing to come through. He thought language translation would only be achieved through design of an intermediate language of "concepts", that was not exactly verbal.
16. Kerimov expressed a certain amount of skepticism about the enthusiasts in cybernetics. He was quite aware of the "fad" aspects of the development, and was not expecting miracles. Cybernetics, he said, is not a science. When I asked him what concrete developments have already taken place as a result of cybernetics, he was not really prepared to provide an example (I believe this may have been the point where the conversation turned to language translation). When I asked why the cybernetics organization had been established, he mentioned two reasons: the need to eliminate duplication, and the fact that the field was interdisciplinary. The sciences have become more and more specialized; now this development has reached its limit, and needs to be reversed. Insofar as a general science of systems is possible, cybernetics will be that science. Cybernetics is the means being used to explore this.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

6.2(d)

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

OO-B-3,261,161

-4-

17. The last part of our conversation was largely political. At one point-- perhaps in answer to a comment that his discussion sounded more like idealism than materialism--Kerimov defended himself as a "good Marxist". This led him into some comments about US materialism, and to some discussion of whether human beings were the same or different the world over. He was good-tempered about all of this, his attitude being a bit of the "you in the US have so much and we in the USSR so little, but the USSR is progressing".
18. Kerimov asked almost no detailed questions about cybernetic work in the US. This was perhaps due to his lack of technical background, for he made numerous requests that we send him our publications and literature.
19. In a general evaluation of our conversation with Kerimov, I would say that at no single point, except the fairly dubious story about tapping messages from the forearm, did I learn of a single new Soviet development in advance of the US state of the art. Cybernetics in the USSR sounded to me like a sort of composite of the operations research society and the AGM and the Society for General Systems Theory in the US. It is tentative and inchoate; sort of a hunting license expressed in the form of a bureaucratic organization with real power, rather than an established fact.
20. I secured very little biographic data on Kerimov except that he is 40 years of age and originally came from Baku. He is very proud of the fact that he is the youngest full professor, outside of the field of physical sciences, in the USSR.

-end-

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

6.2(d)

INFORMATION REPORT

150

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

COUNTRY USSR
 SUBJECT Alexander P Molchanov, Soviet Exchange Graduate Student: Interest in Measuring Human Radio Energy/Secondary Interest in ESP/Desire to Take US Experimental Equipment to USSR
 REPORT NO. OO- B-3,904,092
 DATE DISTR. 4 Jun 64
 NO. PAGES 2
 REFERENCES [redacted] 6.2(d)
 DATE OF INFO. [redacted] 3.3(h)(2)
 PLACE & DATE ACC [redacted] 3.3(h)(2)

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE:

1. [redacted] Alexander P Molchanov, a Soviet exchange graduate student
 [redacted] I have not had any lengthy discussions with him that would bear on the relationship of biological communication studies with the institutional structure of the Cybernetics Council in the USSR. As far as I can tell, Molchanov is answerable to Professor I. L. Vasiliev, at Leningrad University, who apparently has good connections with the Soviet Academy of Sciences. From the literature, Vasiliev would seem to be a scientist, himself, although I do not know him personally.
2. Molchanov comes to me regularly with technical questions about his work. One of these recent inquiries dealt with his interest in extrasensory perception [ESP]. It was concerned with radio energy generated by the human nervous system and either transmitted or sensed by the subjects of Soviet experiments in this field. Apparently their original attempts to analyse these radio frequency signals fell down, i.e., they did not stand out above the noise level. To get around this problem, the Soviets seem to be looking for some sort of pattern out of these many bandwidths which are all acting simultaneously. Molchanov asked me about making a correlation analysis of such many frequencies operating at once in order to determine whether there is any meaningful signal present. As described to me, this is all very mysterious and represents no clear concept. It is a poorly defined problem that represents a sort of last resort approach.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

INFORMATION REPORT

INFORMATION REPORT

3.3(h)(2)
 3.6.2(d)(2)
 6.2(d)

Door Driscoll

6.2(d)

6.2(d)

- 2 -

3. ESP is not Molchanov's main concern now. It is conceivable to me that [redacted]

[redacted] Vasiliev might have his head when Molchanov returns to the USSR. He has been thinking about ESP for some time, but it is not his main interest as far as I can tell.

4. From our conversations, I have learned that Molchanov wants to take some US equipment back to the USSR with him. He was interested in a random signal generator now on the market, but its US\$300.00 price made it too expensive for him and I did not authorize him to purchase it from our own funds. Molchanov also would like to obtain a rather sensitive blood pressure measuring device, one capable of taking instantaneous blood pressure recordings from caps that are placed on the subject's fingers. We have obtained for him some items of equipment, such as transistors, relays, etc, with which he is actually building bench models for his experimental work. [redacted] several weeks [redacted]

[redacted] in order to obtain some data from his experimental equipment that is being set up. Some of this equipment may be assembled by one of our graduate students during Molchanov's absence. After getting this data, it is my understanding that he will return to the USSR.

-end-

3.3(h)(2)
6.2(d)3.3(h)(2)
6.2(d)

Poor Oriank

6.2(d)

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the Espionage Laws, Title 18, U.S.C. Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

REPORT NO. OO-- B-321/02171-64

DATE DISTR. 3 Aug 64

NO. PAGES 4

REFERENCES

DATE OF INFO.

PLACE &
DATE AC

Supplemental to: 00-B-3,904,092

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE:

1. Alexander P Molchanov, a Soviet exchange graduate student who was performing research work in my laboratory throughout that period. Molchanov audited several courses and worked in my laboratory with some of my graduate students where he developed a model of the inner ear. He also corresponded with a number of other US researchers in fields similar to his own and visited several of them.

One of his hosts has since told me on the telephone that he was impressed with Molchanov.

He commented to me that this would be a good way for the government to make money and that they should have them back in the USSR.

2. Molchanov was very anxious to obtain books while he was here and we were able to obtain additional funds for this purpose. His requisition of these volumes has been approved and they will be sent to him at Leningrad in my name. He jealously guarded the books that he purchased here, text books and technical volumes on audio and filter systems and on electronics. In fact, his main consideration during the last months he was with us was the purchase of these books.

~~C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L~~

BEST
COPY
AVAILABLE

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

OO-B-321/02171-64

-2-

3. Before he left, Molchanov asked me if I would consider a lecture tour in the USSR. I replied that I would be interested if this could be arranged.
4. In the administration of Molchanov's work at Leningrad University, the apparent motivating force is Professor L L Vasiliev from what he has told me. Vasiliev, apparently a sort of odd ball on a personal basis, became interested in extrasensory perception [ESP] a few years back, certainly at least two years or more ago. Vasiliev persuaded A D Alexandrov at Leningrad University to give him funds from the latter's personal budget for one year of ESP trial experiments. He convinced Alexandrov that positive results could come from this first year of work. I gathered from Molchanov that Vasiliev built up a set of statistics to show that this was a valid scientific program. It appears that he may be a dynamo in this regard. At any rate, any politicking for this ESP program was carried out by Vasiliev first at Leningrad University and then presumably at Moscow.
5. At Moscow University, according to Molchanov, there was a good deal of fighting with E M Braverman and M A Ayzerman over the question of a theoretical model of what Vasiliev wanted to investigate. Both Braverman and Ayzerman, being mathematicians, felt that such a model should be set up. Vasiliev, a physiologist, held out that some sort of results should be obtained and that the future course of the experiment should proceed from there. There was quite a fight over this, mainly on the issue of whether a theoretical model of such ESP work might be feasible. From what Molchanov told me, only one or two people at Moscow University are working on ESP and they are not in an organized effort. Vasiliev's group at Leningrad seems to be the only organized one specifically concerned with ESP research.
6. Molchanov still seems to have his reservations on the whole ESP research question. He is impressed by it because a man of Vasiliev's stature is interested in it, however. I believe that when Molchanov has some of his own results from ESP work he will make up his mind on this issue. When he returns to Leningrad from the US, he will work on physical and theoretical models of the cochlea. He feels that he should understand the brain mechanism so that he may ultimately apply this knowledge to ESP research. At the moment, he does not have a clear detailed long-range program for this. Rather, he has an over-all goal for the future of finding out about ESP generally. Molchanov's detailed plan for the near future is to stay with the auditory system. He plans to duplicate his model of the tympanic membrane at Leningrad and to work out a more theoretical model as well. Thus, I would guess that he probably will attempt some sort of theoretical program on biophysics.
7. The actual correlation of his intended work with ESP is rather vague. Molchanov seems to want to maintain an open mind toward ESP research. He certainly will not criticize Vasiliev, his superior, but I believe he does have his own reservations about this work.
8. In his laboratory research with us, Molchanov used his model of the basilar membrane, phonograph cartridges and record equipment. These were employed with simulated neurons to study the picking up of stimuli. From this, he worked out equations and compared the action of the basilar membrane model with that of a normal audio filter system. I hope that the US graduate student who worked with Molchanov on this will be able to co-author a paper on this work. Molchanov seemed to feel that he would need a period of time back in the USSR to read the material that he collected here and to consolidate the information that he had obtained in this country. In addition to the US texts that he took back, he has numerous technical publications, papers and notes to use.
9. Molchanov's audio work performed here does not have any direct application technically to my own research. The real contribution of his research is in calling my attention to the value of a model of the basilar membrane.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

3.3(h)(2)
6.2(d)

-3-

as a simulation of neural pickups, as for example in speech recognition machines. It is a stimulus toward further work rather than a contribution. Molchanov's research does not answer any immediate need and I probably would not have looked into this aspect of the matter otherwise at this time. If it represents no real payoff for me at the moment, it does suggest both the concept and the instrumentation if I ever want to perform this work again here. For Molchanov to repeat this research in the USSR, it will be a question of obtaining or reproducing the von Beken model and the other electronic equipment.

10.

Molchanov had a good deal of exposure to methods of research and technology in the pattern recognition field -- audio and speech analysis in particular. He also was exposed to computer techniques that differ from those of the Soviets. Finally, he must have come by a good deal of interpretation of completed and current US scientific work not available in books and publications. It seems to me that Molchanov would profit from the direct exposure and stimulation from the overview of the spectrum of US experimentation that he witnessed. In addition, after a year here his increased knowledge of English can help him to interpret English sources more fully. For example, I believe that he can now better understand a report that I might write on my own work.

11.

In his laboratory work here, Molchanov used a number of devices and showed some technical proficiency with them, although I would not consider him to be especially sophisticated as such. I am referring to equipment such as oscilloscopes and other lab bench devices. Molchanov has little appreciation of the cost of such electronic laboratory components in this country. Many of them are excessive cost items and he may have wanted to see good transistorized equipment not often available to him. Because of the cost of such items, I struck several from the list of those that he would like to take back to the USSR. As a result, he ended up with a surplus of equipment funds which I have turned back to the proper authorities.

12.

My early impression of Molchanov's professional training still stands. He is a competent, mathematically-trained theorist. Although he is working in a physiological laboratory, he is not a physiologist but rather is slanted in that direction and toward learning. He does not seem to possess a sophisticated knowledge of physiology at this time. His strongest capability would be as a mathematical physicist working in a group of physiologists and physicists. He knows how equipment should be set up, but he is not an experimentalist although he can pitch in and is capable of getting his hands dirty with laboratory equipment. Molchanov is primarily an applied mathematician with some experimental capability. Professionally, I feel that he has good growth potential and can go quite a way to increase his capability in this field.

13.

At the same time, I do not feel that Molchanov is likely to make any major conceptual contribution. He would perform well in a group where someone else decides the major direction of research. It is primarily at the technical level rather than the conceptual level that Molchanov is outstanding. It is true that he does have ideas about experiments which involve broader concepts, especially in the area of ESP, but these are not well worked out. An example would be the Soviet scheme I have previously described for detecting signals against a noisy background. [Collector's Note: See 00-B-3,904,092 for the source's description of this Soviet attempt to analyze radio energy generated by the human nervous system.] This represents just about the level of his conceptual thinking.

14.

Molchanov does not approach problems as an adept theorist. He does consider various aspects of the situation, however. If I were to ask him for a report on a laboratory or institute that he had visited, I would place a much higher value on his remarks about the technology of this place than on his interpretation of what actually was going on there.

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

3.3(h)(2)
6.2(d)

6.2(d)

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

00-B-321/02171-64

-4-

He should be able to function well as an observer of what he saw in the US with the limitation that he does not have an excessive linguistic capability or a conceptual point of view. One way to characterize Molchanov is to consider him a mathematically astute engineer.

15. Now that he has returned to the USSR, there is US professional work in certain areas that I expect he can see more clearly as a result of having been here. Molchanov can speak generally about the more prominent ESP research here. He can look at these experiments and understand them, although due to linguistic difficulties primarily he may be lost in the explanation of motivations or in understanding detailed theoretical explanations. I should add, however, that if there is something that he needs to understand Molchanov is dogged about it. This became evident to me when he would ask for clarification of specific points after some of my lectures or descriptions.
16. Molchanov described himself to me as a fairly low-man on the totem pole beneath Vasiliev. In the right spot with good supervision and with someone handling the conceptual end, I feel that he might make a contribution in his field. This is difficult for me to evaluate precisely because of the difference in our approach and goals. Molchanov wants to use a physiological approach and he should be able to do this. I would not be surprised to see a number of publications from him in his area of research over the next few years.
17. In addition, I feel that Molchanov can understand and interpret US reports on perceptron research. He has a rather good idea of how this device should function. He has even used parts of it in his own experiments with one of my graduate students. But he has less understanding of where we are on the theoretical level in our perceptron research. Nonetheless, Molchanov could be valuable working with a group trying to build a Soviet perceptron. Even though the Soviet approach to this might be different and Molchanov might be more sensitive to the original US work he has seen here, he would be a valuable consultant to any Soviet group doing engineering or design work along this line.

-end-

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

6.2(d)