

19 November 1979

Mr. Manfred Gale
HQ, Department of the Army
ATTN: DAMA-ZD
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C.

Dear Manny:

Following our last meeting, I have given considerable thought to what was obviously a minority viewpoint on the need for further, better, more-controlled R&D on RV. I find myself still in favor of recommending such, with the same degree of uncertainty I indicated at that meeting.

It is difficult to take a positive position toward the possible (let alone probable) existence of RV. Everything we are taught in scientific inquiry, in both the physical and the behavioral sciences, suggests that such a phenomenon cannot and should not exist. Indeed, because plausible evidence of its existence is so difficult to obtain, the acceptance of a physically measured PK phenomenon is more palatable to us. At least, the PK decision can be placed upon the output of physical instruments, thereby taking our "decision making" out of consideration, and avoiding any guilt or conflict feelings we, as scientists, might have by accepting the existence of PK.

Such is not the case with RV, because we have not yet learned how to remote the decision making aspects of its possible existence. Thus, to state that it may exist is to be willing to place one's scientific rigidity (if not sanity) on the line. That is rough--and none of us can do it comfortably or objectively.

Nonetheless, I believe there is enough anecdotal "evidence" to prevent our disregarding its possibility of existence. At least, there appear to be adequate, though nonscientific, examples. That, I feel, should cause us to research the possibility further.

The major argument FOR this R&D is that, if the RV phenomenon exists, and it can be controlled and used in the intelligence community, then the payoff is potentially large. The major argument AGAINST seems to be the combination of notoriety, disbelief, incredulity, and loss of scientific reputation of the proponents. (I can certainly identify with the latter.) Cost has really very little to do with it--the cost of a 3-5 year, controlled scientific program would be small in the overall scheme of DoD R&D (e.g., DARPA). To hide behind the cost cloak is, I think, convenient but invalid.

For the above reasons, I'm willing to stick my neck out, perhaps too far, and take a positive position that future R&D is indicated in the RV area. In the attachment to this letter I've tried to provide my "Findings and Recommendations" for your use, along with some rationale. I've tried to keep the rationale unclassified, and I think you can fill in the details.

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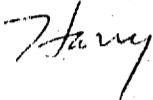
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One last comment is perhaps in order. As our team is constituted, we have some exceedingly brilliant and competent people. They have not all had the opportunity to review all detailed "research" and "experimental" reports. While I would certainly agree with Jesse that no unequivocal scientific evidence for the existence of RV is available, we deal in a probabilistic world. My subjective impression of the probabilities of the existence of RV is that p (existence) is greater than zero. Whether we should pursue it further depends on the utility side of the payoff matrix.

Sincerely,



Harry L. Snyder, Ph.D.

/edm
Encl.

P.S. If we choose not to recommend further work, how would we explain a possible positive result on the shipbuilding details to be evaluated on 1/1/80? Such, if valid, would be a reasonably positive result and potentially embarrassing (to say the least!) to a negative recommendation.