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ORD-0289-95

20 June 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director

VIA: Deputy Director for Science and Technology
Director of Congressional Affairs

FROM: Director of Research and Development

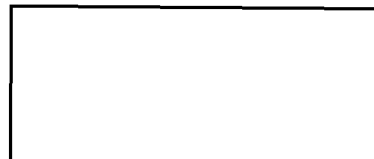
SUBJECT: Star Gate - Program Status, Proposed Options

1. This memorandum provides a summary and status for the Star Gate program, develops options for your consideration, and recommends a course of action.

2. Star Gate is a DIA program which involves use of paranormal phenomena, primarily remote viewing, for intelligence collection. The DIA program consists of three operational remote viewers and three management and support personnel. DIA also funded a related R&D effort with SAIC for several years, ending in 1994. The Senate Appropriations Committee inserted language in the FY95 Conference Report directing DIA to transfer \$500K and ten civilian billets to the CIAP, and directed us to submit a status report in March, with transfer to be completed by 1 July 1995. Funds were to be applied equally to operational viewing, research, and foreign assessment. The language also called for a retrospective review and technical analysis of the program. (Attachment A) CIA was involved in a program with similar objectives during the 1970s. That program was discontinued, but will be included in the review by the recently established blue ribbon panel described below.

3. ORD was asked to coordinate CIA's response to the Congressionally Directed Action (CDA); in late January, the Executive Director approved ORD's recommended plan (Attachment B). Our strategy was to ask the US Army and the National Research Council to form a blue ribbon panel similar to the group that completed a study for the Army in the late 1980's. We also proposed to declassify past CIA sponsorship and to further declassify other program material. Finally, after completion of the review and declassification efforts, we would develop a comprehensive management strategy for the program, assuming the review established some utility for such a program in CIA.

4. In late March, the Executive Director for Intelligence Community Affairs submitted a status report for Congressional review (Attachment C) and we briefed Mr. Richard D'Amato of the SAC staff on our status and plans. In the written material and during the March briefing, we specifically discussed our plan to conduct a panel review, using the National Research Council. A status briefing was also provided to seven SSCI staffers on 22 May 1995.



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5. We made it clear to Mr. D'Amato during our briefing that before CIA could devise a management strategy regarding the disposition of any program resources (including the people currently at DIA) we would have to complete the review. We emphasized that it made no sense to bring any DIA people to CIA to perform paranormal remote viewing until we had established whether this program made sense for CIA and had developed the necessary infrastructure to obtain requirements, task, disseminate, and otherwise make use of the product these individuals offer. Since DIA had these processes in place, we stated our intent to leave the people there for now.

6. Although our initial discussions with the NRC were encouraging, they sent us formal notice, dated 5 May 1995 (Attachment D), in which NRC declined to perform the review, citing a 1988 report which addressed the topic of remote viewing. Quoting from their previous work they stated:

"In summary, after approximately 15 years of claims and sometimes bitter controversy, the literature on remote viewing has managed to produce only one possible successful experiment that is not seriously flawed in its methodology - and that one experiment provides only marginal evidence for the existence of ESP. By both scientific and parapsychological standards, then, the case for remote viewing is not just very weak, but virtually nonexistent. It seems that the preeminent position that remote viewing occupies in the minds of many proponents results from the highly exaggerated claims made for the early experiments, as well as the subjectively compelling, but illusory, correspondences that experimenters and participants find between components of the descriptions and the target sites."

7. Given the strong position taken by the NRC, ORD raised the option of going back to Congress with the recommendation that we discontinue the review and not accept the program from DIA. (Early discussions with the DI and DO had indicated a clear disinterest in acquiring Star Gate.) After consulting with the DDS&T, however, we decided to continue with the Star Gate review and initiated a contract with the American Institutes of Research (AIR), a highly respected firm dealing with behavioral science studies. AIR quickly assembled a panel which included some members who had been selected by the NRC during our initial interactions, and on 1 June, AIR officially began the retrospective review, which is now scheduled for completion at the end of September. In the meantime, we have proceeded with program declassification activities and have begun to review material received from DIA regarding the quality and value of intelligence produced by Star Gate.

8. OCA recently informed Mr. D'Amato that the review will be completed by AIR in October, but he seeks a short term response from CIA regarding our proposed disposition of the DIA people. (DIA informed us, and has also informed Congress, that they have elected to reassign the remote viewers to other jobs at DIA during the course of CIA's review.) We oppose any action to transfer these people to CIA, because there is no way to utilize their services. Furthermore, we consider it likely that, after the panel review, CIA will recommend cancellation of this program based on the following:

a. Unless there are new facts uncovered by the AIR review, I believe they will conclude (as did the NRC) that remote viewing operations are without scientific merit.

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b. None of the nearly 100 documented remote viewing products evaluated by DIA's own customers was said to be of "major significance," the highest possible numerical rating for value.

c. The Inspector General of DoD strongly recommended in a 1989 memorandum that this program be terminated at DIA.

d. Current demand for remote viewing by all of the customers for this product in the Intelligence Community appears to be insufficient to employ the DIA remote viewers fulltime, thus their planned reassignment.

e. Based on our preliminary discussions with various CIA senior managers, there is no enthusiasm for this type of activity within either the DO or DI.

9. We believe that CIA has only two realistic options at this time regarding Star Gate. Option 1: Continue with the AIR review of this program. If this review indicates some utility, we can then develop a management strategy which addresses program mix, resources, and the need for any DIA personnel. If the AIR review confirms the NRC assessment, we will be on very firm ground in deciding not to proceed further. Option 2: Recommend to Congress immediate termination of this program based on the data we have already acquired about its probable low scientific merit, utility, and lack of customer demand. This option might be unpopular with the Congressional Committees, particularly the SAC.

10. I believe we have enough information to justify proposing to Congress cancellation of this activity now, and I recommend ~~that course of action~~ - Option 2.

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Attachments:

- A. Congressionally Directed Action Language
- B. D/ORD memo to Executive Director
- C. Letter from ExDir/ICA, dtd 28 Mar 95
- D. Letter from National Research Council

CONCUR:

Deputy Director for Science and Technology

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APPROVED:

OPTION 1: CONTINUE WITH BLUE RIBBON PANEL REVIEW

Executive Director

Date

OPTION 2: PROPOSE TERMINATION TO CONGRESS

Executive Director

Date