

# Defense Intelligence Agency Seeking “Mind Control” Weapons

By [Tom Burghardt](#)

Global Research, August 24, 2008

[Antifascist Calling...](#) 24 August 2008

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Military](#) and [WMD](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

A new report from the National Academy of Sciences’ National Research Council (NRC) argues that the Pentagon should harvest the fruits of neuroscientific research in order to enhance the “warfighting” capabilities of U.S. soldiers while diminishing those of enemy personnel.

The 151-page report issued by a 16-member blue ribbon [commission](#), “Cognitive Neuroscience Research and National Security,” was quietly announced in an August 13 National Academy of Sciences [Press Release](#).

Commissioned by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), the Pentagon spy shop, the study asserts that the U.S. intelligence “community” must do a better job following cutting-edge research in neuroscience or as is more likely, steering it along paths useful to the Defense Department. According to the NRC,

A 2005 National Research Council report described a methodology for gauging the implications of new technologies and assessing whether they pose a threat to national security. In this new report, the committee applied the methodology to the neuroscience field and identified several research areas that could be of interest to the intelligence community: neurophysiological advances in detecting and measuring indicators of psychological states and intentions of individuals, the development of drugs or technologies that can alter human physical or cognitive abilities, advances in real-time brain imaging, and breakthroughs in high-performance computing and neuronal modeling that could allow researchers to develop systems which mimic functions of the human brain, particularly the ability to organize disparate forms of data. (“National Security Intelligence Organizations should Monitor Advances in Cognitive Neuroscience Research,” National Academy of Sciences, Press Release, August 13, 2008)

Unlocking the secrets of the brain is projected as the next growth industry for the military, academia and corporate grifters hoping to land huge Pentagon contracts. As defense analyst Noah Shachtman reported in [Wired](#), the “Army has given a team of University of California researchers a \$4 million grant to study the foundations of “[synthetic telepathy](#).” Unlike “remote viewing” research funded by the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency between 1972 and 1996, variously known as “Grill Flame,” “Sun Streak” and finally, “[Star Gate](#)” before the plug was pulled, the Army-U.C. Irvine joint venture are exploring thought transmission via a brain-computer mediated interface.

Recently *New Scientist* [reported](#) on a series of bizarre experiments at the University of

Reading in the UK. Researchers there have connected 300,000 disembodied rat neurons suspended in “a pink broth of nutrients and antibiotics” to 80 electrodes at the base of the growth medium. As journalist Paul Marks informs us, the “rat neurons have made-and continue to make-connections with each other.” The voltages sparked by the firing cells are displayed on a computer screen.

Welcome to the “brave new world” of neural prosthetics and the militarists who are exploiting science and technology for new weapons applications.

Declaring that emerging technologies such as brain imaging and cognitive and physical enhancers are “desired by the public,” NRC avers “such forces act as strong market incentives for development.” But as Rick Weiss [cautions](#) on the *Science Progress* blog,

But even more interesting to me is the report’s discussion of the emerging market in brain-targeted, performance-degrading techniques. Some experiments, it turns out, suggest that magnetic beams can be used to induce seizures in people, a tempting addition to the military’s armamentarium. More conventionally, as scientists discover new chemicals that can blur thinking or undermine an enemy’s willpower, and as engineers design aerosolized delivery systems that can deliver these chemicals directly to the lungs (and from there, the brains) of large groups of people, the prospect of influencing the behavior of entire enemy regiments becomes real. (“Minding Mental Minefields,” *Science Progress*, August 15, 2008)

The use of so-called calmatative agents as non-lethal weapons are already under development. As *Antifascist Calling* [reported](#) last month in “The Calmatative Before the Storm,” the Pentagon’s Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate ([JNLWD](#)) are carrying out experiments into what it euphemistically calls “[Human Effects Research](#)” and developing an “Advanced Total Body Model for predicting the effects of non-lethal impacts.”

Apparently the DIA has taken this a step further and will now explore the possibility of creating aerosolized pharmacological agents that can disrupt and perhaps influence, the mental functioning of targeted populations abroad, enemy soldiers or dissenting citizens here in the United States.

Neil Davison, a researcher with the Bradford Disarmament Research Centre (BDRC) at Bradford University in the UK, wrote an important 2007 [study](#), “‘Off the Rocker’ and ‘On the Floor’: The Continued Development of Biochemical Incapacitating Weapons.” Davison examined the historical differentiation made by weaponeers between “off the rocker” agents such as LSD, PCP and psilocybin in their allegedly weaponized forms versus “on the floor” agents such as sedatives, opiate analgesics and anesthetic chemicals.

During the “golden age” of the CIA and U.S. Army’s quixotic search for “mind control” agents during the 1950s and 1960s, researchers were seeking a reliable mechanism that would unlock the secrets of the mind-and gain control over witting or unwitting subjects-for intelligence and counterintelligence purposes. Hundreds, if not thousands, of unethical experiments were carried out on psychiatric patients, civilians and soldiers. The results were subsequently suppressed on grounds on “national security.”

While the majority of CIA MKULTRA files were ordered destroyed by former Agency Director Richard Helms in 1973, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence held landmark 1977

hearings and issued a [report](#), “Project MKULTRA, The CIA’s Program of Research in Behavioral Modification.” As Senator Ted Kennedy discussed in his opening remarks,

Some 2 years ago, the Senate Health Subcommittee heard chilling testimony about the human experimentation activities of the Central Intelligence Agency. The Deputy Director of the CIA revealed that over 30 universities and institutions were involved in an “extensive testing and experimentation” program which included covert drug tests on unwitting citizens “at all social levels, high and low, native Americans and foreign.” Several of these tests involved the administration of LSD to “unwitting subjects in social situations.”

...

We believed that the record, incomplete as it was, was as complete as it was going to be. Then one individual, through a Freedom of Information request, accomplished what two U.S. Senate committees could not. He spurred the agency into finding additional records pertaining to the CIA’s program of experimentation with human subjects. ... The records reveal a far more extensive series of experiments than had previously been thought. **Eighty-six universities or institutions** were involved. New instances of unethical behavior were revealed.

The Central Intelligence Agency drugged American citizens without their knowledge or consent. It used university facilities and personnel without their knowledge. It funded leading researchers, often without their knowledge. (emphasis added)

While the CIA’s MKULTRA project and related Army ventures carried out at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) at Ft. Detrick, Maryland, may have failed to develop specific agents that could be wielded as a “mind control” weapon, the research did result in the development of abusive interrogation techniques that can only be characterized as torture.

As *Antifascist Calling* [queried](#) in “Neuroscience, National Security & the ‘War on Terror’,” “If behavioral psychology was handmaid to the horrors perpetrated at Guantánamo Bay, Abu Ghraib and CIA transnational ‘black sites,’ what new nightmares are in store for humanity when advances in neuroscience, complex computer algorithms and a secretive national security state enter stage (far) right?”

Apparently horrors of the “mind control” variety, particularly when it comes to applications for ever-newer and more insidious interrogation/control techniques to be used on “enemy combatants” or dissenting malefactors in the *heimat*.

According to the NRC and the corporate-academic grifters involved in the research, cognitive warfare should be sold as a “more humane” method of advancing imperialist objectives. As the report baldly states, the equation “pills instead of bullets” will be the preferred marketing technique employed for “selling” the program to the American people. As anthropologist Hugh Gusterson [wrote](#),

The military and scientific leaders chartering neuroweapons research will argue that the United States is a uniquely noble country that can be trusted with such technologies, while other countries (except for a few allies) cannot. They will also argue that these technologies will save lives and that U.S. ingenuity will enable the United States to dominate other countries in a neuroweapons race. When it is too late to turn back the clock, they will profess amazement that

other countries caught up so quickly and that an initiative intended to ensure American dominance instead led to a world where everyone is threatened by chemicalized soldiers and roboterrorists straight out of **Blade Runner**. (The militarization of neuroscience," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 9 April 2007)

But as the world looked on in horror at Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay, this "uniquely noble country" guided by "ethical principles," resorted to repugnant methods such as sensory deprivation, near drowning and "self-inflicted pain" techniques (short-shackling and the like) to achieve control over defenseless prisoners.

As the NRC would have it, academics in thrall to corporate funding and state agencies staffed by war criminals now expect us to believe that "ethics" will guide those exploring pharmacological methods to obtain more insidious means to subjugate humanity.

Weiss reports that the NRC notes in its report, the motivation, or lack thereof, to fight, is of great concern to Pentagon bureaucrats and policy makers. "So one question," for military-corporate-academic funded research "would be, 'How can we disrupt the enemy's motivation to fight?' Other questions raised by controlling the mind: 'How can we make people trust us more?' 'What if we could help the brain to remove fear or pain?' 'Is there a way to make the enemy obey our commands?'...As cognitive neuroscience and related technologies become more pervasive, using technology for nefarious purposes becomes easier."

But as is usual with all such screeds, the psychoanalytic theory of *projection* comes in handy when deciphering the monstrous intent of Pentagon weaponeers. It is all-too-clear whether we are discussing nuclear, biological, chemical or contemporaneously, cognitive weapons that Western proponents of preemptive war, always couch their acts of violent imperialist aggression in purely *defensive* terms.

In this light, Freud and his followers have defined projection as a form of defense in which unwanted feelings are displaced onto another person, and where aggressive impulses then appear as a threat from the external world. In the case of corporate defense and security grifters, their militarist pit bulls and the academic sycophants who fuel their deranged "cognitive warfare" fantasies, the *other*—a nation, a dispossessed class or a bogeyman such as "international terrorism"—are *always* the *external* harbingers of apocalyptic death and destruction, when in reality such fantasies are wholly reflective of *their own desire* to aggressively dominate and plunder other nations.

Therefore, the NRC maintains, and note the ideologically-skewed reference to the eternal verities of "the market," the Holy Grail of capitalism in its hyperimperialist phase:

The fear that this approach to fighting war might be developed will be justification for developing countermeasures to possible cognitive weapons. This escalation might lead to innovations that could cause this market area to expand rapidly. Tests would need to be developed to determine if a soldier had been harmed by a cognitive weapon. And there would be a need for a prophylactic of some sort. (NRC, op. cit.)

Who, pray tell, is driving this "escalation" and counting on academia to produce "innovations" in "this market area"? One might also quite reasonably inquire: Who profits?

As Christopher Green, the chairman of the NRC investigative panel championing neuroweapons research avers in a [roundtable](#) discussion sponsored by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Big Pharma is global. Drug discovery research is both ponderous (not as much as arms control, however) and increasingly **beyond the control** of governments and the public. The development of cognitive enhancers and anti-aging aides during the next two decades (the time needed for drug discovery to become successful) will be...ethically worrisome. But it will be beyond opprobrium. Drugs will be developed and marketed, and not necessarily under the auspices of traditional Western controls and good laboratory practices. ("The potential impact of neuroscience research is greater than previously thought," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 9 July 2008) [emphasis added]

While Green claims he is opposed to developing drugs "with safe and efficacious properties for military use," the NRC study, after all, was funded by the Defense Intelligence Agency, hardly a "neutral party" when it comes to "enhanced interrogation techniques" and other horrors of this horrible system!

One must also dissect the linguistic formulations and assumptions deployed by those advocating this line of research. By referring to neuroweapons production as a "market area," those contemplating unleashing devilish pharmacological forms of warfare on unsuspecting populations behave, in you'll pardon the pun, as if they were brainstorming the release of a new video game or suite of luxury condominiums in an American city "ethnically cleansed" of its urban poor!

Green and his acolytes claim that "battlefield commanders of all nations hold sacrosanct the right to determine the applications" of weapon deployments that may cause "collateral damage" to civilian noncombatants. Therefore, Green argues that "if governments or scientists were to try to develop a system to pre-screen neuroscientific cognitive manipulators, which would be HIPAA approved and tested, and robust in its core science, success would be as likely as it was with mines and cluster-bombs—meaning not likely." Translation: full-speed ahead!

While the NRC allege that their approach to monitoring neuroweapons research is "ethical," the committee ponders whether "the concept of torture could also be altered by products in this market. It is possible that someday there could be a technique developed to extract information from a prisoner that does not have any lasting side effects."

Other than the hollowing-out of one's personality and the unique traits that make us human, that is. "Paging Winston Smith, white courtesy telephone!"

While Nazi theories of Aryan superiority may have been displaced by a uniquely American ultranationalist, though no less predatory utilitarian praxis, behind the glittering technological promises trumpeted by today's biotech weaponeers lurk the same murderous mental constructs that guided Indian hunters and slave traders of yore.

Only this time, *we're all Manchurian candidates.*

*Tom Burghardt is a researcher and activist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to publishing in Covert Action Quarterly, Love & Rage and Antifa Forum, he is the editor of Police State America: U.S. Military "Civil Disturbance" Planning, distributed by [AK Press](#).*

The original source of this article is [Antifascist Calling...](#)  
Copyright © [Tom Burghardt](#), [Antifascist Calling...](#), 2008

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Tom Burghardt](#)  
[http://antifascist-calling.blogspot.co](http://antifascist-calling.blogspot.com/)  
[m/](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)