

Project Stargate – US Government Remote Viewing Program

The remote viewing (RV) work at SRI (1972-1990) and at SAIC (1990-1995) is unique in the history of the field of parapsychology. For one thing, it is the only long-term psi-research program known to have been funded by the U.S. government (specifically, the Department of Defense and different intelligence agencies, such as the CIA); second, its reason for being was, from the outset, driven by an interest in applications, i.e., the use of psi for intelligence operations; third, because of its sensitive nature, a majority of this work has been – and still is – classified.

Nevertheless, a recent Congressionally Directed Action induced a declassification of a small portion of the documents, as well as leading to an evaluation of the 24-year government-sponsored program, known as STARGATE.

The early SRI work, initiated by physicists Hal Puthoff and Russell Targ, focused on a few gifted individuals, such as New York artist Ingo Swann, and former police commissioner Pat Price. Pilot trials with these individuals produced some truly astonishing results. For example, Swann suggested trying to remote view the planet Jupiter before the NASA Pioneer 10 spacecraft would photograph the planet. To his surprise, he reported seeing a ring around the planet, which seemed quite contradictory with all that was known about Jupiter; nevertheless, Targ & Puthoff mentioned Swann's statement in their report, and, soon afterwards, the photos taken by Pioneer 10 indeed revealed an unexpected ring around the planet.

Pat Price, in his first task for "psychic spying" on the Soviets, was simply given the coordinates of an "R & D facility" in the Soviet Union. Price went on to describe and draw, with amazing detail, a major structure at the site.

The first public (i.e., unclassified) reports of the RV experiments at SRI, including over 50 trials with Price, Swann and a few other subjects, yielded solid qualitative and quantitative evidence for the reality of RV. Following report of these results in the interdisciplinary journal *Nature*, considerable controversy arose, as critics questioned both protocol and statistics. Nevertheless, even using conservative estimates of success, and independent evaluations, the SRI data seemed clearly supportive of the psi hypothesis.

A number of other experiments followed seeking to determine what, if any, were the limitations of RV. In one experiment, for example, the targets were small objects placed in metal film containers (which exclude light), while in another they consisted of microdots (images shrunk to the size of a dot, and demanding a microscope to be seen). RV seemed to work just as well as ever. Even more interesting was a short experiment which involved not only considerable distances between sender and receiver, but also the tremendous physical barrier of the ocean depths, known to block almost all electromagnetic radiation. Two sessions were conducted, each involving a gifted subject (Hella Hammid and Ingo Swann) who was in a submersible, in the depths of the Pacific; the sender was located at a randomly selected site in the San Francisco Bay

Area. Despite distance and the filtering action of the ocean, both sessions were successful, with each subject describing their targets with high precision, and the quantitative results being statistically significant.

Also worthy of note is some of the later work of Puthoff and Targ, attempting to enhance the accuracy and reliability of RV by using different error-correcting techniques (i.e., majority vote and Associational Remote Viewing).

The STARGATE project continued well into the 1990s, under the direction of physicist Edwin May, first at SRI and then at SAIC (Science Applications International Corp.). Extending earlier work of Puthoff and Targ, May and his colleagues conducted a number of studies exploring the potential of RV for intelligence-gathering, while also attempting to understand some of its underlying mechanisms. Working with a small, select group of "expert" remote viewers, the SRI/SAIC researchers continued to produce some very striking examples of the applied potential of remote viewing, while also exploring certain fundamental questions about the nature of this skill.

In its totality, the STARGATE work provides some of the most solid evidence for psi to date – as can be witnessed by the recently declassified documents. Nevertheless, an agency contracted by the CIA to evaluate the 24-year program (American Institutes for Research or *AIR*) managed to give a mixed review, with a positive assessment by statistician Jessica Utts, a negative one by psychologist Ray Hyman, and an overall recommendation by the *AIR* staff to terminate the STARGATE program. Although accepting that a significant effect had been shown under scientifically rigorous conditions, the *AIR* report suggests that there is no need to accept the reality of RV, and that, in any event, its pragmatic utility for intelligence-gathering had not been demonstrated. Following this, Edwin May made several public appearances strongly challenging the objectivity of the *AIR*, and questioning the true motives driving its report. An article by May, detailing some of the more objectionable aspects of this affair, has appeared in the *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, along with articles by SRI researchers Hal Puthoff and Russell Targ and *AIR* consultants Jessica Utts and Ray Hyman.

For more detailed information on Stargate, go to [Cognitive Sciences Laboratory website](#).

Further Reading:

[The American Institutes for Research Review of the Department of Defense's STAR GATE Program: A Commentary by Edwin May](#)

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