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Army Tested LSD as Alternative to A-War

Washington

The Army's general counsel and surgeon general said yesterday that tests it sponsored on humans using LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs were part of a search for alternatives to nuclear war but might not have been properly authorized for the first eight years.

Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee's investigations panel, they said they have "few doubts" that prescribed medical ethics, safety procedures and prior-consent requirements were violated to some degree in

the first decade of the tests, held in the 1950s and 1960s.

General counsel Charles D. Ablard declined to answer in open session a question as to whether the Central Intelligence Agency used "the results of your research" in actual operations in foreign countries.

Ablard said that the "motivating factor" for the tests in the first place was a report to the Army surgeon general from "a civilian doctor" on Oct. 21, 1955, after the doctor had communicated "with several European medical personnel concerning the effect of 'ego-depressant drugs.'"

Aside from the threat to U.S. troops the drugs presented, and their potential use to get information from American intelligence agents, Ablard said the information more significantly "indicated that an alternative to nuclear weapons might be available, a weapon which might render large forces helpless — but only temporarily — and without any permanent damage to those forces and none to their surroundings."

Lieutenant General Richard R. Taylor, the Army's surgeon general, said that, to the best of his knowledge, the drugs — which

were used in laboratory experiments and on U.S. troops at three forts, in mass field experiments — were never used against foreign forces. The research program was abandoned in 1967 because of the "unpredictability" of LSD and related psychochemical agents, he said.

Taylor said that, while "we may be missing some documents," the Army's investigators of the drug-testing program so far have found no evidence that the portions of it involving psychochemical agents such as LSD were properly authorized before 1958 or 1959.

Overall, Ablard said, the medical profession's ethical codes and procedural safeguards on such human research were well established in the last 25 years during which the experiments occurred, but "I must in all candor admit that they appear not always to have been followed in these tests."

Taylor said, "There is no doubt in my mind there were serious problems in the 1950s. . . . There is evidence that the sound ethical principles directed in past and present Department of Defense regulations appears not always to have been followed . . ."