war, and, according to the *Post*, the scenarios show friendly force reductions of up to 50 percent in some counterinsurgency situations—but reductions of only 3 to 4 percent in conventional battle scenarios. Nonetheless, despite this weak evidence concerning conventional war, ESSG allegedly recommended inclusion of a herbicide capability in various contingency plans.

DOD, for its part, maintains that "The SPECTRUM scenarios are completely hypothetical computer models of various warfare situations and have nothing to do with existing battle plans or contingency plans." That is, DOD has not included herbicides in its official battle plans—yet.

Aspin, reacting to the *Post* disclosures, labeled the scenarios "computer lunacy" and said: "Herbicides have been of little use in Vietnam and promise little real advantage in a European conflict."

Another reaction to the report is a written commentary, drawn up by two former DOD analysts, John P. Wheeler, III, and Han Swyter. In talking about military effectiveness, says the Wheeler-Swyter critique, the ESSG study failed to note that herbicides are becoming technologically obsolete:

> A critical point with respect to conventional and counterinsurgency warfare is that the technology of electronic and infrared sensors is becoming such that herbicides could be labeled obsolescent, possibly obsolete.
>
> The reason for this is that sensors can provide surveillance of an area without stripping vegetative cover for friendly use, that sensors can be delivered or used fairly independently of weather, and that an enemy is not likely to know that a sensor is present, whereas he would be aware of defoliation.

The ESSG report also reveals that the generally unanimous pro-herbicide position taken by DOD in public conceals a variety of warring factions. As mentioned earlier, herbicides proved least popular with the air officers. One long-term observer of DOD said this finding confirmed his view: "The Air Force has never been wild about offering combat support for the Army, which is what they were doing in the herbicide program." In the same survey, almost 30 percent of the Navy officers had doubts. A former officer observed that Navy officers had "gut-

Fischer-Spassky Charges: What Did the Russians Have in Mind?

Many exorbitant propositions have punctuated the chess championship being played out in Reykjavik, but by far the strangest was last week's accusation by the Russian player's side that Fischer was using "electronic devices and chemical substances" to debilitate Spassky's playing skills. The Icelandic Chess Federation gravely summoned a chemist and an electronics engineer to investigate, but not a tatter of evidence was found that might invest the Russian complaint with respectability. Assuming the Russians believed their own charges —and they would be unlikely otherwise to put them to public test—just what did they expect to find?

It was obvious to others besides the Russians that Spassky had not been behaving like his usual self. "He does not smile. He acts like a man in jail. There is something on his mind besides Fischer," commented Argentine grand master Miguel Najdorf. As Spassky's second, Efim Geller, said in making the charges, "Having known [Spassky] for many years, it is the first time that I observe such unusual slackening of concentration and display of impulsiveness in his playing, which I cannot account for by [Fischer's] exclusively impressive playing."

Other observers have attributed Spassky's listlessness to "Fischer-fear," the trancelike state which similarly affected the three grand masters—Taimanov, Larsen, and Petrosian—who preceded Spassky as obstacles in the path of Fischer's road to victory. To the Russians it may have seemed that possibly something more practical than mesmerism underlay the obliging propensity of Fischer's opponents to despair before their time was up.

In the Russian medical literature is the description of an ailment known as "asthenic syndrome." The symptoms include weakness, fatigability, depression, antisocial tendencies, sense of fear, impairment of memory and general mental function, and an inability to make decisions.

The cause of asthenic syndrome is said to be low intensity microwave radiation. Soviet physiologists explain the syndrome in terms of a theory of Pavlov's which views the central nervous system as particularly sensitive to radiation. Western physiologists acknowledge that intense microwaves may produce mental discomfort by a simple heating of the brain, but they have generally had difficulty in confirming the low intensity effects described by the Russian school.

An opportunity for the physiologists on both sides to study the question was the alleged bombardment with microwaves of the United States Embassy in Moscow during the 1960's. The purpose of this remarkable incident, according to syndicated columnist Jack Anderson, was to alter the personalities of American diplomats. Under Operation Pandora, the Advanced Research Projects Agency exposed a number of monkeys to the same microwave environment as that detected in the embassy, but psychologists could reach no absolute conclusion that the monkeys' minds were affected, Anderson reported in his column last 10 May. (No comment on the alleged incident could be obtained from the State Department last week.)

Did the Russians believe Fischer was making microwaves at Spassky? "That's what occurred to me—the reports in their literature are typical of that," says Herbert Pollack, a consultant to the Institute of Defense Analyses who is expert in this esoteric field. But the Russians in last week's statement did not specify the nature of the electronic devices they suspected Fischer of using. They had received letters, Geller said, indicating that Fischer's chair and the special lighting fixtures might be the sites of the unseen influences. Professor Sigmundur Gudbjarnason of the University of Reykjavik analyzed samples of the two players' chairs by gas chromatography but the two showed identical profiles with not a hint of toxin, pheromone, or untoward alchemy. And nothing but the now celebrated two dead flies was discovered in the lighting fixtures at the chess hall.

The Russian side is now bearing the brunt of the humor which their complaint evoked. Yet, absurd as the accusation may have seemed to the spectators at Reykjavik, from a different perspective, in the distant office of a Kremlin bureaucrat, it may have seemed a plausible key to a strange and disturbing set of facts.—NICHOLAS WADE