

GSC/JB

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Chairman,  
Security Sub-Panel

Character Weakness Bearing on Security

1 Further to our discussions in the Security Sub-Panel meeting of 8 July, attached are examples of character weakness under 10 headings which we consider have security implications and which when sufficiently serious may cause denial of security clearance. It is pointed out that these character weaknesses are often found in combinations such as over indulgence in alcohol, not amenable to discipline and failure to pay debts. It is also pointed out that these character weaknesses usually seriously effect job performance and often make the person unsuitable from this point of view as well as from the security aspect. You may not consider the list of headings exhaustive, however it does represent our experience in this field.

2 It is felt that a paper on the subject of character weakness and its bearing on security should include:

- (a) Why character information is required.
- (b) What it consists of.
- (c) How it is analysed.
- (d) What action is taken on it and in what manner.

It is suggested that such a paper should avoid generalities, and endeavour to demonstrate the facets of character weakness which bear on security and the degree of seriousness and substantiation required.

3 It should be emphasized that Government practice on this subject is the same as in use in almost any business or industry. As a minor example, no restaurant would employ a person with a history of unreliability as a cashier. No industry would employ in its engineering department any person who might give away secrets to a competitor. This type of thing could be given a reasonably prominent place in the paper to the Panel in order to ensure that there is no feeling that the Government servants are treated any differently to anyone else.

4 Finally it should be emphasized that all these cases are carefully considered, and that decisions are not made by security officers but by senior officials. In every case, every consideration possible is given to the employee.

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