

SECRET

CRITIQUE OF EVALUATION REPORT OF SPECIAL PROJECT, NDMC

6 May 69

Major General D.G.M. Nelson

Reference: Copy of report of Dr. Dalbir Bindra dated 1 March, 1969

The enclosed report from Dr. Bindra was submitted by him to Dr. Hoyt of the Defence Research Board at her request for an independent evaluation of the Special Project being carried on in this laboratory under DRB Project # C94-25-16. It was forwarded to the Surgeon General and thence to me by hand with the request that a critique be prepared and submitted to the authority initiating the project.

It would appear that some confusion exists both as to the scientific aspects of the project and the practical applications of it in the future and this is probably due to the inability of Dr. Bindra to visit NDMC and carry out an on-site inspection of the program as well as the very short time which Dr. Wake and LCdr Lawless had available to them to present the history and nature of the project. A further contributing factor might be that Dr. Bindra was not in possession of a report written by the principal investigators some weeks in advance of the visit of 25 February, 1969.

With regard to Dr. Bindra's comments on the scientific value of the project on which he was asked primarily to report, it is not understood how he could have come to the conclusions which he did. It was reported to him at the time that the laboratory was achieving success in the area of pupillary measurements as a differentiating factor in homosexuality. However, Dr. Bindra failed completely to grasp the significance of these findings in the area of pupillary response and in fact, because of his lack of comprehension, his report is highly misleading and his criticisms of its scientific value invalid. He further suggests that all other electrophysiological measurements should be abandoned as well, and yet has noted that 30 differentiating items have been isolated by the laboratory, many of which are, in fact, electrophysiological data. In addition to this, and contrary to his statement, there is a considerable body of literature which does suggest that specific features of certain pictures will produce greater emotional arousal in homosexual males than in control subjects.

The suggestion that other laboratories are better equipped than this one to do intercorrelation work is valid but is not a problem. On the contrary, the major problem of this laboratory,

.../2

SECRET

A0454562\_1-002526

SECRET

- 2 -

which is as well equipped to investigate pupillary measurements as any in Canada, is the fact that the actual measurements of the pupillary response must be done by hand. No satisfactory automated system has yet been developed which can do this work. One system is available in the U.S.A., but the cost is prohibitive. Until such time as scoring is automated economically, the mass of data which can be scored by hand is insufficient to justify the use of a computer for correlational analysis.

Dr. Bindra's comments on the practical applications of the project are not clear. The specific problem posed to the laboratory is the establishment of a practical, reliable method of distinguishing homosexuals from other applicants for Government employment and there is no intention of expanding to the routine investigation of character disorders, etc., until this is accomplished. In addition, the interests of Dr. Wake and LCdr Lawless with regard to research do not enter into any consideration of whether the project should be supported departmentally or be investigator-initiated. These investigators are not free to apply to any Government agency for grants, and, in any event, of the agencies suggested one refused support at the initiation of the project (NH&W) and one (NRC) is interested primarily in basic research as opposed to applied research.

The security classification of the project has been criticised by Dr. Bindra on rather tenuous grounds. He fails to understand that the entire project is not classified "Secret" but that specific items are, such as the identity of its initiators, the specific subject of the investigations and the specific purpose. Anything else can legitimately be discussed openly. With regard to his remarks on confidentiality and anonymity of subjects, Dr. Bindra must realize that all human psychological research, considered from this point of view, is ethically confidential. His suggestion that the use of mobile testing units could be used to protect the identity of subjects is simply not understood. I can, in fact, think of nothing more calculated to draw attention to a project and those involved. In addition to this, the use of mobile units is highly impractical as well as being very expensive.

Dr. Bindra also suggests that routine psychiatric or psychological screening in which the applicant is asked questions such as "do you have homosexual tendencies?", "are you likely to need help if you are blackmailed for anything?", and "what precaution can we take now to minimize the chances of your being blackmailed?" might work as well as any other method of identification. I find that this suggestion is incredibly naive, psychologically invalid, and completely unworthy of one of this country's better known

.../3

SECRET

A0454562\_2-002527


SECRET

- 3 -

psychologists. Even in view of proposed amendments to the Criminal Code, applicants for the Federal Service will still attempt to place themselves to advantage and admissions of sexual deviation will still engender great embarrassment, anxiety and danger to the subject. Legislation does not necessarily change the attitudes of people, particularly in areas of social taboo.

In summary, then, it is felt by the principal investigators that Dr. Bindra's report is invalid, incomplete, and unwarranted by the facts. It is felt to be both retrogressive and defeative to abandon work in areas where progress can be demonstrated, particularly when the cost of continuing is minimal compared with the expenditures made to date.

Respectfully,

  
J.C. Lawless  
Lieutenant Commander

SECRET

A0454562\_3-002528