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EVALUATION REPORT OF PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL LABORATORY NDMC

BY DR. D. B. BINDRA

6 May, 1969

Major General D.G.M. Nelson

I am grateful to you for the opportunity to report on Dr. Bindra's submission concerning research in psychophysiology at NDMC. The items covered in his report are extensive considering that, for business reasons, he was unable to visit the laboratory and thus, perforce, relied upon an historical verbal account from Lawless and myself, and such items of data as we had thought might prove useful. The following comments are organized in the manner of Bindra's appraisal.

A. Scientific Value of the Project

Bindra notes that the "progress on the work has been slow" -- a judgment I am loathe to accept although it may be apt. Work on pupillary measurement could be termed rapid in view of the fact that our apparatus was built from vague descriptions and thus we had to devise -- furthermore, it can be said that progress was rapid since Bindra notes the "useful contributions in developing an improved technique". In short, I wonder if progress has not been considerable in view of the budget and personnel structure of the unit.

Bindra's wish to abandon the psychophysiological measures and concentrate on the other testing procedures is puzzling. In the abstract of my original report to the Privy Council Office, a review had indicated that the most promising tests were thought to be psychophysiological in nature as opposed to projective and other paper-and-pencil tests. Furthermore, the abstract stated that "combinations of the above (tests) could prove more valuable than a single test, or individual tests given consecutively". Our data have uncovered some 30 items (as Bindra recognizes), that offer promise for differentiating homosexuals from the general population -- 19 of these are psychophysiological. Furthermore, his statement that "there is nothing to indicate that specific features of certain pictures would produce greater emotional arousal in HM than in the general population" is a direct contradiction to the findings of the prime mover in pupillometric research, one Eckhard Hess. It is worth saying that our research has contradicted the simplistic statements by Hess without denying his (and others) basic findings that pupil diameter changes occur with varying stimuli. In other words, Hess may be right but his data do not show it. Worth recall, also, is the as yet unpublished research by Seltzer, dealt with in the original Privy Council Report, which backs the stand by Hess.

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Bindra's point that "other laboratories are better equipped to do this type of intercorrelation work" is a little difficult to follow. Are studies only to be located in the laboratories with the best equipment?

Finally, we must have led Bindra astray. Ours is not a pupillometric laboratory. It does so happen that the immediately publishable items from our laboratory are in pupillometry and we talk of them because they are open for discussion and because we are responding to the old D.R.B. request (Dr. MacCharles) that we do some fundamental research.

B. Practical Applications

Bindra feels that there is no reason this research should not be pursued outside NDMC, with all the secrecy removed, and so it could. However, he does not make clear how the Government could make use of findings without an obvious risk that there would be public recognition of the homosexual aspects of personnel selection. Perhaps the Government is ready for such a stand. Second, our research is directed to the problems the Government wants answered - it must be well known by now that University professors sometimes have difficulty in doing what is wanted, preferring to do as they wish. Third, having spent a few years in the active pursuit of homosexuals for the purpose of using them in research, it is by no means certain to me that an open project would bring in large numbers of subjects, nor that it would be simple to protect them from recognition. Fourth, our study is not wholly confidential. Finally, it is difficult to see how Lawless and Moore could go outside the Service to work on such research. A new team could be recruited - but it seems a shame to throw away trained, highly-motivated personnel.

As for mobile testing units, we would like the funds but not the machines.

C. Security Aspects

Bindra sees no reason why a Government employee cannot be asked "Do you have homosexual tendencies?" This appears of questionable ethics but perhaps not, if surrounded with certain other questions. It overlooks several facts (1) there is no place to go, if the employee answers "no" for there are no data (2) it does nothing for the latent homosexual who is not suspicious of his nature (3) legalizing homosexual acts will not make self-recognition or confession easy for all homosexuals for a number of years yet.

In summary, Bindra recommends freeing the project from Government control, eliminating physiological measures and concentrating on psychological and interview techniques. There is no question that his approach

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could succeed. I have tried to make a case for the present approach as having the advantages of (1) being out of the early experimental stage (2) arising from experience and known approaches by other investigators (3) meeting the peculiar demands of Government.

Respectfully,

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