

USE OF POLYGRAPHS AS "LIE DETECTORS"

DIRECTOR OF DEFENSE RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING,
Washington, D.C., April 13, 1965.

Memorandum for—

Assistant Secretary of the Army (R. & D.).

Assistant Secretary of the Navy (R. & D.).

Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (R. & D.).

Subject: A coordinated R. & D. program of lie detection research.

Lie detection procedures involving polygraphs have been used for many years in DOD to screen personnel for security reasons and to evaluate the testimony of criminal suspects under military jurisdiction.

Despite the weight which has been placed on polygraph data in arriving at decisions of considerable importance, little, if anything, is known about what they contribute to the accuracy of an investigation. A careful examination of this topic reported in IDA TR 62-16 reveals that information on such elementary and basic considerations as the reliabilities of the various measures employed, the freedom of the device from interrogator or interpreter bias, and the validities of the diagnoses for various situations, is largely inadequate.

The need for basic investigations in this area is therefore acute. The timeliness of such an effort is enhanced by the fact that a research program on the polygraph is being initiated at the CIA under the Director of Life Sciences, ORD. Thus, both programs can benefit from interchange, particularly in terms of research plans and design.

I therefore intend to initiate immediately a coordinated program of research on lie detection to include four major tasks:

(a) A study of the validity of lie detection based on existing records of security and criminal cases where evidence independent of the polygraph is available.

(b) An experimental study of interrogation methodology.

(c) A study of interexaminer reliability and examiner performance differences.

(d) A study of the reliability of various physiological measures with actual or potential relevance to lie detection.

This program will be pursued under the cognizance of my Assistant Director (Research) with the coordination of the Special Assistant (Intelligence and Reconnaissance), who will have the responsibility for coordination with the intelligence community.

I am designating the Air Force by this memorandum to be the responsible military department and to form a project within an existing program element in 6.2 funds under "Studies and Analysis of Behavioral Sciences."

I also intend to set up a monitoring group to consist of a research representative and an operational representative from each of the services with central coordination by my staff. Representation from the CIA will be provided where appropriate. Technical assistance will be available from IDA. Firm estimates of amounts for the funding of the project should be determined after guidance from this monitoring group.

I should like each of you to nominate one research representative and one operational representative to the monitoring group described above. These nominations should be made by May 1, 1965. Any amplifying detail that you may need can be obtained from my Assistant Director (Research).

E. G. FUBINI
(For Harold Brown).

Mr. KASS. Now, the Defense Department subsequent to this letter, in July of 1965, issued Defense Department Directive 5210.48, the one we have been discussing here this morning. Doesn't it seem a little unusual that despite Mr. Brown's comments, we just don't know what the polygraph does for investigative purposes. Here, in effect, the Defense Department is putting the stamp of approval on the use of the polygraph.

Mr. SKALLERUP. Would you repeat the question?

Mr. KASS. The question is this: Here you have responsible Defense Department officials saying we just don't know what the polygraph contributes to the accuracy of an investigation. You have informed