

26 March 1953

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

SUBJECT: Interview with [redacted]

[redacted] is of the faculty of the University [redacted] and is a cleared consultant of the Agency. I talked with him this morning by the arrangement of [redacted] head of A&E, who felt I might be interested in talking with him in view of the investigation of A&E presently pending. As Colonel Baird previously had expressed a similar view, I felt it desirable not to turn down the invitation. The meeting was in [redacted] office, he being absent during most of the talk although I specifically asked him to be present. My impression is that he set up the interview at a time when he had a previous outside engagement so as to enable me to question [redacted] privately.

I asked [redacted] his views as to the role psychology should play in the Agency. He answered that he felt there were four areas of activity: (i) in the recruitment or selection of new personnel and the placement thereof, (ii) as a handmaiden of Training, (iii) research, and (iv) morale or employee-employer relations. Although [redacted] broke the fields of activity into four, it might well be said that he actually should have said five for the reason that, attached to each of the four, he envisaged assessment-evaluation activities.

The first area of activity addresses itself to the specific problem of reducing turnover and its value is thus more easily measurable than in the others. [redacted] drew attention to the fact that reduction in turnover, in addition to the preservation-of-investment factor, also involves the element of security, thus adding another reason to make use of psychological techniques in this field. It was also brought out that the techniques involved may be applied by other than psychologists. Although theoretically it would be desirable to use a psychological screen on all new employees, [redacted] recognized that this would not be practical, especially for those coming in at higher grades and said that, as a rule of thumb, such techniques should not be used in connection with the employment of those who are being hired on the basis of achievements.

[redacted] expressed the view that the techniques of psychology both should be applied in the training process itself and as a measure of the results of the training.

On the subject of research, I asked [redacted] to provide me with a working definition and explained that my reason for asking was that

STAT there had been expressed to me the fear that psychologists coming to the
STAT Agency might use it merely as a convenient support for personal academic
study and investigations. [redacted] acknowledged this possibility and
said that he felt that it may have actually taken place during the early
years of the Agency but that he was convinced that such would not occur
under [redacted]. He went on to say that, in this case, research
means the development of techniques needed to fill the peculiar require-
ments of the Agency plus the testing of techniques currently employed,
these two activities being inseparable parts of the trial and error
method.

STAT [redacted] was a little hesitant in advocating morale-through-psychology
and readily agreed with my comment that if the first three activities were
carried on with reasonable success a fourth would not be needed.

STAT We discussed also the definitions of various terms other than
research. For example, I raised the question of the true difference
between assessment and evaluation, the net result of our conversation
on that subject being that ~~the~~^{one} must needs know in what particular sense
you are using the word before you are sure of what you are talking about,
as either word can have a specialized meaning in limited use. From this
I raised the question of whether there might not be a better title for
[redacted] shop and [redacted] gave as a possibility "Personnel
Analysis."

STAT When I asked [redacted] his views as to a desirable organization
STAT administratively, he had only one concrete suggestion: that research
be centralized and not dispersed. As for operational chain of command
and general administration, he had no plan to offer.

STAT While acknowledging that it was a difficult question to answer, I
STAT asked [redacted] whether he had any views regarding the productivity that
reasonably might be expected of psychologists on duty with the Agency as
this obviously would bear on the size of the staff, its cost to the
Agency, etc. [redacted] represented that he knew of no general rule that
could be applied other than to obtain the opinions of various qualified
psychologists as to the number of individuals they felt would be needed
to carry out a specific program.

STAT I asked [redacted] whether he was acquainted with [redacted]
STAT professional reputation. He replied that [redacted] was relatively
STAT unknown among psychologists but that he [redacted] believed that his
professional standing was good.

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[] returned shortly before my talk with [] ended and I took occasion to give a summary review, specifically mentioning the concern which had been expressed over the possibility that the Agency might be used as a resting home for psychologists.

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