

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. D.F. WALL

Security Risks, Homosexual

At the request of Mr. D.F. Wall of the Privy Council Office, and with the concurrence of the Department of National Health and Welfare, I have made an interim study of the possible risks to security involved in the employment of homosexuals in sensitive positions in the public service of Canada, with a view to minimizing these risks. The comments I have set out below are based in part upon a study of the memorandum to the Security Panel entitled "Security Cases Involving Character Weaknesses, with Special Reference to the Problem of Homosexuality".

Perhaps the most important point to note concerning persons with predominantly homosexual tendencies is that, in all probability, their behaviour and characteristics of personality are as varied as those of persons who are consistently heterosexual. That is, with the one exception of 'sex objects', there will be the same proportion of bright and dull, strongly and weakly sexed, manly and feminine, recognizable and unrecognizable individuals. While each of the so-called "identifying characteristics" of the homosexual may have some element of truth in it in a certain number of cases, there are no data to show conclusively that these characteristics apply primarily to homosexuals as a class. For example, the memorandum to the Security Panel states that homosexuals congregate in places which can easily be identified; some of them do, but so do men who enjoy the company of women. Again, it is commonly believed that homosexuals are effeminate; some are, but some are accomplished athletes. The plain fact is that any attempt to study homosexuality as an absolute quality, whether in its relationship to the national security or in any other context, will most certainly fail.

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The above merely underlines the simple truth that not enough is known about homosexuals to make any useful generalizations - how many there are, how they live, whether they are antagonistic to society, or whether they are consistently exploitable through pressure such as blackmail. Data are needed, not only on the past practices and current activity of homosexuals, but also on the potentiality for homosexual behaviour - a potentiality that, in theory, exists in every one of us. Social scientists believe that, in the majority of cases, such a potentiality might never come to the fore unless some extraordinary condition of stress occurs. This point will be touched upon later in the paper.

It seems clear at the outset that, while present policy concerning the employment of homosexuals in sensitive government positions must be based on our present knowledge of the problem, it is essential to make a definite attempt to discover more valid information by which to modify this policy where applicable. If the government agrees with this view, the gathering of the necessary information will require an active research program. Concurrent with, but also dependent upon, the results of this research, a workable policy to minimize the dangers associated with homosexuality might be considered under the following related headings:

- (a) selection of personnel;
- (b) training of personnel; and
- (c) managing the emergency.
- (a) Selection of Personnel

At the present time there is no way, short of confession, photographs or evidence from reliable witnesses, of discovering whether an individual indulges in homosexual activity. The degree of potentiality for homosexual behaviour is also difficult to establish. Certain tests such as the Rorschach and the MMPI are often helpful, but validity and reliability in such tests have not proved to be high. However, if specific attention were turned to

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developing a series of tests, each of which might add a certain weight or selective value, a suitable device for the selection of non-homosexual candidates for certain positions might be developed.

Two tests come to mind which might be developed for this purpose. The first is a special "loaded" version of the Rorschach test, where instead of being asked what he sees in each ink blot, the subject is required to select the two (or more) responses that are best portrayed by the card. The subject's choice will be made from a list including neutral, heterosexual and homosexual responses, the last two often determined symbolically rather than directly.

A second avenue for exploration is the use of a word-association test in conjunction with a psychogalvanometer, or "lie-detector". Here a list of mixed neutral and sexually-symbolic words could be presented to the subject, his word response as well as blood pressure and skin resistance being recorded simultaneously. The pattern of response again might reveal potentiality for homosexual activity.

It might be pointed out here that no research of this nature can be successful without access to homosexual as well as normal subjects. It is probable that a good many sex deviates might be brought into research through the assistance of penitentiaries and reformatories, as well as through the active recruitment of a number who have not been in trouble with the law. It will be of very considerable importance also to study all the case material presently available to departments, not only to validate tests and methods but also to provide hypotheses for further testing.

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Another selection device which might be used is that of the personal interview. While it is not normally considered ethical to ask a person about his sex life when interviewing him for a job, it might be possible to point out the pressures with which he might be faced, say, in a diplomatic post abroad, and to point out that it would be to his great advantage to be quite frank with the employing department concerning any characteristic which might lay him open to these pressures. If it can be made plain to the applicant that his career in the public service may involve situations of considerable stress, not only by the inherent nature of the work, but by deliberate efforts of others to destroy or otherwise render ineffective the work of the department, he should be able to appreciate the need for careful screening in terms of personality characteristics, and the requirement to be entirely forthright about any problems which he may foresee. In other words, the conditions of employment should be made quite clear before the applicant is asked to provide information of a very personal kind, thus giving him every incentive to provide the employing department with sufficient information on which to base a judgement as to his suitability for employment.

(b) Training of Personnel

While it will probably not be possible to screen out by selection all applicants who may later prove to have exploitable weaknesses of character or personality, a continuous and carefully planned training system can be of great assistance in reducing the risks involved. Such a program would inevitably involve conditions of employment which would seem negative and bothersome to anyone who respects personal privacy and freedom. Nevertheless, with full knowledge on the part of both employer and employee of the risks involved, not only to security but also to the careers of the individuals involved, it should be possible to devise an acceptable and effective training program.

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In order to have its desired effect, a training program in this context would require the employing department to assume a number of obligations on behalf of its employees, many of which it does not at present assume. Most important, the department would be obliged to ensure the employees' full awareness of these factors:

- (1) the nature and extent of the risks involved, both to the department and the employee;
- (2) the various methods by which weaknesses or indiscretions might be exploited by a hostile intelligence agency;
- (3) the absolute necessity of reporting immediately any attempt to compromise an employee;
- (4) the department's willingness to give the employee every sympathy and support, including the protection of his reputation, in a compromising situation;
- (5) the necessity of the employee's accepting a certain loss of personal privacy as a condition of employment; and
- (6) the department's assurance that private information concerning an employee will be given the greatest possible protection.

The employing department would also be obliged to provide, on a continuing basis, some acceptable form of consultation and guidance for employees, with a view to recognizing and dealing with those problems of personality which could make an employee exploitable by a hostile intelligence service. The nature and extent of these

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facilities will, of course, depend upon the department's function and the circumstances under which it is to be performed. They will be particularly important in areas where the risk of exploitation is greatest, such as at Canadian posts in Iron Curtain countries, but should also form a continuous part of a general training program prior to posting to a risky area.

A combination of the "awareness" type of training mentioned above and periodic individual consultations should help to ensure stable day-to-day behaviour, and should also result in a kind of employee-departmental representative relationship such that the defences against exploitable behaviour are materially strengthened. Ideally, this relationship should be such that, when trouble is anticipated, the employee should feel entirely free to ask for help without prejudice.

If it is accepted that the avoidance of undue stress will contribute to stable behaviour on the part of employees in sensitive positions, the department should be further obliged to provide working conditions which do not make for loneliness and boredom. In isolated posts abroad, for example, there should be reasonable opportunity for social activity at all levels of seniority, as well as for recreation and relaxation. While a department obviously cannot supervise the leisure hours of its employees, it can encourage them to avoid the dangers which these hours might present in unusual circumstances.

(c) The Emergency Situation

It is clear that the handling of an emergency situation arising through the attempted exploitation of an employee by blackmail would depend to a great extent upon the efficacy of the training program. If the employee is

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sufficiently dedicated to the work of the department, and has sufficient trust in the department's determination to protect his integrity and his future, it should be possible to cut the various risks to a minimum. The risk to security ceases to exist if the victim refuses to cooperate and immediately reports the attempted blackmail to his superiors. The next risk is that to the victim's reputation, which arises through the possible exposure to family, friends, and the public generally, of his act or acts of indiscretion. The department can be of considerable assistance in nullifying these risks, by providing the victim's family with a frank and sympathetic explanation of the circumstances, and by answering any public reaction in as protective a manner as possible.

The government may also have considered a further device which not only affords some protection to the victim of blackmail, but could also be turned to advantage; that is, the device of feeding the blackmailer false information until such time as the victim could be discreetly withdrawn from the situation without arousing undue suspicion. It is recognized that the hostile intelligence service may still "spoil" the operation by compromising the victim, but depending upon the victim's attitude in the matter, this approach might be worth consideration.

It is obvious that any effective dealing with a blackmail situation is almost entirely dependent upon the employee's reporting immediately to his departmental superiors the fact that an attempt is being made to force him into a betrayal of trust. It is therefore essential that all employees concerned be made entirely aware of this necessity, and be given every encouragement and inducement to report any incident or series of events which could lead to compromise.

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Conclusion

It is concluded from the above that, in order to deal effectively with sexual deviation in its relationship to the national security, the following action is to be recommended:

- (a) that a fully considered research program be instituted in order to develop suitable methods of selecting personnel for sensitive positions; and
- (b) that the departments concerned institute a program of training aimed at developing the fullest awareness, on the part of the employees concerned, of all aspects of this threat.

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