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2 February 1973

MEMO FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT Paranormal Phenomena:
Further Developments/Reflections/Suggestions

1. This memo : recapitulates briefly the substance of the 1 Feb meeting with TSD (para 2); supplements in a limited way earlier reflections on the phenomena (para 3); and suggests possible next steps for joint TSD/ORD action (para 4). The Attachment is a suggested draft memo for convening a low-key conference with other Agency elements having a legitimate interest in the topic.

2. The 1 Feb meeting was attended by [redacted] of TSD and [redacted] of ORD; the meeting was held in the ORD conference room and lasted from 1400 to 1700 hrs. The salient subjects covered were as follows.

a. TSD's Past & Present Project, Future Intentions. TSD first got into the paranormal field with SRI in summer 72, giving them a few thousand dollars to complete experiments they were then running (evidently largely on their own funds) with SWANN and, a bit later, with GELLER. It wasn't a controlled 'project' per se but, rather, a stop-gap measure--the results of which were the recent presentation and film. TSD was sufficiently impressed by those results to invest 50K in a six month SRI project (JAN-JUNE 73), the purpose of which is to examine SWANN in considerably more detail and to see if findings of a nature similar to those in the GELLER experiments result. If they do, TSD will in all likelihood urge some follow-on by themselves, ORD and/or others (e.g., the Natl Sci Foundation) but that is a matter which can be seriously discussed only as the SWANN data begins to come in. TSD won't know the precise nature of the SRI design/intent with SWANN until [redacted] next visit there; while the SRI people have been quite cooperative and willing to accept Agency suggestions as to design and procedures (we are the only sponsor they have as yet, although there have been some indications that minor funds have been provided by the Mind Science Foundation of L. A.), the fact that neither SWANN nor GELLER know of Agency or USG involvement (and would, presumably, resent it) has precluded any direct involvement or close control by TSD. [redacted] will send ORD a copy of the current project. TSD has not as yet addressed itself seriously to the question of practical or immediate CS operational applications of the purported phenomena.

b. TSD Impressions of SRI and GELLER-SWANN. TSD has no reason to doubt the motivation or credentials of SRI management and researchers and, on balance, believe that they have conducted themselves and the experiments with decent objectivity. SRI management was highly skeptical and reluctant to get involved at the outset but now most of them are 'believers'--even though they still fear the possibility of a hoax and are reluctant to become publicly identified with the experiments; for this reason they have thus far refused to let PUTHOFF and TARG publish any of their data. Nonetheless, the latter two and possibly other SRI officials as well now believe that they are on ^{THE} to a scientific breakthrough of the century--and are understandably eager to keep control over the Subjects and the experiments so that they won't be aced-out of the eventual credit. SRI's initial proposal to TSD (Dec 72) was for a one year project totalling [redacted] for exhaustive testing of both GELLER & SWANN and research into transferability/trainability of the phenomena); TSD could underwrite only the [redacted] for the phenomenological testing of SWANN (with some hopes of medical/behavioral testing as well) and told SRI that they could, naturally, try to interest other parties in the balance of their proposal. SRI has sent the proposal to NIH, ARPA, NSA, DOD (and possibly others) but, while considerable interest has been expressed, there are no other takers as yet. SRI is also interested in developing screening techniques to identify people with paranormal capacities but it is not clear to what extent (if at all) this will be addressed in the current project. All they really hope/expect to accomplish by June 73 is validation/verification of the fact that there are, indeed, phenomena worthy of our study; beyond that, as to whether SRI has theoretical physicists or others, for instance, who could actually get at the roots of the phenomena, TSD does not know but seems inclined to doubt it.

(1) GELLER: [redacted] met him once and only briefly and by accident; G struck him as a quite 'normal' person in superficial terms--though obviously intense and alert. Though he doesn't talk much about himself or try to articulate his feelings/perceptions about his 'powers', some limited background data of unknown reliability has emerged: G

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states that he first became aware of his powers at about the age of five--when he began noticing that perceptions/feelings/abilities common for him were weird/frightening/offensive to his playmates; responding like a true social animal, he began to repress the powers as a trade-off for peer-group acceptance--though he still used them sporadically and states that they contributed to his rather high academic performance; while in the Israeli army he began doing barracks tricks for his friends and finally developed a full magician's routine and he now states that he went into the stage-magic business since it offered him a socially acceptable way of using his gifts (he doesn't care whether his audience views his work as trickery or supernatural and admits that he uses some of both in his professional routine).

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Though not communicative, G is generally pleasant and cooperative (at least, as long as he is being paid adequately); he had one bad brush with Mr LAWRENCE of ARPA whom he perceived (perhaps not without reason) as being hostile--but otherwise he hasn't been unduly temperamental. He is now in New York (for how long and for what reason was not clear) and has no further contractual relationship with SRI at this time, although there is no reason to doubt that he'd accept one if the money was forthcoming. While SRI clearly views him as their property and want to be associated with any further use of him, we have no way of knowing what G feels in this respect. TSD believes, however, as did apparently the others present, that it would be unwise and unfair of us to try to finesse SRI out of the picture at this time; at the very least that would jeopardize their current contract with SRI--and it may well be that G wouldn't cooperate without SRI's blessing.

(2) SWANN: Though quite a bit less 'talented' than G (both in the range and intensity and predictability of phenomena) S is easier to work with, is more articulate and perceptive about his powers and, apparently, truly wants to understand them. During the 6 months SRI intends to test him on some of G's 'tricks' as well as further investigate his own; they will also hopefully examine the possibilities of training/enhancing his powers and at least make a stab at trying to determine what is going on during the phenomena (e. g., EEG, electromagnetic, etc); finally, they hope to do some basic medical examinations of him. S is living in California for the 6 months and is fully at SRI's disposal. Again, SRI hopes to sew S up as their property but we have no inkling as to S's views on the matter--or whether he would be willing to cooperate with USG.

c. Possible ORD Involvement/Contribution. TSD stated that they would welcome ORD involvement; should the current tests bear-out the earlier findings, thus establishing beyond reasonable doubt that there IS something worth study, there would obviously be more than enough for all of us (and others) to do--much of it well-beyond TSD's legitimate charter and interests. It was generally agreed that ~~it~~ it was too late to make any basic adjustments to TSD's current SRI contract--although it was also agreed that to the extent these and subsequent discussions uncovered possibly fruitful avenues of approach TSD would pass them on to SRI for whatever modifications might be feasible. Basically, it was felt, we should now address ourselves to the fundamental questions/issues which would be essential to any sound follow-on project should the current project live up to expectations. If it does not (i. e., if the SWANN evidence is inconclusive or negative) it is quite unlikely that TSD will continue in any guise. But if there is to be a continuation TSD and ORD should fashion it jointly and, in order for momentum (and the Subjects) not to be lost, the preparatory work should be completed by April or so. While there seemed to be general acceptance of the rough delineation between the TSD and ORD roles (i. e., 'applied' vs 'basic' research), it was agreed that another meeting between the two units should be held before we consider getting the necessary in-put from other Agency elements--though, in principle, it was agreed that that would be an essential step as long as it was handled in a sufficiently low-key and unbureaucratic manner. NOTE: [REDACTED] will be out of town during the week of 5 Feb and, after the meeting, it was tentatively agreed that the next TSD/ORD meeting would be at 1400 hrs on Friday, 16 February, in the ORD conference room. The TSD representatives strongly urged that one or two ORD representatives accompany Mr KRESS the next time he visits SRI in order to get a feel for the institute, the people and the way things are being handled.

d. Other Matters. There was much anecdotal exchange about SWANN & GELLER and considerable interesting though inconclusive speculation on the phenom na but the only other substantive matters/suggestions which seem worthy of note were as follows. It was generally agreed that there was no profit in becoming involved with the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] circle or the nebulous groups/foundations in that milieu; TSD mentioned

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that, in any case, it would be impossible to get clearance to deal with [redacted] On the other hand, it was recognized that later study to determine the critical variables associated with the 'psi' capability would require a much broader subject-population; but it was felt that there would be number of ways of dealing with this problem (highly selective advertising, reliance on the extensive card-files SRI is now creating). [redacted] suggested that GELLER and SWANN themselves could be our 'spotters' since it isn't illogical to assume that they can recognize others with the capability--and would probably be, if willing, adept at training those with the innate ability. [redacted] also suggested that, if possible, some of the SWANN experiments (e.g., the thermal ones) be designed for simultaneous, multi-faceted testing of thermal instruments working on different principles; TSD will pass the suggestion to SRI. They will also pass to SRI Dr KASSLER's suggestion that SWANN be tested for extraordinary visual/audio acuity.

3. Reflections. Since, as matters now stand, apparently nothing more is to be done with GELLER and since we can ill afford to ignore the powers which he allegedly has and which SWANN does not share, the following possibility might be explored. Telling SRI (sincerely, by the way) that we have no intention of easing them out and that they will have full access to the data and first option re publication, we persuade them to use their good offices with GELLER in the following manner. They tell him that, in order to get the kind of money necessary for prolonged research, they showed their data and film on a highly selective basis to officials in the USG. While all expressed interest (and many incredulity) only one group had both the vision and the courage and the means to pursue the matter--and they urge GELLER to at least listen to the proposition they wish to make. If he asks who they represent SRI finesses the matter by telling him that the representatives, themselves, would rather explain their status. (NOTE: Alternatively, with appropriate backstopping, we could pass ourselves off as NIH officials--see below) SRI then provides the introduction to GELLER and we try to convince him to accept a contract as our consultant for a two or three month period--renewable if both parties concur. If we don't pose as NIH officials and if he insists on knowing who we are, we tell him--but only after enough low-key and sympathetic exposure to permit him, at least, to judge us objectively. If we pose as NIH, the rationale for our interest is simple--straight basic research. If we drop cover, the rationale is simply that, in addition to our scientific interest in understanding the phenomena, we are concerned about the potentialities for its use in the wrong hands and against the interests of humanity as a whole; we have a defensive responsibility in that regard and solicit his help in meeting it. In other words, we virtually level with him. As matters now stand we have little to lose and, handled adeptly, we might get a reasonably cooperative response. If so, we arrange for him to be ensconced in an NIH clinic (under alias if he prefers) and ensure that the conditions (privacy, security, yet freedom of movement for G who will live and sleep there but be free to leave outside 'office' hours) are optimum from his and our points of view. We then conduct the experiments designed for him and have him examined by an array of NIH specialists. In this context, while we probably have to keep the regimen as unthreatening and unpainful as possible, it would be of great value if we could obtain blood/metabolic/other indices both when he is 'high' (performing well) and when he is in a normal state. If consistent traces lead to biochemical suggestions, the whole matter of both identification and enhancement in others (drug-wise for example) might be short-circuited. All of us experience in less dramatic ways 'on' and 'off' states--with minor cycles being measured in hours or days and major ones measured sometimes in years. When we are 'on' we 'click', feel 'fit', are on top of things and we are perceived by others as being 'effective', 'dynamic', 'magnetic', etc. It seems reasonable to assume that similar or analogous cycles are operative in the 'psi' arena--and that (as with us) the underlying causes are physical/chemical, as well as environmental and psychological.

4. Suggestions. That the group (TSD/ORD) meet again at 1400 hrs on 16 February and be prepared to consider at least the following topics:

- a. the respective TSD/ORD functions and goals in the proposed joint effort;
- b. feasibility of the para 3 (or another) approach to SRI and GELLER;
- c. specific research and preparation essential for any post-June 73 follow-on;
- d. advisability and modes of obtaining other Agency in-put (see Attachment).

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