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MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

SUBJECT: Grill Flame

6 August 1979

1. The Scientific Evaluation Committee decided to issue this interim report in order to highlight an emerging recommendation, which should get immediate attention in order to avoid additional time delays and costs.
2. Following our initial review of RV experiments, especially those performed in accordance with the SRI protocol and procedures, it is our conclusion that existing experimental practices are not likely to enhance the credibility in the RV process, nor are they likely to establish the existence of the very phenomena.
3. The currently planned AMSAA proposal has recognized many of the weaknesses in the existing RV protocols and has taken important steps to affect constructive changes. AMSAA has especially recognized the basic problems associated with the judging process, and they have proposed procedures which tend to attack human frailties and reduce their impact on the final outcome. However, it is our opinion, that probably because of the pressure of time and resources, they have not gone far enough to provide an unambiguous judging methodology.
4. We recommend that AMSAA be tasked to address the issue of an RV experiment that approaches, as far as possible, "viewing" experiments which can be judged by humans, hopefully in a mechanistic way, i. e., filling in blocks on an answer sheet responsive to "yes" or "no" type of answers. It may be useful to do this work in addition to the type of experiments already planned, rather than in complete replacement thereof. What we recommend can be approached by picking targets that are simple and in such contrast to their surroundings that no imagination is needed to ascertain a "match", to what AMSAA calls an "essence" or "concept". This, of course, would mean that the AMSAA's target pool must include targets that are simple, relatively unambiguous and well defined by a minimum of descriptors such as shape, smell, size, function, etc. (Since relatively simple scenes are alleged to offend the sensibilities of the viewers, we should then be prepared to grudgingly increase the complexity until the viewers appear to be satisfied.)

CLASSIFIED BY: HQDA-Msg
(DAMI-ISH, dtd 7 Jul 79)
 REVIEW ON: 7 July 1999

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DAMA-ZD 3-79
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5. We realize that adapting experimental modifications to seriously reduce the uncertainties in the judging process will slow down the current rate of effort and may also increase costs, however, we feel that in the long run this is more than justified if the goal is to conduct an RV experiment which benefits to the maximum extent from the perceived faults and doubts of previous work, and which could form the basis for building a disciplined data base in this area.



MANFRED GALE
Chairman
Grill Flame, Scientific
Evaluation Committee

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