

Army Criticizes Voice Analyzers As Lie Detectors

By William Claiborne

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The Army Land Warfare Laboratory has flunked a new lie-detecting device that is supposed to measure tiny,

giveaway modulations in the human voice when a lie is told.

In a recently declassified report released yesterday by Rep. Harold V. Froehlich (R-Wis.), the Army was sharply critical of "voice analyzers" that are currently in use by more than 500 police agencies and private organizations here and abroad.

The Army itself owns at least three of the \$3,700 machines, according to Dektor Counterintelligence and Security Inc., of Springfield, Va., the major manufacturer.

The study indicated a "clear inferiority of voice analysis ... not only to the polygraph, but also to judgments made on the basis of simply observing subjects' behavior."

Voice analyzers attempt to measure stress in the voice, while polygraphs measure such physiological symptoms as perspiration and heartbeat.

When the voice analyzer was introduced about two years ago, civil libertarians warned against a device that purportedly could establish the veracity of statements without the knowledge or consent of the subject.

The promoters of the Psychological Stress Evaluator (PSE) even suggested that the truthfulness of statements made in televised speeches by politicians could be established.

Moreover, the PSE's inventors claimed, the device could be used long after a person finished speaking, providing his voice had been recorded.

Froehlich said he was still undecided about the validity of the Army's \$37,000 study—conducted by Fordham University psychologist Joseph F. Kubis—but he said he pressured the Army into declassifying the report because of "a host of questions about the surreptitious use of these machines."

"If the Kubis report is correct, well qualified and truthful people could lose job opportunities or jobs because of an inaccurate or unreliable voice analysis completely beyond their control," Froehlich said.

Alan Bell, president of Dektor, yesterday challenged Kubis to a "one-on-one showdown, with polygraph versus PSE," and Kubis as the subject.