

S-2-8

Questions on Personnel Security: NSA

Discussed with [redacted] on 6/17/88. (301) 859-6350

Procedures and Timeframes

STAT

1) Noted the fact that your program has a statutory basis. Do you thing this helps/hinders it in any way?

There are practical aspects to it. They do adhere to DCID 1/14. The statute also provides an "out" in that DCID 1/14 permits intelligence agencies to grant people temporary SCI clearances, and their statute does not. [redacted] thinks that's good, prevents them from possibly granting a temporary SCI and then having to revoke it. The statute also give the NSA Director authority to withdraw a clearance. While he has never had to use this authority (he normally appoints a Board of Appraisal and accepts their recommendation), the fact that he can do so is important. NSA uses this part of the statute to demonstrate to Congress the sensitivity of their work.

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2) Are there any particular differences in your program because of the statutory requirements?

See number 1.

3) Do most of the clearances meet the five month timeframe that NSA considers reasonable?

Vast majority do. Those that don't, and which might skew statistics, are those which have a lot of overseas background checking. Many don't take 5 months.

4) As far as you know, is NSA the only intelligence agency that grants an interim, limited clearance?

As far as he knows. Those who have limited interim clearance (a secret clearance without SCI access) have different badges and can't be i areas with access to gray phones or SCI data. They have had the full lifestyle poly and a psychological examination, and very few have "washed out" afterwards. They use it frequently because it gives them a better chance to compete with private industry. If they couldn't commit, they would lose qualified personnel -- they can't afford to do this.

The staff really don't "waste time" by being there without the clearance. There are classes they have to take as new employees, and they can take these with only a secret. They sometimes get assigned to areas that really need help but wouldn't otherwise get it (e.g. personnel). One new staff member who was cleared quickly, because a parent was an NSA employee, said it would have actually been better to have the Limited Interim Clearance for awhile. As it was, every time she got into her job (with the full clearance), she had to stop for a week of training.

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5) The obvious "pro" to the interim clearance is that you can bring staff on board quickly. Are there any cons?

Only that it is sometimes difficult to find a "clean" work area for LIC staff -- no grey phones, no SCI data, etc. This isn't really a big problem.

6) Looking at Applicant Review Panel and Security close-outs. Does Security get all these applications at the same time the ARP does, and work on them concurrently, or does ARP get them first for a "personnel qualifications" review?

The Applicant Review Panel only gets those cases which have been through security and for which there is some derogatory information. If all the security clearances are fine, the person's paperwork goes back to personnel to decide on final hiring. ARP goes over all components -- medical, security, psychological, etc -- and recommends approval/disapproval.

Impact of Security Issues on Lifestyle/Family Issues

7) Exit-questionnaire data very helpful, and we noted how few of those who left cited 'restrictions imposed by the classified nature of the work.' In general, are any of the most prevalent reasons cited related to the nature of NAPA's review -- i.e. problems with the personnel system?

This question would best be asked of personnel. Ask Duane.

Impact of Involuntary Staff Separation on Agency Security

8) Does any part of your Crisis Intervention Program involve helping with a job search for post-NSA employment? If so, is this done by the agency's own staff, or is this contracted out?

The outplacement staff is a small, overworked one. They had planned that it would be bigger, but when NSA adopted its no-growth policy, the slots were cut. The problem is probably bigger than they even know. They are in the middle of the first five-year reinvestigation cycle. In the next 18 months, as they finish it for all 25,000 people, they will probably find more problems and need more outplacement. } X

9) Is it possible to give any examples of the program's demonstrated success (as cited in NSA's response.)?

Decided not to ask this question.

Agency Views on the Polygraph as a Security Tool

10) Is the polygraph used before or after you do the BI? And what is the rationale for when it is done?

They do it before. If they did it after the SBI, they would be doing the investigation on people who would have "washed out" on an up-front poly. This would be wasteful. The policy is economically correct.

11) In adjudicating polygraph results, do you use the criteria outlined in Attachment C to DCID 1/14? Presuming so, how do you instruct/train staff so they apply them the same way?

There is polygrapher training to help them be consistent. There's a DCI course All adjudicators must go.

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12) We hear people say that agencies handling SCI who routinely use the polygraph are hesitant to use on details/special projects the staff of agencies who don't. Could you comment on this?

"We don't practice this at all." NSA's tact is to actively pursue the polygraph as a requirement for all SCI-cleared people. However, in the meantime, they don't treat non-poly'd people "that way," and he would not "want to go on record as thinking that." In the past, they have been accused of having an overreliance on the poly. Really, what it helps in are lifestyle issues. They don't rely on it as the primary clearance tool for those who pass it. The tool is the full-field investigation, as it should be.

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