



(U) Do We Over-Classify? Are We Sharing Enough Information? ... An Interview with [REDACTED]

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(U//FOUO) [REDACTED] *Chief of SIGINT Policy, Congressional Issues & Intelligence Security (S02L), talks about classification issues, information sharing, and more...*

- (U) What is the most memorable experience you've had during your career?

(U//FOUO) Certainly one of the most memorable would have to be a trip I took to Moscow in 1985 when I was on the staff of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Several of us, including George Tenet (who later became DCI) and Keith Hall (who went on to become Director of the NRO*), were looking into the bugging of the new American embassy in Moscow and the allegations of consorting with the KGB by some of the Marines stationed at the embassy. It was a real eye-opener to the world of U.S. global intelligence operations and Congressional oversight. Seeing things first-hand always provided invaluable perspective into some very complicated issues.

- (U) If you could change one thing at the agency, what would it be?

(U//FOUO) One of the things I worry about is over-classification of information. We certainly have come a long way from the "No Such Agency" days, but I think we are unrealistic at times about what information we try to protect from public disclosure. Make no mistake about it: we have to protect our core secrets, our SIGINT and information assurance sources and methods. But if we continue to insist on classifying information which has already become known to our adversaries or for which disclosure would cause little or no harm to national security, we risk losing control over the really sensitive stuff.

(U//FOUO) The Congressional committees investigating the attacks of September 11, the 9/11 Commission, and the Senate Intelligence Committee have all complained that NSA over-classifies too much information. My worry is that a consensus is building within Congress that they need to take action to deal with this problem. Trust me, we don't want that. We need to address this issue so that the solution is one of our creation and not one that is imposed on us from the outside.

- (U) What is the most exciting project for the future that your organization is currently working on?

(U//FOUO) Information Sharing! This is one of the most important -- if not the most exciting -- things going on right now at NSA and across the Intelligence Community. Particularly since 9/11 the Agency has been under pressure from the Congress and from other community organizations to share more SIGINT in order to help "connect the dots." Some in the community believe that our attitude is "we will tell you what you need." We must get this right!

(U//FOUO) We have to move from a climate of "need to know" to one of "need to share" without compromising SIGINT sources and methods in the process. This is a complicated issue involving statutory requirements, Executive Orders, policy and yes, politics. From the Director on down there is a lot going on now with this issue and, again, we must get this right. If we fail, someone else, whether it's the Congress, DoD* or the DCI*, will fix it for us and we will have to live with the consequences.

- (U) What was your first job at the agency?

(U//FOUO) For all practical purposes I had two "first jobs" at NSA. I joined NSA the first time in 1982 after six years with the U. S. Public Health Service. I worked in the old N2 finance and

manpower organization keeping track of billets and later putting together the Congressional budget books. In 1985 I resigned to join the staff of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence as the budget monitor for all of NSA's programs. I left the committee in 1994 and returned to NSA.

(U//FOUO) My second "first job" at NSA was on the Senate team (Duh!) in the Legislative Affairs Office (LAO). That job afforded me the opportunity to utilize the experience I had gained working on Capitol Hill to help the Agency's senior leaders to develop a successful strategy for dealing with the Congress. That was a particularly challenging and rewarding time in my career.

*(U) Notes:

NRO = National Reconnaissance Office

DoD = Department of Defense

DCI = Director of Central Intelligence

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