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Cryptologic Almanac 50th Anniversary Series

The Effort to Create a Smokefree NSA

(U) Since January 1, 1990, the National Security has been a totally smokefree workplace, but it has not always been like that. From the Agency's beginnings in 1952, work and dining anywhere in the Agency were conducted in a blue haze of tobacco smoke.

(U) The publication in 1964 of the Surgeon General's original report on the harmful impact of smoking on health led to the publication of a set of federal "Guidelines" to control smoking in GSA-operated buildings, but they were merely "recommendations vice directives." In addition, they did not apply to Department of Defense (DOD)-owned facilities, so they were completely ignored by the Agency.

(U) Even though the Surgeon General's report stated that over 33 million nonsmoking Americans had chronic health problems that were exacerbated by tobacco smoke, most smokers and managers felt that environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) was nothing more than a nuisance to nonsmokers.

(b)(3)-P.L. 86-36

(U//FOUO)

(U) The movement towards a smokefree environment in the Agency started on April 13, 1975, when [redacted] then the chief of R242, wrote a letter to the Director, Lieutenant General Allen, suggesting the following actions:

1. A memo to the workforce, from the Director, stating the impact that ETS could have on people with health problems
2. A memo prohibiting smoking in conference rooms
3. A memo or directive establishing nonsmoking areas in the cafeteria and executive dining room

(U) John J. Connelly, the NSA Assistant Director for Personnel and Security (ADPS), responded by saying that the Agency had no authority to prohibit smoking and that it had to rely on common courtesy and the consideration of one's co-workers to solve the problem. "I foresee no Agency directive prohibiting smoking in NSA other than those areas where fumes, volatile agents and chemicals make for possible fire hazards," was Connelly's final conclusion.

(U//FOUO)

(U) As a result of [redacted] persistence, in the spring of 1976 the ADPS concurred in creating a committee to study the problem and make recommendations. The committee,

however, met only once.

(U) On October 14, 1976, the DOD Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Installations and Housing issued a memorandum supporting the implementation of the GSA guidelines in DOD facilities. A month later Louis J. Bonanni, the NSA Deputy Assistant Director for Installations and Logistics, issued a memorandum that "encouraged" supervisors to implement the GSA "guidelines."

(U) A DOD "Instruction" on smoking control was issued on August 18, 1977. This essentially restated the GSA guidelines, but it also contained a paragraph that required an educational program to discourage smoking. The "Instruction" carried authority that the previous "guidelines" had not, and it required some form of implementation by each DOD organization.

(U) On July 31, 1978, the NSA Deputy Director for Management Services (DDM) issued a directive that formally established the authority for the Agency to create an educational program on the harmful effects of tobacco use. It was agreed to have a table outside the cafeteria for the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout in November. The American Lung Association provided two people to man the table on the day of the Smokeout, assisted by a handful of eager Agency employees. This was very successful and provided an additional list of Agency people who were smoke sensitive. The success of this activity led to similar activities for each successive annual Great American Smokeout.

(U//FOUO)

(U) The DDM, Dr. Don Jackson, and [] met on January 11, 1979. After [] presented data that showed the cost to the Agency in terms of dollars and lost productivity due to tobacco usage, Dr. Jackson agreed to the following:

1. Publication of an article by [] in the NSA Newsletter
2. Implementation of a smoking education program
3. A briefing by [] to the Director and his seniors

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(U) As a result of this meeting, [] briefed the Director (Vice Admiral Inman) and his seniors on March 22, 1979. [] presented data that showed that smoking was costing the Agency 151 person-years per year of lost productivity, plus untold thousands of dollars attributable to premature deaths and disabilities, cleaning the air of tobacco smoke, cleaning the facilities of tobacco debris, etc. After the briefing, the Director gave his support to a continuing education program and authorized an NSA Newsletter article for his signature expressing his strong support for the implementation of the DOD Directive.

(U//FOUO)

(U) Second, the NSA Newsletter of March 1979 published an article authored by [] entitled "Tobacco Smoke and Indoor Air Quality."

(U) Third, a task force to develop the education program was formed, and it initiated a five-day (April 23-27) "Smoking Education Program" with video presentations, booths providing data on the harmful effects of tobacco smoke, displays outside of the Friedman Auditorium, and external health experts as speakers. The program was a resounding success and led to the identification of hundreds of people who were suffering from tobacco smoke in their workplace.

(U) During 1980 and 1981, the implementation of the DOD directive took place, but it met with strong opposition in many areas. The December 1980 edition of the Newsletter ran an article by the Director affirming his support for the DOD directive and outlining his suggestions for the managers and workforce to follow. This article stimulated many nonsmokers to start complaining to their supervisors and to insist on getting as much isolation as possible from the tobacco smoke of their colleagues.

(U) In April 1982 the first Agency "Quit Smoking" clinic was conducted under the sponsorship of the Civilian Welfare Fund. Maryellyn Holmes, the Executive Secretary of the CWFC, wrote a memorandum describing the success of this clinic and made an appeal to the chief of M34 to continue the program.

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(U) In November 1982, [redacted] briefed the Director, Lieutenant General Faurer, and his senior managers. At that time [redacted] suggested stronger controls on where smoking could take place and the creation of an ombudsman so that nonsmokers with complaints would have an authoritative person to whom they could appeal.

(U//FOUO)

(U) In February 1983, General Faurer issued a memorandum affirming his support for controlling smoking in the workplace. He also appointed [redacted] as the ombudsman with the title of Agency Smoking Policy Compliance Officer (ASPCO). A Personnel Management Bulletin stated "smoking should not be permitted in work areas shared by smokers and nonsmokers when an accommodation cannot be made."

(U) The Agency regulation on smoking was reissued on October 27, 1983. For the first time it guaranteed a smokefree workplace to persons whom the NSA Medical Director certified as having a medical problem caused or aggravated by tobacco smoke.

(U//FOUO).

(U) During the first week in January of 1985 the ASPCO, [redacted] solicited Agency views on smoking when he polled the Agency workforce via a note that went out with each paycard. Eighty percent of the workforce responded [redacted] found that 81 percent of the respondents were nonsmokers and that 34 percent of the nonsmokers said smoking was currently a problem in their work area. Seventy-five percent said that smoking in the workplace adversely affected their productivity.

(U//FOUO)

(U) A new and much stronger DOD directive on smoking in the workplace was issued on

March 11, 1986. For the first time nonsmoking was established as the norm. Although smoking was not totally banned, it was permitted in common work spaces only if it did not adversely affect nonsmokers. Smoking was still permitted in private offices [redacted] the new ASPCO, also declared that 60 percent of the cafeteria would be a nonsmoking area, that there would be designated smoking and nonsmoking restrooms, and that free smoking cessation clinics would be conducted during working hours.

(U//FOUO)

(U) In November 1986, Whitney Reed, the Assistant Director for Training, banned smoking in the classrooms, corridors, stairwells, restrooms and operational areas of the International Tower Building (ITB), which housed most of the National Cryptologic School. However, smoking was still permitted in private offices and in the vending area of the ITB.

(U//FOUO)

(U) Although the 1986 DOD directive called for educational programs on the health consequences of tobacco smoke, no such program existed at NSA when [redacted] became the NSA Deputy Assistant Director for Training in January 1987. He immediately instituted an educational program, which was incorporated into the orientation course (CY-187) taken by all new Agency employees. This program emphasized the impact of smoking on both smokers and nonsmokers and explained in detail the new Agency smoking restrictions. The program emphasized a person's right to a smokefree workplace. Although things improved, smoking problems continued to exist despite the new regulations and the educational program.

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(U) On October 17, 1988, the new ASPCO [redacted] issued a memorandum prohibiting smoking in the corridors of the Operations One and the Headquarters Buildings due to poor ventilation.

(U//FOUO).

(U) On December 2, 1988, [redacted] briefed the Director, Vice Admiral William Studeman, and his seniors on the problems of smoking in the Agency. The Director approved recommendations made at the briefing despite opposition from a couple of the seniors. On February 21, 1989, Admiral Studeman signed a memorandum stating that as of July 1, 1989,

1. Smoking in common office spaces would be prohibited;
2. Nonsmoking areas in cafeterias would be expanded from 60 to 75 percent;
3. The sale of tobacco products in NSA buildings and facilities would be prohibited;
4. The Agency would become a totally smokefree workplace as of 1 January 1990;
and
5. Free smoking cessation clinics would be available for anyone wishing to take them.

(U) Even though there was an initial effort by a group of smokers to overturn the Director's decision, the policy was implemented with little difficulty.

(U//FOUO)

(U) When the smokers in the Agency finally realized that NSA was really going to go smokefree, there was a flood of applicants for the smoking cessation clinics. Mrs. [redacted] the smoking compliance officer, responded by presenting more clinics herself and by recruiting and training other people to conduct them. This action was a key factor in the relatively smooth transition to a smokefree Agency.

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(U) On June 28, 1990, Dr. Raymond Lenhard, the president of the Maryland Division of the American Cancer Society, presented Admiral Studeman with the ACS Smoke Busters Award for his outstanding actions on behalf of the health and welfare of his workforce.

(U//~~FOUO~~) [John H. O'Hara (CON), S3303, 857-3026s, jhohara@nsa]

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