(U) Senior Executive - What Does It Mean?

FROM: SIGINT Communications
Unknown
Run Date: 10/27/2003

(U) Note: This is the first in a three-part series.

(U) What is a Senior??

(U) You've heard NSA's leadership called "seniors". But do you really know what a senior executive is? How is one selected to be a senior? And do all seniors work as managers? For answers to these questions and more, read on . . .

(U) The Concept

(U//FOUO) Why do we have seniors? The rationale is that the Agency needs a cadre of leaders who have the experience and skills needed to help run the Agency. The Agency works to prepare high-potential candidates from within NSA for these positions, and also seeks qualified personnel from outside the Agency. To help NSA attract and keep talented leaders, seniors are also offered higher pay rates than GS employees.

(U) The Two Kinds of Seniors: Managers (DISES) and Technical Leaders (DISL)

(U//FOUO) Seniors are divided into two categories: managers and technical experts. **Managers** belong to the **Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service (DISES)** , and **technical experts** belong to the **Defense Intelligence Senior Level (DISL)** . While both DISES and DISLs are recognized as Agency leaders, having the two categories gives DISLs the opportunity to remain focused on technical endeavors and not get bogged down with managerial duties. (See related information from NSA On-Line.)

(U//FOUO) Candidates may receive special leadership training to prepare them for these senior positions. For example, the Senior Leadership Candidate Development Program (SLCDP) gives trainees the broad exposure and managerial training they will need to fill DISES positions. Similarly, the Senior Technical Development Program (STDP) helps develop technical skills needed for DISL positions.

(U) How Many Seniors are there in SID, and What Percentage of the SID Workforce Are They?

(C) NSA's current DISES/DISL ceiling is 420. Of the 420, no more than 295 can be DISES. NSA presently has 249 DISES and 151 DISLs (a total of 400). Of these, 82 DISES and 76 DISLs (a total of 158) are in SID. You can contrast this with the SID civilian population of GG15 and below - about 6200 - which means that seniors represent roughly 2.5% of the SID workforce.

(U) Coming in part 2: How Are Seniors Selected and Assigned?

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TOP SECRET // SI / TK // REL TO USA AUS CAN GBR NZL
DERIVED FROM: NSA/CSSM 1-52, DATED 08 JAN 2007 DECLASSIFY ON: 20320108