AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

A CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT FOR NSA INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS

By

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**Proposed Updated NSA Values**

NSA values correlate to those of ODNI, and support intelligent, creative and forward thinking employees to stay ahead of adversaries and ensure the safety and security of our nation. To help employees work through possible dilemmas from mission work conflicts with their consciences, the author proposes explicitly defining shared values that represent ethical ideals. For example, a succinct, yet relatable, values statements may be articulated as follows:

NSA employees strive to continuously improve performance and hold ourselves to the highest standards. We encourage adaptive and forward-thinking ideas to develop new approaches. We protect United States information and information technology. We partner with other federal agencies. We are dedicated to delivering for U.S. decision makers and service members alike. Thus, all dedicated NSAers are committed to three enduring values:

• Integrity: truthful words match our actions and we are accountable to the nation, community, managers and leaders, and fellow employees;

• Competence: we are dedicated and focused professionals who overcome technological challenges and excel in all intelligence-related skills;

• Patriotic Service: we trust and are loyal to the United States and its Constitution, the Intelligence Community and the Agency.

**Proposed NSA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**

I. Vision & Purpose:

a. This Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct sets the expectations that we have for ourselves as NSA Intelligence Professionals. It describes required behaviors as well as those to which we aspire.

b. It is in keeping with ODNI’s Principles of Professional Ethics for the Intelligence Community: Stewardship, Excellence and Diversity.

c. This Code will shore up internal mechanisms for airing concerns. It will help NSA employees work through possible ethical dilemmas regarding missions or capabilities.

d. It will provide ‘big picture’ transparency. Articulating this code will improve buy in, group cohesion and camaraderie.

II. Persons to Whom Code Applies

a. This Code applies to all civilian employees, interns and military personnel of NSA.

III. Values that support Code

This Code is our commitment that our everyday behavior at work will reflect shared values of Integrity, Competence and Patriotic Service.

a. Integrity means that we uphold the highest standards. We always speak the truth. We commit to continually improving our skills and sharing our knowledge to increase our contributions to mission.

b. Competence means that we develop the related abilities, commitments, knowledge and skills to act effectively in any job or situation.

c. Patriotic Service means that we are dedicated to the mission and are very responsive to customers’ needs. We always act in accordance with U.S. laws.

IV. Aspirational and mandatory behaviors

a. Integrity: Aspirational behaviors

i. We will do what is best for the mission while taking care of our health and well-being.

ii. We will follow-through with commitments and always do what we say.

b. Integrity: Mandatory behaviors

i. We will speak and seek the truth in all workplace situations.

ii. We will solve problems and challenges in the correct way.

c. Competence: Aspirational behaviors

i. We will continually learn and broaden our skills.

ii. We will seek and perform higher level roles with broader mission impact.

d. Competence: Mandatory behaviors

i. We will perform each job to the best of our ability.

ii. We will seek information and actively learn skills needed to perform well.

e. Patriotic Service: Aspirational behaviors

i. We will make decisions that are best for the U.S. and its taxpayers.

ii. We will embrace transparency to the fullest extent possible.

f. Patriotic Service Mandatory behaviors

i. We will always act in a lawful manner.

ii. We will always act in ways that earn the public trust

Strengths:

Ethics/ COC- Ethics contained very important and relevant principles.

The COC is well defined, specific, and even gives rationalization for each of its principles (Gives employees a clean purpose and improves moral...).

Weaknesses:

Ethics/COC - This segment of information isn’t as readily available. It required some digging around to find. Also, this is only what is proposed and it’s unclear if it is official or not as it is but a proposal.

NSA website: “What we do”. May 3, 2016

NSA/CSS:

* Saves lives
* Defends vital networks
* Advances U.S. goals and alliances
* Protects privacy rights
* Is a unique asset

We are well-positioned to carry out our missions because NSA is both a member of the Defense Department and an Intelligence Community agency.

U.S. leaders, policymakers, war fighters, law enforcement agencies and our Intelligence Community partners face some of the gravest national security challenges in U.S. history.

To overcome the very real threats to our country, national decision makers:

* Need to know what our adversaries are doing and what their capabilities are so they can make decisions and plans, and execute policies and operations;
* Need to be able to communicate and exchange information securely, so that our adversaries can't undermine our plans;
* Must be able to outmaneuver those who would do us harm in cyberspace.

NSA is the world leader in cryptology - the art and science of making and breaking codes.

It is this expertise- from our people and technology- that allows us to accomplish the goals of discovering adversaries' secrets, protecting U.S. secrets, and outmaneuvering our adversaries in cyberspace while at the same time protecting the privacy rights of the American people.

Strengths:

What we do – Recent and relevant information. Readily available on their official website.

Backups it’s claims for cryptographic security. It’s the country’s leader if not the world’s.

Weaknesses:

What we do - Has a lot of vague guidelines/policies for both itself and associated agencies.

No mention on ethical principles or dicision making, only mentions agenda.

(For evaluating these two documents, if appears to us that it really isn’t so much the guidelines and principles themselves. It’s mostly in the execution that could be considered at fault).