



(U//FOUO) Joining S2: An Interview with Cindy Farkus

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A SIDtoday interview with **Cindy Farkus**, recently appointed as SID's Assistant Deputy Director for Analysis and Production (S2) (U//FOUO)

- (U) You've returned recently from an assignment abroad (as SUSLO Ottawa)... Did that tour give you any new insights into how the SIGINT System operates? Did you take away any "lessons learned" that can be applied here at NSA?

(U//FOUO) During my two years in Ottawa (and in my previous tour at MRSOC, too) I saw that those who work in other places find NSA/CSS Headquarters a huge and overwhelming place to deal with! It's hard for them to know where to go for a point of contact. We need to remember that as we progress with mission alignment, the NSA/CSS build-out, and as we transform to operate in a network-centric manner, everyone must be able to easily find the right collaborators elsewhere in the world.

- (U) What do you see as the highest priority tasks for you to work as the new Assistant Deputy Director for A&P?

(U//FOUO) First and foremost, mission alignment -- a huge undertaking. We need to work toward a common infrastructure, transition of people, use of buildings, hiring issues, tapping into resources locally... there are so many aspects. Governance is another issue. Representatives in the field will need to think of themselves as part of a global system rather than an independent operation. There will be a lot of change at the Agency for many years to come. While we collaborate more and more, it will be very important that everyone "play position" and stay in constant communication -- This principle applies within NSA/CSS, with our international partners, and across the Intelligence Community.

(U//FOUO) Collaboration with other intelligence organizations and industry will be another area of focus. Within the IC, NSA has by far the most extensive interaction with foreign partners, and we can help other IC agencies see the benefits of that. It was a real eye-opener for the State Department personnel in Ottawa to see how well we interact with the Canadians.

(U//FOUO) Coupled with that is cultural transformation, which is hard enough on its own. At the same time, we must continue our current operations at full speed, providing cryptologic support, products and services that are vital to protecting our nation and our allies, as we make changes to our structure and develop tools and processes to remain relevant in the future. Other big pieces of the cultural transformation are mission blending -- melding our offense and defense capabilities -- and the role we will play in the CNO world. We don't have an exact picture of where we'll end up, and I don't think we ever will. I'm reminded of a golf tournament I watched recently that was played in the fog. Because the players couldn't see the flagpole, they hit the ball in its general direction, getting closer with each stroke. That's what we need to do.

(U//FOUO) Last but not least, I'll work on taking care of the work force by pushing for a better work environment and getting the tools needed to be successful in the net-centric environment of the future.

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

(S//SI) I was stationed here in 1977 as a Russian linguist on my first assignment in the Air Force working the Soviet Conventional Forces target. Although updating and maintaining order of battle information wasn't the most exciting job, it whet my appetite for the intelligence business. I came back in 1983 as a civilian after my graduation from the University of Maryland Baltimore

County and continued to work Soviet targets.

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

(S//SI) Many things spring to mind -- from operational and leadership points of view. From an operational viewpoint during tours in NSOC, the Chernobyl accident in 1986 (as a Soviet Network Activity Posture analyst) and the O'Grady shoot-down and rescue in 1995 (as an A Senior Group Coordinator) top the list. For Chernobyl, a bunch of communications activated in the Kiev Military District didn't fit any of the profiles of normal exercise activity, so we suspected something different was going on. A few days later, we became aware of the accident and understood that the unusual activity represented the forces in place to assist in the clean up operations. During the O'Grady shoot-down and rescue, it was fascinating to be a part of the system responding to track, locate and extract O'Grady.

(S//SI) From the leadership point of view, I've always enjoyed starting new things: an environmental analysis cell targeting Soviet theatre forces, a group-level advanced reporting staff, and the initial stand-up of the Medina RSOC. The challenges, opportunities and character-building experiences are hard to capture in words, but in each case teamwork and communications were a critical part of the foundation.

(U//FOUO) And I can't miss the opportunity to talk about being chosen as Lt Gen Hayden's executive assistant. I was serving at the MRSOC as Chief of Staff while Gen Hayden was the Commander of the Air Intelligence Agency [at nearby Kelly AFB], and I had some interaction with him at that time. When I was due to PCS back to Fort Meade, I applied for the exec job. I had a phone interview with him (where the line dropped out at least once) - followed by a face-to-face meeting at NSA/CSS HQ. I was thrilled (and a bit nervous) to be selected -- and worked with him for 3+ years until my assignment to Ottawa. Being part of the "100 Days of Change" and transformational initiatives, such as the hiring of outside expertise, dealings with Congress and media, working with elements of the Intelligence Community, Foreign Partners, industry and academia; institution of corporate business process -- just to name a few -- gave me an appreciation and understanding of the Agency from a very different vantage point. I hope to be able to put some of the knowledge I've gained to good use on behalf of the A&P workforce across the extended enterprise.

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

(U//FOUO) I'd like to see us adopt a mindset and an understanding that change is constant -- and adapt to the idea that that it's okay to give up authority and take responsibility. Culture change is necessary for us to embrace the concept of mission blending and other new ways of doing business.

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