



WHISTLEBLOWER COMMENTS

DI-11-0487 - Comments about the report i.e. the report from the SAF to the OSC, under the summary of evidence:

An Achilles' heel is a deadly weakness in spite of overall strength, that can actually or potentially lead to downfall. While the mythological origin refers to a physical vulnerability, metaphorical references to other attributes or qualities that can lead to downfall are common.

Schriever AFB is the home of the 50th Space Wing of the Air Force Space Command, and this base provides command and control for over 170 Department of Defense warning, navigational, and communications satellites. Also housed at Schriever AFB are the Missile Defense Integration and Operations Center and the Space Innovation & Development Center. Schriever AFB is the main control point for the Global Positioning System (GPS).

The following critical missions are supported by the heat rejection capability of the seven cooling towers i.e. in support of national security and defense. The critical missions at Schriever AFB:

The 2d Space Operations Squadron (2 SOPS) is a unit of the United States Air Force at Schriever Air Force Base, Colorado. Its mission is to manage the Navstar Global Positioning System satellite constellation for global navigation, time transfer, and nuclear detonation detection.

The squadron performs the command and control mission for the Global Positioning System satellite constellation

The 2nd SOPS has three missions: global navigation, time transfer and nuclear detection. Uses of GPS include precise timing for financial transactions, search and rescue, communications, farming, recreation and both military and commercial aviation.

Precise time is crucial to a variety of economic activities around the world. Communication systems, electrical power grids, and financial networks all rely on precision timing for synchronization and operational efficiency. The free availability of GPS time has enabled cost savings for companies that depend on precise time and has led to significant advances in capability

Major investment banks use GPS to synchronize their network computers located around the world.

Power companies and utilities have fundamental requirements for time and frequency to enable efficient power transmission and distribution.

4th Space Operations Squadron (4 SOPS) is a satellite operations unit located at Schriever AFB, Colorado. 4 SOPS controls the Milstar communication satellite constellation.

The mission of 4th SOPS is to ensure the Milstar system provides survivable, enduring, critical essential command and control communications through all levels of conflict for the president, the Secretary of Defense, and war fighting combatant commanders worldwide. 4th SOPS operates the \$31 billion Milstar system executing communications management, satellite command and control, and ground segment maintenance for the Milstar constellation. 4th SOPS' motto "Linking the Forces" reflects Milstar's responsibility to enhance the nation's secure communications capability for today's military forces

A key feature of the Milstar system is the use of interoperable terminals by the warfighters of the U.S. Armed Forces. For example, sea-based terminals can be used to upload data onto cruise missiles carried aboard submarines and guided missile destroyers in real time. Land-based terminals provide communications and data exchange for the mobile, ground-based warfighter. The Air Force has the primary responsibility for managing the \$6 billion Milstar program which is acquired and sustained by the MILSATCOM Systems Directorate (SMC/MC).

The Missile Defense Agency (MDA) is a research, development, and acquisition agency within the Department of Defense. Missile Defense Integration and Operations Center: The Integration and Operations Center supports research and development, agency operations, test and evaluation, and operational training for missile defense capabilities.

Upon a review of the report, it seems that a number of inconsistencies were noted and the following comments are provided:

Page 7- Each cooling tower has a fan with six blades approximately five to six feet in length.

Each cooling tower has a fan with five blades and when measured are actually 63 3/4 inches in length from the tip of the fan blade to the end of the connecting hub of the fan blade i.e. that is when measured from one end of the fan blade to the other end of the fan blade. The other set of fan blades when measured are actually 63 1/4 inches in length from the tip of fan blade to the end of the connecting hub of the fan blade. Both sets are provided by Hudson Products Corp. under the product name of Tuf-Lite Fans. The company that manufactures the fan blades is located in Sugarland Texas

Page 7- The fan is mounted atop a right angle gear box which is powered by a six foot drive shaft with flexible disc couplings attached to an induction motor.

The fan is mounted atop a right angle gear box which is powered by a five and one half foot drive shaft (i.e. when the length of the drive shaft is actually measured) with flexible disc couplings attached to an induction motor.

Page 9- Mr. Paulson indicated that employees are required to do a weekly check of the oil levels.

It seems that this requirement i.e. weekly requirement that Mr. Paulson indicated is a recent requirement and not all of employees were informed verbally or by email. Presently the employees on duty on the night shift and in order to meet this requirement would have to use flashlights, or an extension cord with a light attached to it. Seemingly and because of safety concerns and the hazards that are located on the roof of the utility plant i.e. protruding pipes, cables and lightning rods with sharpened points, this is not a viable requirement and it seemingly presents an unsafe working condition. Previously one such employee, Harry Angier, was injured while performing/conducting maintenance during the daylight hours on the utility plant roof. Mr. Angier tripped and landed on one of the lightning rods which punctured a hole in his leg. Mr. Angier is presently an employee at Peterson AFB.

Page 26- Mr. Paulson stated - I know at least once a shift they're on the roof checking.

Again, it seems in the previous statement made by Mr. Paulson, this would result in an unsafe working condition esp. for the employees on duty during the night shift.

Other Matters - page 32

In his statement (as well as earlier complaints and correspondence with Schriever AFB officials), Mr. Anderson identified non-compliance with a mandatory reporting requirement regarding reduced redundancy of mission - critical utility systems. Indeed, the apparent failure to provide "Yellow Time" reports to AFSPC constitutes a potential violation of AFSPCI 32 -1010, paragraphs 5.2.21 and 5.2.2.2. this is significant because the cooling towers conduct a mission - critical function. While there were no outages associated with the seven cooling towers that directly resulted in a loss of mission capability , there was a clear loss of utility redundancy. AFSPC cannot fix or address a problem if it is not notified of the outages or extended downtimes associated with the cooling towers.

Ironically; The following is an email reply from one of the 50 CES/CC i.e. the squadron commanders:

-----Original Message-----

From: Clairmont, Daniel J LtCol USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CC
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2009 2:55 PM
To: ANDERSON, KEITH D WG-11 USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CE0IP
Cc: Liberman, Edward J Maj USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CEO; BLAYLOCK, DENNIS V WS-14 USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CEO; Milne, David J MSgt USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CEOFU; OGALLAGHER, EDWARD M CIV USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CE-2; Crist, Derek E SMSgt USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CEM
Subject: RE: Information conveyed to the utcc operators.

Mr Anderson,

Thank you for pointing this out. I read this regulation and it does give me the impression that AFSPC wants to be informed about everything even if there is no mission impact. Personally, I do not feel the level of reporting described in the regulation is value added, however, it is a regulation so we need to address it with AFSPC and find out their intent. They recently sent out a clarifying memorandum for this AFSPCI and are in the process of rewriting the entire document. However, the fact that we have the records is a good thing. Are they in a database or electronic format which would simplify trend analysis (the AFSPCI's stated purpose for collecting the information)?

BTW, I tried to go to the AFSPC publications website where the AFSPCI says the Form 7 is available to see what it looked like and it appears the form has been discontinued or no longer available electronically.

Thanks again for pointing this out. We will touch base with AFSPC.

// signed //

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(It seems based on Lt. Col Clairmont's statement; Personally, I do not feel the level of reporting described in the regulation is value added , that Lt. Col Clairmont tried to minimize the damage. (The on-going damage with the cooling towers). A result/outcome of this particular email communication, I was issued a letter of counseling. My supervisor at the time i.e. Mr. Paulson was directed by Major Edward Liberman (50 CES/Operations Flight Chief) to issue the letter of counseling. Major Liberman reported to Lt. Col Clairmont during that time frame.

11 months later, in several emails from Lt. Col Clairmont:

(Perhaps this is part of the reason the on-going damage to the cooling towers was not reported IAW AFSPCI 32-1010 and quite possibly ignored)?

-----Original Message-----

From: Clairmont, Daniel J LtCol USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CC
Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 2010 5:31 PM
To: Anderson, Keith D Civ USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CEOIP
Cc: Blaylock, Dennis V Civ USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CEO; O'Gallagher, Edward M Civ USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CE-2; Sipe, Christopher W Maj USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CEO;
Milne, David J MSgt USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CEOFU; Knight, Eric T MSgt USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CEOFH
Subject: RE: utility outage reporting procedures

Thanks. I've discussed with Maj Sipe. What we need to do is nail down our processes. However, I do want to take a minute to clarify your perception of

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how these forms are used. I've talked with AFSPC about it and they simply compile the data and brief it internally. It doesn't actually go anywhere, certainly not to NORAD, and barring any glaring issues, they don't take any action based on the data. If there were any significant issues we would be contacting them immediately and not waiting for them compile data in a quarterly meeting. It's possible that they used to do more with it but not any longer.

As far as using it for funding or other support, if there were an emergency or some support required I guarantee I would be on the phone with the appropriate senior leaders in the wing and AFSPC and we would get the support with or without a form. That's not to say we shouldn't do them. There's an AFSPCI that requires them and we need to comply. However, if in fact we missed submitting one over a year and half ago, it's not actually something that needs to be corrected. The people that get the form are not going to do anything with it. We only need to ensure the issue is documented and considered in our management of the plant. What may need tweaking is the procedure we use to ensure they are submitted.

The AFSPCI gives me the latitude to define more specific guidance on when we submit the reports and what is considered a "Lack of redundancy." Major Sipe is working with engineering to ensure we capture the critical areas and document it clearly so we are all on the same page. Realistically it may not be finished until after the ORI but it will get done so the process is clear to everyone.

Additionally, we've discussed the incident you mentioned with the gas line. I've asked Maj Sipe to provide me the details on the incident and I'll determine if a report of survey is warranted.

What I would ask from you is that you not wait a year and a half to report something. Frankly, with all the things that I worry about every day, something that happened a year and a half ago which, apparently, was an isolated incident and no longer a problem, is not something I will put a lot of resources into unless the issue is significant. I highly recommend you don't either. We can't turn back the clock. We should focus on the future, learn from mistakes, and implement practices that prevent oversights in the future. Should something else happen, we then need to report it in a timely fashion so we can take action on it.

We still owe you some feedback but hopefully this helps you understand where we are on the issues you raised. If you have any other questions or would like to discuss in more detail, I would be more than happy to sit with you and your supervisors to try and clear up any confusion. Thanks for letting us work this.

// signed //
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In an effort to convey the seriousness of the matter is one of my emails to Lt. Col Clairmont:

-----Original Message-----

From: Anderson, Keith D Civ USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CE0IP
Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 2010 8:58 AM
To: Clairmont, Daniel J LtCol USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CC
Cc: Anderson, Keith D Civ USAF AFSPC 50 CES/CE0IP
Subject: FW: utility outage reporting procedures

Lt. Col Clairmont:

It appears that all mission-impairing utility outage are reported to AFSPC/MSE who apprises AFSPC, North American Aerospace Defense Command, and other relevant staff on the current status of critical AFSPC utilities as required.

This data is used to track trends in the command to ensure our critical utility availability meets or exceeds the availability requirements established by HQ AFSPC Director of Air and Space Operations (XO).

Outage reporting provides installations a mechanism to request urgent financial, technical, or personal assistance to resolve an outage.

My concern's are strictly mission related

Mr. Anderson

Under the Corrective Action portion of the report, page 33: In addition, all plant employees were provided annual lockout/tagout training in August 2011, possibly as a result of the interview inquiries.

It seems that the last occurrence of the annual lockout / tagout training was conducted during February 2010. Attachment one is provided for review. The original is contained within the utility plant's lock out/tagout binder.

Page 33- There are no plans to install and monitor oil level switches which will therefore remain an item for the Plant operators to routinely check off manually.

Email dated March 13, 2012: Subject; Oil Level Switches from TSgt Muehlhausen states that oil switches will be installed on the cooling tower gear drives by March 16, 2012. (Attachment two is a copy of the email provided for review).

Page 33 - As a result of the investigation, 50 CES is now making proper outage reports as required under AFSPCI32-1010.

Sadly, why does it seem that it takes an investigation esp. in reference to national security, the agency's mission and the taxpayer i.e. in the defense of this nation?

One issue that was seemingly avoided and not included in the report was the apparent damaged metal grates (fan blade covers) openings that appeared to be created by disengaged fan blades above several of the cooling towers. None of the employees interviewed seemed to be concerned with the openings in the metal grates that appeared to have been created by the impact force of the fan blades when the fan blades disengaged from the gear drive connecting hub and the fan blades struck with enough force to damage the metal grates. In mechanics, an impact is a high force or shock over a short period of time when two or more bodies collide. The effect depends critically on the relative velocity of the bodies to one another i.e. the fan blade when disengaged from the connecting hub of the gear drive creates enough force to blow a hole in the stationary circular metal grate. The damage to the metal grates transpired regardless and again it was noted that during the review of the report all of the employees interviewed, none have stated anything about any damage to any metal grates. Why was this fact not annotated in the report? Despite the content of the report the damage to one of the metal grates, an opening that measured two feet by three was quite apparent regardless...The damage was quite evident when actually measured....

Overall and based on the interviewed employee's response and references from the AFSPC/IG investigating officer (IO), the response's come as no surprise esp. from the interviewed employee's. The employee's seemed to deviate from the topic of the on-going damage to the cooling towers to include the responses from the two employee's that represented the Trane Co. During the course of the investigation, it seems that mitigating the damage has been of much more importance and a priority than that of the agency's mission, national security and the taxpayer.

(This is the Achilles' heel, the deadly weakness in spite of overall strength, that can actually or potentially lead to downfall).

March 15, 2012

ATTACHMENT ONE

The following individuals have been briefed on shop procedures, and have viewed the Lock Out Tag Out video, and have read the training slides provided in the Lock Out Tag Out binder.

- Mr. Marcus Abraham [REDACTED] Date 2/21/10 Initial / Refresher
- Mr. Keith Anderson [REDACTED] Date 2/17/10 Initial / Refresher
- Mr. Roy Bergsholm [REDACTED] Date 2/24/10 Initial / Refresher
- Mr. Paul Basedow [REDACTED] Date 12 FEB 10 Initial / Refresher
- Mr. Thomas Day [REDACTED] Date 10 Feb 10 Initial / Refresher
- Mr. Larry Hanks [REDACTED] Date 20100209 Initial / Refresher
- Mr. Thomas Lemon [REDACTED] Date 16 FEB 10 Initial / Refresher
- Mr. Steve Mendoza [REDACTED] Date 9 FEB 10 Initial / Refresher
- Mr. John Paulson [REDACTED] Date 16 Feb 10 Initial / Refresher
- MSgt Eric Knight [REDACTED] Date 9 Feb 10 Initial / Refresher
- MR. Zimri Riddle [REDACTED] Date 9 Feb 10 Initial / Refresher
- Mr. Pete Tornone [REDACTED] Date 12 Feb 10 Initial / Refresher