



NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY
CENTRAL SECURITY SERVICE
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-6000

6 January 2003

Letters to the Editor
The Sun
P.O. Box 1377
Baltimore, MD 21278-0001

Dear Editor,


During my tenure as the Director, NSA, I have made honest, open communication with the public and media a priority. Although much of the work we do is secretive by nature, I believe it is critical that Americans understand NSA works diligently, 24/7, to protect American lives and preserve freedom. Inaccurate, misleading articles such as Ariel Sabar's "NSA Still Hobbled by Power Outages" undermine our efforts.

Mr. Sabar had two points of information: statements from a sales representative alleging that his company assisted NSA with major outages and statements from NSA denying any such outages. In Mr. Sabar's presentation, he chose to ignore NSA's position until half-way through his article, only mentioning the denial as an afterthought. Readers are led to believe that NSA has struggled with major outages over the past two years, when nothing could be further from the truth. Mr. Sabar was clearly told his information was wrong, but he chose to publish it anyway.

I would like to assure the American public that NSA has not had major outages since the one experienced in January 2000, which we fully disclosed to our congressional overseers and the American public. With improvements we have made as a result of lessons learned, NSA has continued to provide uninterrupted intelligence information to America's policymakers and warfighters.

Mr. Sabar's article is a disservice to all the men and women of the NSA.

Sincerely,


MICHAEL V. HAYDEN
Lieutenant General, USAF
Director, NSA



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Dear Editor,

I'm troubled to see that in spite of our upfront communications with your reporter, Ariel Sabar, his article, "NSA still hobbled by power outages," published on December 31, 2002, contains inaccurate information about the National Security Agency and outages.

Mr. Sabar called NSA regarding two alleged computer outages that his source says occurred over the July 4, 2000 and Labor Day, 2002 holidays. We clearly informed Mr. Sabar on the record that his information was inaccurate; NSA had no outages during the times he mentioned. As I explained to Mr. Sabar in our telephone conversation, the last major outage NSA experienced was the January 2000 computer outage (about which we were very public).

NSA has high operating norms, and since January 2000, we have been functioning well within those norms. We are incredibly proud of the improvements we have made to our infrastructure to ensure the problems that occurred in January 2000 will not occur again. Your paper's headline that NSA is "hobbled" by power outages is blatantly wrong and is an insult to the people of this agency.

Mr. Sabar's reporting on this article was unprofessional and amateurish. I encouraged him during our telephone conversation to recheck his facts regarding the accusations of the alleged outages. It is obvious after reading the article he did not do his homework.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith A. Emmel".

JUDITH A. EMMEL
Director
NSA Public Affairs