

# SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS READINESS PLAN (RP)



*FOR INTERNAL SELECTIVE SERVICE USE ONLY*

*DO NOT RELEASE*

**NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONSIDERATIONS DURING DISRUPTIVE EVENTS**

### **1. PURPOSE.**

This appendix outlines conceivable actions which may be taken by various individuals or groups in an attempt to disrupt work at SSS offices. It further provides public affairs guidance which should be followed in these instances.

### **2. BACKGROUND AND ASSUMPTIONS.**

- a. Because reinstatement of the draft will be resisted by some groups or individuals, SSS offices at all levels are susceptible to demonstrations and other disruptive actions by these groups or individuals.
- b. Organizations that have been vocal opponents of registration in peacetime will gain followers if classifications and inductions resume. Alliances will add to their strength. Coalitions of “professional activists,” conscientious objectors, anti-war and religious groups will form, labeling “the draft” as sinister.
- c. Once organized, these groups will launch (or intensify) a concerted public relations effort. There will be a proliferation of underground newspapers, flyers, “counselor” services, workshops, and rallies. They will make special efforts to meet and befriend the media, seeking broad platforms for their causes and complaints.
- d. Past experience indicates picketing and demonstrations will probably take the form of disruptions affecting SSS offices and personnel. Although such demonstrations are usually “peaceful”, it is conceivable that “worst case” situations could include purposeful destruction of equipment and/or files. Violence would most likely result from “outside” radical groups joining anti-war demonstrators. Since the goal of their actions is to call public and media attention to anti-draft points of view, the demonstrators may behave in a manner likely to obtain attention from photographers and TV cameramen in the following ways:
  - (1) Marching.
  - (2) Obstructing entrances (sit down, pray-in, human chain, etc.).
  - (3) Chaining or handcuffing to immobile fixtures.
  - (4) Burning “draft cards” or other facsimiles (since draft cards aren’t being issued, any SSS letter or document would suffice.) Destroying effigies.

- (5) In extreme instances, violence, which could include rock throwing, rampaging, self-immolation, or other destructive behavior. Also, extremists may cause damage to physical facilities by bombing, sabotage, and/or arson – usually when a building is unoccupied.

**3. OBJECTIVES.**

Selective Service must conduct business as usual despite attempted disruptions by hostile groups, and we must continue to accomplish our vital missions. At the same time, visible opposing efforts will automatically generate media and public interest. It is important to serve the public interest, and to be prepared to satisfy the public's right to know what is going on. We must disseminate timely and accurate information. And we must be cohesive in our approach to adversity – we must “speak with one voice”.

**4. CONSIDERATIONS.**

- a. Know the rule regarding access to owned or leased Federal property. You have the right to refuse entrance to any individual or group:
  - (1) who is entering the property during nonworking hours;
  - (2) whose conduct creates a nuisance, blocks building entrance or access, or disrupts service;
  - (3) who is carrying weapons or firearms; and/or,
  - (4) who possesses or is consuming alcohol or drugs.

For additional information, please refer to Federal Property Management Regulations, Title 41, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 102-74, Subpart C, dated November 2005.

- b. Know the civil or military authorities who have the job of protecting you. Establish close liaison with security, police, and fire officials.
- c. Safeguard private information about office personnel. In the wrong hands, such information may result in harassing phone calls, threats, and other unpleasantness.
- d. Examine your existing relationships with local media and community groups. Make sure you establish a climate of cooperation and support. You'll need your neighbors' support when protestors are on the march.
- e. Assess the vulnerability of your office. Take measures to make it more secure.

## APPENDIX 1 TO ANNEX G

- f. Develop a contingency plan to deal with a hostile threat. Include public affairs aspects. Share your plan with everyone in the office. Keep them informed.
- g. Have a contingency plan for the “worst case”. If your office is forced to endure a violent demonstration or other forms of destruction, have a plan to deal with medical emergencies. Have a Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan to quickly resume operations at an alternate facility if it becomes necessary.

### 5. PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROCEDURES.

- a. Prior to any threat of disturbance:
  - (1) Establish rapport with local media. Get to know editors and reporters when there is no pressure of crisis. Familiarity and mutual respect will pay off if your office later becomes a focus of media attention.
  - (2) Coordinate closely with local authorities. Know what procedures to follow should your office receive a threat, or should a demonstration against you be announced. Who do you call? What will they do? Put agreements in writing, if possible.
  - (3) If there is a college or university nearby, chances are that any opposition to Selective Service will be based on the campus or near the campus. If there is an ROTC detachment in residence, the Professor of Military Science (PMS) could probably keep you informed of any student activity that may pose a threat to you. Coordinate early with the PMS and ask for his support.
  - (4) Establish communication with the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) at your hosting or nearby military installation. If your office is located on military property, the Post or Base PAO will be primarily responsible for public affairs considerations and handling of media during a crisis.
  - (5) Get to know the nature of “the opposition”. Read their literature. If there is an opportunity, consider meeting with them privately, one-on-one, to understand their concerns. Such meetings should not be confrontational; they should be informational. They may serve to relieve tensions and reduce the possibility of a public demonstration.

## APPENDIX 1 TO ANNEX G

- b. When there is a threat of a disturbance:
- (1) Determine the nature of the threat: How big a demonstration is planned? What is their stated intent? How imminent? Are media showing early interest?
  - (2) Notify your Region officials (who will, in-turn, keep NHQ informed). Seek assistance. If there is time, ask for a Public Affairs representative to come and help out. Get legal guidance.
  - (3) Notify authorities and request police assistance.
  - (4) If you know media are aware of the threat, identify one person in the office as “spokesperson,” then call contacts at local media. Assure them SSS is doing business as usual. Have a general statement ready which reassures the public and maintains calm. Be prepared to tailor your statement for special situations or in response to special threats.
  - (5) Only comment on SSS business and the functioning of your office. Stay upbeat and positive in your statements. Do not comment on the demonstrators or their plans, philosophies, or activities.
- c. If a disturbance occurs:
- (1) Keep higher SSS officials informed and seek guidance.
  - (2) **Do not, in any way, confront demonstrators.** This is the responsibility of the police and other local officials. Stay inside. Don’t help the demonstrators’ cause by appearing before them. You will only give them a target for a “media opportunity.” Keep the visibility of office operations low during the disturbances. If you are expecting visitors that day, call them and postpone their appointments. Keep office traffic to a minimum.
  - (3) Keep the safety of your personnel and your facility in mind at all times.
  - (4) Be prepared to see even more media show up than you believed existed. You should be prepared to speak with media. Treat all media equally.
    - Have one spokesperson answer all media questions.
    - Have fact sheets about SSS processes as handouts for reporters.

- Speak only about subjects within your purview. **Again, never comment about the philosophies, grievances, or activities of the demonstrators.** Don't give opinions or attempt to explain issues involving national policy. Refer all such media questions to NHQ.
  - Chances are, once a demonstration is underway, issues surfaced by demonstrators won't only be limited to SSS. Once they have established a platform and have media attention, many other issues, i.e., anti-nuke, amnesty for prisoners, etc., may be surfaced. In your conversations with media, comment only on your office's mission in support of Selective Service.
  - Refute any incorrect information about SSS that media may have. If you know the demonstrators are providing media with incorrect or exaggerated information about SSS, set the record straight with any facts pertaining to your office operations, but do so with the attitude that you are sharing facts, not challenging the demonstrators' veracity.
  - Do not get into a public dialogue with protestors and demonstrators. Don't agree to any public debates. It might cause later legal problems and injure the government's case if an SSS official was to appear in a public forum with any individual who may be subject to prosecution for violation of Selective Service law.
  - Document any contacts with media. Make a written memorandum for record of questions asked and answers given as soon as possible after the interview. If possible, obtain each reporter's agreement in advance and tape record any interviews you grant. Share your report with higher SSS officials.
- (5) Keep a positive attitude. Smile and stay calm.
- d. Following a disturbance:
- (1) Prepare an after-action report and submit it through the chain of command. Cover lessons learned and critique performance of your office, the media, and the demonstrators.
  - (2) Monitor media reports and obtain copies or transcripts. Be alert for editorials and letters to the editor. If you see any incorrect

## APPENDIX 1 TO ANNEX G

reporting about Selective Service, call the media responsible and “set the record straight”.

- (3) Review and make appropriate changes to your contingency plan.