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Lieutenant General Kenneth A. Minihan, USAF

1996 - 1999

Lieutenant General Kenneth A. Minihan was born on 31 December 1943 in Pampa, Texas. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Florida State University in 1966, and entered the Air Force that same year as a distinguished graduate of the Florida State University Reserve Officers Training Corps. He received a master's degree in National Security Affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, in 1979 and graduated from the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB), Alabama, in 1984.

Upon receiving his commission in 1966, Lieutenant General Minihan attended the Armed Forces Intelligence Center at Lowry AFB, Colorado, and was then assigned as an intelligence plans officer at Langley AFB, Virginia. In 1969 he became a target intelligence officer and command briefer at Headquarters, 7th Air Force, at Ton Son Nhut Air Base, South Vietnam. In 1970 he was named chief of the Current Intelligence and Presentations Branch for U.S. Southern Command in Panama. This was followed by an assignment to Air Force Headquarters in Washington, D.C., from 1974 to 1978. After completing his studies at Monterey, he served in a number of command positions and senior staff positions. Principal among these were assignments as deputy chief of staff for plans at Headquarters, Electronic Security Command at Kelly AFB, Texas (1987-1989); deputy chief of staff for intelligence at Headquarters, Tactical Air Command, Langley AFB, Virginia (1989-1991); commander, Air Force Intelligence Command again at Kelly AFB (1993); commander Air Intelligence Agency at Kelly AFB (1993-1994); and director of the Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington, D.C. (1995-1996).

In February 1996 Lieutenant General Minihan was appointed Director of NSA. He continued to deal with the need to reduce the size of the Agency in the face of budget cuts mandated by Congress, a task that was also addressed by his two immediate predecessors (Vice Admiral Studeman and Vice Admiral McConnell). These budget cuts came at a time when the Agency was being increasingly challenged by the expanding use of fiber optics to replace microwave

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communications. NSA also was faced with increased use of commercially available encryption devices at the same time that U.S. companies were losing the virtual monopoly they had traditionally enjoyed in the research and development cutting edge communications and encryption technology. To position the Agency to deal with these developments, Lieutenant General Minihan commissioned and championed the development of the National Cryptologic Strategy for the 21st Century. His intent was to put NSA in a position to provide information superiority for the U.S., to ensure dominant battlespace knowledge through the integration of cryptology and joint operations, to enable policy makers to promote stability and thwart aggression through the integration of cryptologic support, to remain a cryptologic leader by sustaining leading edge capability in key technologies, and to transform the cryptologic workforce, processes, and infrastructure to meet emerging challenges. He also saw the need to bring greater cohesion to the two major missions that make up NSA, signals intelligence and information assurance. To put the U.S. government in a better position to deal with threats to information technology, he stood up the Information Operations Technology Center, a joint intelligence community venture colocated with NSA. In 1997, to help ensure that the sacrifices of past cryptologists would not be forgotten, he dedicated the National Vigilance Park.

Lieutenant General Minihan retired from military service following his tour as NSA Director. He remains active in the information security area of private industry, and serves as a national-level consultant on this topic.

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