(U//FOUO) Machine Translation Success Story

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(U//FOUO) We couldn't call this one a "SIGINT Success Story" because it goes so far beyond SIGINT and is an accomplishment not only for NSA but for the entire Intelligence Community.

(S//SI) Curious? Last fall, a representative of our own Senior Language Authority (SLA) learned that the CIA had obtained the latest and best Arabic machine translation software, produced under a 7-year long development contract with a foreign firm. However, such software usually needed to go through a costly and time-consuming code review process before it could be used. The SLA representative pointed out that NSA's Information Assurance (IA) Research Group had developed a capability that makes foreign software safe-and thus could provide a way for NSA to host CIA's new Arabic machine translation securely and quickly.

(S//SI) Our SLA representative then partnered with the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) Foreign Language Committee and the Technical Manager of Language and Speech Exploitation Resources at Ft. Huachuca to identify funding to implement the plan. The NSA Center for Applied Machine Translation (CAMT) worked through the Chief Information Officer and the Research Directorate to create a special turn key secure environment to host the necessary applications, and the new secure environment was approved in mid-March.

(S//SI) The result? NSAnet was able to host CIA's latest Arabic machine translation just as the Middle East situation escalated into war. In March, for example, 11,000+ documents were translated through the CAMT, as compared to the usual 3,000. Users included the USS Carl Vinson, the USS Abraham Lincoln, the USS Mount Whitney, and many other military intelligence units deployed in the Gulf.

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