



(C//SI) Cover/Anonymity: When Mission Requires NSA Association to be Hidden

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(S//SI) Imagine a couple of scenarios. First, a Target of Interest communication network is in the process of being upgraded, and an opportunity to gain access is discovered. To do so requires NSA personnel to operate under non-official cover. Second, the Foreign Affairs Directorate has established a SIGINT relationship with a new Partner. The Partner will allow an in-country technical support facility if the relationship and fact that NSA personnel are operating in country are concealed.

(C) So, how does one go about making NSA personnel look like they actually work for an entity other than NSA? What regulations and policies must be followed? How does one ensure cover/anonymity mechanisms don't conflict with and expose other sensitive activities? What training should be provided to effectively use and maintain a cover? The simple answer to all of these questions is to contact the Special Operational Support (SOS) Office, S3092.

(S//SI) SOS is NSA's Designated Cover Support Office (DCSO). As such, it provides administration of all NSA/CSS cover and sensitive personnel support programs, which include:

- Maintaining compliance with DoD regulations and policy, and coordinating cover plans and operations with the Defense Central Cover Staff and Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD(I));
- Coordinating, as required, for the provision of cover and anonymity with logistics, transportation, personnel and medical support;
- Providing cover and anonymity guidance to mission elements that are coordinating sensitive activities;
- Working with DoD activities, Federal and State governments and non-governmental organizations to establish and maintain cover support mechanisms (e.g. DoD Common Access Cards (CAC), travel documents, state driver's licenses, credit cards, post office boxes, social security cards, pocket litter and telecommunications);
- Ensuring personnel are provided adequate training to support cover operations.

(S//SI) In short, SOS's role is to develop and maintain a cover support program which enables NSA sensitive mission activities while ensuring the cover support aspects are fully coordinated and compliant.

(S//SI) To support scenario 1 noted above, a Cover Support Plan will be developed by the SOS Staff and approved by USD(I) for conducting a Cover for Action by using a Non-official Cover provider. A "black" contract will be arranged and effective cover mechanisms will be put in place. The second scenario is dependent on the sensitivity of the relationship with the SIGINT partner. A nominal official cover arrangement may work in some cases; however for the more sensitive 3rd Party relationship, the cover mechanisms will be more complex.

(S//SI) As NSA's missions continue to evolve and increasingly require cover operations, it is imperative that we develop and maintain a cover program capable of protecting our SIGINT mission from compromise, our people from the growing threat of terrorism, and the equities of our partners.

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