



(U) Eye-Opening Experience in Haiti (part 2)

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Here is part 2 (and final) of the story of one IA intern's deployment to Haiti. If you missed it, see [part 1](#) (S//SI)

 **SERIES:**
(U//FOUO) Intern TDYs

(TS//SI) All this connectivity is fantastic and perhaps enough to perform a satisfactory job, but the real combat multiplier is augmenting this access with personal contacts on the ground. By physically being in Haiti, I had regular access to US embassy personnel, the CJTF-Haiti Marine J2 (Director of Intelligence), Marine Radio Battalion operators doing tactical SIGINT, SOCOM* planners and operators who were in charge of the missions going against Haitian High Value Targets (HVTs), the Canadian SIGINT personnel working the Haiti deployment in a camp right next to ours, the TAREX** team sent to do surveys of Port au Prince and Haiti, and the CJTF-Haiti Counter-Intelligence team that often roamed the countryside working on leads. As a result, I was able to act as a two-way transmission point for collection items from these assets on the ground in Haiti back to the TOPI (Target Office of Primary Interest).

(TS//SI) Two examples come to mind. On one occasion, the CJTF-H CI team leader passed me some notes from a trip to the central highlands of Haiti where they met with rebel leaders who controlled the area. During this trip they had collected several telephone numbers of these leaders and their associates. Within a week of my passing these numbers to the TOPI, we began to see multi-page reports of conversations between one important rebel leader and his wife which provided insight into his negotiating position and plans for control of the central highlands. One report was immediately briefed to the CJTF-H J3 (Director of Operations) and had a direct impact on our negotiations with the rebel leader. On another occasion, the CJTF-H J2 passed to me a French-Creole document that contained a list of the new Haiti police commissioners and their telephone numbers. I was only too happy to pass this on to the TOPI as well.



(U//FOUO) NIST personnel one week before returning home (the author is on the right). The building in the background is CJTF-Haiti HQ.

(TS//SI) An eye-opening experience for both me and the TOPI back here at NSAW was the realization that some customers are looking for a different kind of product than what is produced for most SIGINT customers. This takes some getting used to, because often we are conditioned to pass on only the data that meets the criteria for normal SIGINT reporting. One of the "surge" efforts performed by the TOPI was to send out gists with a quick translation of every HVT-related conversation, with the time of call, etc. -- a simplified and streamlined KL, in effect.

1. [Doing SIGINT in Pakistan](#)
2. [The Only Game in Town \(part 1\)](#)
3. [The Only Game in Town \(part 2\)](#)
4. [Eye-Opening Experience in Haiti \(part 1\)](#)
5. [Eye-Opening Experience in Haiti \(part 2\)](#)
6. [Assisting in the Hunt for al-Qa'ida Leadership](#)

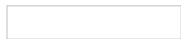
(TS//SI) What I discovered is that the Special Forces operators loved this kind of reporting because it allowed them to corroborate SIGINT reporting with their own HUMINT access. One operator was actually with a source in Haiti when the source received a telephone call. Operators used the SIGINT gists to help corroborate who and when calls were made between sources and HVTs. So, while the call itself was of inconsequential value to the normal SIGINT customers, there was a very high value to the tactical customers on the ground.

(TS//SI) I received several emails from people who were incredulous that a conversation between an HVT target and his girlfriend was of any importance. The truth is that a lot of SIGINT "leavings" that never make it into normal SIGINT reporting are actually valuable intelligence items for tactical warfighters. In fact, sometimes they are the **most important elements** of information for warfighters. We may like the crusts cut off of our peanut butter sandwiches, but that does not mean that others would wish the same.

(TS//SI) As for Haiti itself, it was both haunting and amazing. The people are friendly and there is much to see. I had some of the best food of my life while I was there. Having said that, the country is in dire straits and the most impoverished sections of Port au Prince are decrepit beyond words. The land has been so devastated from deforestation that the nation is always one natural disaster away from catastrophe, which I expect to be the cycle for the foreseeable future.

(TS//SI) I was thrilled at the opportunity to drive around the city and was amazed at how much fun I had behind the wheel in the chaotic streets of Haiti, but it is bittersweet knowing that progress there is haphazard, if it happens at all. I grew to love Haiti in my short two months there, but that is little solace to those who live there. Time will tell for Haiti.

(S//SI) I am ecstatic that I was able to participate in the contingency NIST deployment to Haiti. This kind of experience is something to keep in mind the next time a hot spot allows for the opportunity to deploy forward on behalf of NSA.



(U) Goods on their way to market in Port-au-Prince, a common sight in the crowded streets. It is amazing to see these hand carts loaded to the gills with produce; they become very unwieldy.



(U) Traffic and a "Jesus-bus" in Port-au-Prince. These large, colorful buses are so named by the US forces on the ground because they are often painted with spiritual themes. They are the public transportation for Haiti, along with the countless equally colorful small pickup trucks with a cap and seats in the truck bed (locally called "tap taps").

Notes:

*(U) SOCOM = Special Operations Command

** (C) TAREX, or Target Exploitation, is a unique collection program chartered under USSID 173 to collect information and documentation of interest to the U.S. Cryptologic System.

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