



(S//SI) Iran Day - Aiming for High-Hanging Iranian 'Fruit'

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(U) Washington's relations with Iran have been tense for over a quarter century. What's the situation now in this strategically important country and what does it mean for the Intelligence Community?

(S//SI) Representatives from across NSAW and the Extended Enterprise sought answers to these questions at a recent all-day Iran Day conference, sharing knowledge, approaches, successes and challenges associated with the Iran target. On 13 December, Middle East North Africa (MENA) Global Capabilities Manager Mary Jo Coyner and Strategic Intelligence Issues Chief Dr. David Shore kicked off the day with opening remarks to a packed conference room. Both highlighted the fact that Iran is considered a target of enduring concern and a threat to the US on a number of fronts.

(TS//SI) Throughout the day, Iran-related topics and discussions included:

- Leadership and Foreign Policy
- Economic, Energy and International Security Issues
- Iranian support to terrorism - Hizballah/Iran relationship, support to Iraqi insurgents
- Counterintelligence/Denial and Deception
- Strategic Warning - Iran Missile Programs
- Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

(TS//SI) The analysts touched on such issues as: Iran's view of itself as the leader of Shia' Islam; Iran as a closed society; the challenges in determining Iranian leadership's intentions, with a firebrand like President Ahmadi-Nejad at the helm; its role as a potential proliferator of WMD; its intent with respect to nuclear capabilities, etc. These issues represent formidable challenges not only to NSA's SIGINTers, but to the entire Intelligence Community (IC) as well. Given the many challenges presented by the target, the Director National Intelligence (DNI) identified Iran as one of four missions (the others being Counterterrorism, WMD, and North Korea) warranting a specific Mission Manager to lead the IC charge in prosecuting these targets.

(S//SI) By sheer coincidence, Iran Day occurred the very day that **Leslie Ireland**, the recently named (see [ODNI message](#)) Iran Mission Manager, chose to visit NSA! Ms. Ireland welcomed the opportunity to share her vision with this group of Iran experts. She identified the following as initial goals for herself and the IC relative to Iran:

1. To appropriately **prioritize those issues most critical to US national security**. She believes that the US intelligence system must determine which topics are truly of the highest priority and focus attention on them, realizing that in doing so some difficult decisions will have to be made.
2. To best posture the IC to **deliver intelligence that is well-sourced and objective** in order to regain confidence in the US intelligence system.
3. To **identify a strategy for retaining linguistic and analytic experts on Iran**.

Ms. Ireland made a further key point that **the IC should not be satisfied with the production of volumes of information from "low-hanging fruit."** She hopes to transition the IC collection structure from one driven by "what we can access currently" to a structure that obtains data of higher value to policy makers, even if this impacts on intelligence production for a time during the transition.

(U//FOUO) All in all, Iran Day proved to be a tremendous success, with much information

exchanged, new insights gained and, hopefully, new professional relationships forged and older ones strengthened. Given the success of this event, the MENA Product Line, Near East South Asia (NESA) SIGINT National Intelligence Officer (SINIO) and NESA Issue Management Team hope to host an IC-wide Iran Day-2 in Spring 2006 with broader representation and presentations.

(U) Stay tuned and look for more "Country Days" on the horizon.

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