



(U//FOUO) Who Is SID's Focal Point for Interacting With Congress?

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(U//FOUO) The story of how SID's Congressional Issues Team manages SID's interactions with Capitol Hill...

(U//FOUO) For members of the SID Congressional Issues Team, each day can bring a unique set of circumstances or a new set of challenges. When we arrive in the morning, we never know completely what our day will bring.

(U//FOUO) It could be a day hosting congressional visitors, or coordinating a trip to Capitol Hill with a group of SID briefers. It could be a day that requires chasing after a quick turn-around request for information (RFI) from a professional staff member from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Or it may very well be an afternoon spent in the Director's small conference room, hoping against hope that the A/V equipment is working, the briefers don't run over their allotted time, the questions from the Congressional visitors are answerable and you're able to make it back to the office before everyone else leaves. Welcome to a day in the life of SID Congressional Issues!

(U//FOUO) NSA's special relationship with Congress became formalized in the mid 1970's with the establishment of intelligence oversight committees, and their appropriations committee counterparts, in both the Senate and House of Representatives. **DIRNSA is obligated by law to keep the congressional intelligence committees fully informed of intelligence activities conducted by NSA.** Through the Legislative Affairs Office (LAO), NSA interacts with the oversight committees on a daily basis:

- the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI),
- the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI),
- the Senate Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee (SAC/D), and
- the House Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee (HAC/D).

LAO also works with other committees that have jurisdiction over defense and national security issues, such as the Armed Services Committees and Foreign Relations Committees, as well as the U.S. Senators and Representatives from the State of Maryland.

(U//FOUO) **The SID Congressional Issues Team, S02L2, serves as the SID focal point between LAO and SID elements** on SIGINT Enterprise actions and requests for information related to congressional oversight. We accept, track and respond to congressional inquiries and provide value-added resources to SID senior leaders. We coordinate multiple SID inputs to Questions for the Record (QFR), Congressionally Directed Actions (CDAs), hearings, notifications and appeals to legislative language impacting NSA's budget and turn them into a unified SID reply.

(U//FOUO) Each response usually involves several different SID elements, subject matter experts, staff and action officers to approve the response, not to mention the various editors and chiefs required for coordination and final approval. Though time consuming and labor intensive, all these steps are required to ensure the NSA response to Congress is accurate and provides the specific information they requested. Not too hard, you think? Usually not, however, most requests (or maybe it just *seems* like most requests) come into the building late in the afternoon (or maybe it just *seems* like late in the afternoon) with a response due back to Congress by noon the next morning! Sound familiar?

(U//FOUO) OK, so maybe this isn't the norm, but it does happen. Though challenging, **all Congressional requests provide great insight into how much Congress relies on NSA to**

be the subject-matter experts on a variety of topics. One of our greatest opportunities to showcase this comes from a recent invitation to regularly brief at the Speaker of the House's weekly intelligence briefings. Speaker Hastert is very knowledgeable on intelligence issues, so each week the SID organization must choose a current, relevant topic that will be sure to grab the Speaker's attention. Some of our initial topics have been on special collection programs, financial intelligence initiatives and counter-narcotics success stories.

(U//FOUO) When members of Congress, or their professional staffers, want to get out of the city and visit the NSA campus, there is a great deal of pre-planning and juggling of schedules that goes on, as the SIDCI team works with LAO to ensure a SID agenda that is tailor-made for a particular Senator or Representative. It doesn't sound too difficult if you have a few weeks to do all the planning. However, most Congressional visits tend to be short notice, with very little lead time to contact a SID organization and request a briefing or two. Fortunately, since most people understand that it is Congress who provides our paychecks and foots the bills for our newest technologies, finding a briefer, even on very short notice, can usually be done without pleading, bribery, coercion or the promise of your firstborn. The SIDCI team is always very grateful to the SID organizations for sharing their expertise with our congressional visitors. And yes, we do realize how much we ask of you!!!



(U) Capitol Hill (Reuters)

(U//FOUO) Note: On the SID today homepage you can find links to recent SID congressional notifications (i.e. formal messages informing Congress of a situation or event) and SID congressional updates (an account of current day-to-day interactions with Congress). Look for them in the "SID Notes/Reports" section.

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