(U) Write Right: Frequently Asked Question: Where Do I Go for Help With USSID SP0018 Issues?

FROM: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
of the Reporting Board (S12)
Run Date: 03/09/2006

(U) Answer: It depends on what the issue is. There's some confusion over what "getting the USSID 18 briefing" or "USSID 18 training" actually is, and we hope to clear that up with this column. There is an unfortunately widespread misconception that there is one comprehensive official "USSID 18 briefing." (Yes, we know the new name is USSID SP0018, but the people asking the questions invariably use the old name.)

(U) First of all, a quick definition: USSID SP0018 (formerly USSID 18) *prescribes policies and procedures and assigns responsibilities to ensure that the missions and functions of the United States SIGINT System (USSS) are conducted in a manner that safeguards the constitutional rights of U.S. persons.*

(U) Now, how do reporters apply these policies?

(U) The first stop should be at the SIGINT Directorate's **Office of Oversight and Compliance.** Enter " go oversight " in your browser to find a comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions covering Reporting as well as Targeting, Database Access, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), and Information Sharing. O&C offers briefings on these topics; for instance, analysts with access to raw traffic databases must have the targeting, a.k.a. collection, brief every two years to maintain their access.

(U) O&C conducts some briefings jointly with the **Office of the General Counsel** (OGC), so we hear questions like, "is this the USSID 18 briefing that the lawyers give?" OGC can tell you what authorities and restrictions NSA operates under; its web page ("go gc") carries copies of all executive orders, Department of Defense Directives, NSA Regulations, and other statutes that govern the collection, production, and dissemination of intelligence by NSA. The OGC's Operations Group can provide briefings on USSID SP0018 issues that can be tailored to your office's particular needs.

(U//FOUO) Finally, for questions about how to handle U.S. identities in SIGINT reporting, **there is a class** taught by longtime reporting experts in the Intelligence Analysis curriculum of the National Cryptologic School. RPTG-2018's subject matter was recently updated and a number of new instructors certified both at NSA Headquarters and at the Cryptologic Centers (see related article in the ISS Spotlight) . There are several pre-requisites for this two-day course, as it is meant for experienced reporters who are familiar with all aspects of SIGINT reporting.

(U//FOUO) The course briefly touches on the background that led to the promulgation of USSID 18, and then moves into the cases where reporters can identify a U.S. person. It discusses ways to obscure identities while still retaining foreign intelligence value, and ways to avoid identifying U.S. persons through the context of the report. It also addresses procedures for handling those cases

where consent, threat, or emergencies allow reporters to identify U.S. persons. Finally, the class addresses the various types of waivers that will allow a reporter to identify a U.S. person in a SIGINT report.

(U//FOUO) The class provides students with many opportunities to use the references and guidance that exist on this topic, which are available on The Reporting Page's new USSID SP0018 Corner . Since most of the class will consist of exercises and discussion, the school has declined many requests to present it in a self-paced, computer-based format. The examples that each student brings up necessitates examination of the basis for any decision, and each offering of the class has so far provided an opportunity to improve the course.

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