(S//SI) An Intern Tour at the SNAW... With a 3-Month TDY to New Zealand

FROM: Michael C. McKloskey
Social Network Analysis Work Center (SSG12)
Run Date: 04/04/2006

(S//SI) Intelligence Analysis intern Mike McKloskey describes working SNA (Social Network Analysis) and passes on his impressions of working at GCSB in New Zealand.

(U//FOUO) After some initial exposure to social network analysis a couple of years ago, I came to realize the unique benefits that SNA can provide. This motivated me to volunteer for an intern rotation at the Social Network Analysis Workcenter (SSG12), where I am currently working. How has it worked out?

(U//FOUO) This tour has provided me the opportunity to learn about and use analytic tools specific to SNA, which includes commercial products as well as Agency-developed applications. One such tool, Assimilator , is undergoing development right now. Interns, SNAW analysts and other beta testers provide feedback that is quickly incorporated into the tool. It is definitely a unique experience to suggest an improvement and very quickly see it appear in the production version!

(S//SI) Working in the SNAW gives an intern the flexibility to focus on a particular target or if you're like me, dabble in a wide variety of activities. At the present time, the Workcenter has four interns dedicated to mission support and has several others forward-deployed to target offices. For example, the Workcenter has ongoing projects with offices within CP, Counterterrorism (CT) and Regional Targets, among others. Not only are interns working with local offices, but also they work closely with analysts across the Extended Enterprise (NSA-Georgia).

(TS//SI) Besides working with NSA target offices, SNAW interns have the opportunity to interact with the wider Intelligence Community (IC) and Second Parties at meetings, conferences and working groups. The focus of my recent tour was a **three-month TDY to New Zealand** where I worked hand-in-hand with Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) analysts and management to develop an indigenous social network capability.

(U//FOUO) GCSB Head Office in Wellington

(U) Wellington

(U) Living and working in Wellington was an interesting experience. Headquarters is located downtown and is within easy walking distance to other government agencies, Parliament, as well as many restaurants, shops and hotels. In fact, the proximity to normal daily activities made me realize how much I enjoyed working in a city as opposed to the Fort.

(U) On a nice day, the view from GCSB headquarters is unrivaled. Most offices provide picturesque views of Wellington, its harbor and surrounding neighborhoods. Unfortunately, Wellington's weather is ever-changing and unpredictable. Locals are famous for advising tourists and newcomers that the city can experience "all four seasons in one day." I can vouch for this fact because on numerous occasions, I left my apartment in the morning expecting a nice sunny day with temperatures about 65 degrees only to walk out at lunch or at the end of the day to a 45 to 50 km per hour sustained "southerly" wind blowing right into the city from Antarctica. Until I experienced Wellington's famous wind, I never considered walking a resistance exercise!

(TS//SI) Aside from experiencing the best of what Wellington and New Zealand had to offer, my daily duties required me to train GCSB analysts in social network analysis and techniques. This

training was not limited to classroom exposure to methodology and practice -- it actually employed these concepts against one of GCSB's largest SIGINT targets: the Solomon Islands. The target was particularly important due to the presence of Australian and New Zealand personnel on the ground supporting the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, or RAMSI.

(TS//SI) From a technical point of view, connectivity to NSA and its computer networks was virtually nonexistent. I applied for and used Second Party versions of many standard NSA tools (Dishfire, Banyan, etc.) but relied heavily on GCSB tools to conduct many of my daily tasks. The tools may have been different, but the concepts were the same and in many cases, the tools were easier to learn and benefited from simpler architecture. One such example is "Bigwig," GCSB's personality database. The database is easy to navigate (keyword searchable) and allows any analyst the opportunity to create or modify entries. This is a far cry from my initial experiences with either Homebase or the TKB. Having said that, the GCSB database experiences the same hurdles any knowledge base does regarding accuracy, namely, it's only as accurate as the information analysts input and update.

(TS//SI) Working alongside GCSB analysts allowed me to witness how a small organization confronts challenges as well as handles routine workflow. The majority of GCSB intelligence analysts perform both transcription and reporting functions. Unlike NSA, these two roles are not divided between two separate skill fields. Additionally, target SIGDEV work is handled by the Operations Division, which oversees collection and development activities. Despite the division of work, as well as the additional linguistic work, GCSB analysts were more then willing to learn a new technique and subsequently employ it against his or her specific target. The interaction with Second Party analysts was a tremendous opportunity for career growth and the TDY provided great insight into how Second Parties operate, the challenges they face, and finally, their focus (both domestically and with regard to the 5-Eyes community).

(U) Conclusion

(U//FOUO) My rotation at the Social Network Analysis Workcenter has allowed me to contribute in meaningful ways to mission support as well as tool development. Nowhere else during my two-plus years at the Agency have I had the opportunity to work such a variety of targets and topics. In short, it's been a great tour!

(U) Wellington