



(S//SI) The Italian Job: An IA Intern's Experience of a Lifetime

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Run Date: 05/03/2006

(S//SI) When our plane touched down in Torino on 1 February, I mostly felt relief. Relief that a long day of travel was over. Relief that the fog that trapped us in Munich for several hours finally lifted. Relief that the French and Italian Alps decided not to swallow our small Italian commuter plane whole.

(S//SI) These were not the normal feelings I had associated with travel for the Agency. Prior to February, my trans-Atlantic flights had ended in Afghanistan or Iraq, usually in the back of a C-17 or C-130, and certainly without complementary hand-towels. But, then again, I was an IA Intern. I had to be prepared for anything, even if it meant wrestling with the beautiful provincial Italian city of Torino, host of the XX Winter Olympic Games.

(S//SI) I arrived in Torino on 1 February, 10 days before the Opening Ceremonies, along with two other NSAers, to round-out the NSA-Torino Olympic Support Team (our Officer-in-Charge had been on the ground for 3 weeks), and to begin what would be an exciting, rewarding, sometimes confusing and always interesting 5 weeks in Northern Italy. Our team worked directly with representatives of 13 other government agencies, led by the US Dept of State Diplomatic Security Service and the FBI, to help ensure the security of US athletes and VIP guests and their delegations.

(S//SI) Prior to our arrival, another TDY team from NSA had built a custom-made Temporary SCIF*, courtesy of the Model Shop (see [related NSA Daily article](#)), in an Italian office building just down the street from the Medals Plaza and the NBC Today Show set...

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
(S//SI) "NSA in-a-box" (S//SI) Our office building

... Our team of 4 analysts (there were also 2 comms technicians on-call) took turns working 8-hour shifts to cover the TSCIF and provide support to the agencies working with us in the office.

(S//SI) For the most part, our support revolved around maintaining situational awareness of what was going on at the ground level in Torino and at the various Olympic venues spread out in the surrounding mountains. We were in direct contact with an NSA element at the Embassy in Rome (part of the GALILEO Joint Olympic Support Center) as well as NSAW and the National Counter-Terrorism Center, and, along with receiving intelligence from them, we also provided them with intelligence gathered by the numerous State Department and FBI Special Agents assigned to each venue and VIP site.

[REDACTED]
(U//FOUO) NSA Torino Team pose at base of the Olympic half-pipe (the author is second from left)

(S//SI) A usual day saw extensive use of the [InfoWorkSpace system](#) to communicate with Rome and NSAW. We prepared read files for the other cleared analysts, who would enter our small SCIF to read and discuss the intelligence (our 8x8x8 box was the only place cleared for TS and SCI material, computers and conversations in the entire city). SIGINT played a role in planning security for the opening ceremony visit of First Lady Laura Bush and her daughter, and allowed us to track possible global threats that had recently appeared in Italy. If we had the day off, we might explore the city or the venues, enjoy a large dinner or shop for souvenirs at the Olympic store.

(S//SI) For an IA Intern, it was an eye-opening experience. Working with a largely law-enforcement management chain offered new insight into how other members of the IC community use our data, and also what they can offer us in our analytical work.

(U) The 2006 Winter Olympics went off (almost) without a hitch. Multiple times in the weeks leading up to the games the running of the Olympic torch was interrupted by protestors, and during the closing ceremony a protestor made it onto the main stage, but in all cases the events were non-violent and usually represented opposition to a proposed high-speed train line through the Alps (the TAV).



*(U) Notes:

SCIF = Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility

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