



(S//SI) Seeing the Iraqi SIGINT Element In Action

FROM: Colleen Ostergaard
FAD's Middle East North Africa/Asia Office (DP12)
Run Date: 05/18/2006

(S//SI) The Country Desk Officer for Iraq travels to Baghdad to witness NSA's efforts to build an Iraqi SIGINT organization.

(S//SI) I recently had the opportunity to visit FAD's (Foreign Affairs Directorate) forward-deployed team in Baghdad, one of the most interesting and exciting trips of my career. The primary goal of the FAD team in Iraq is to establish a viable Iraqi SIGINT Element (ISE), an integral part of the Iraqi National Intelligence Service (INIS). As the Country Desk Officer for Iraq, I've been working with a cross-Agency team for nearly a year in an effort to develop a strategy and training program and to provide technical equipment and expertise to the fledgling SIGINT element. Being able to see the operation in action, experience the logistics of living in Iraq, and meet the potential Iraqi partners was invaluable for understanding the mission.

[Redacted]

(U) Colleen Ostergaard with a guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

(S//SI) Although we have not established a formal Third Party relationship with Iraq, we have a robust SIGINT mission already in progress. Starting in mid-2005, the ISE team expanded its mission from INIS headquarters in Baghdad to two forward-deployed sites, one in Al Qaim, on the Syrian border, and a second in Ramadi, just west of Baghdad. A third site is scheduled to start operations in Mosul, in Northern Iraq, this month.

[Redacted]

(U) Clockwise from left: [Redacted], [Redacted], [Redacted], [Redacted], [Redacted], and Colleen Ostergaard at the FAD trailer.

(S//SI) These joint SIGINT teams consist of one US Liaison Officer and five Iraqi linguist/analysts, living and working side-by-side with the US military, providing direct support to enable the capture of high-value targets. The tippers produced by these teams are also providing vital intelligence to both the Iraqi government and the Multinational Forces in Iraq.

[Redacted]

(U) From left: [Redacted], [Redacted] and [Redacted] enroute to the US Embassy

(S//SI) On the personal side, I was impressed with the congenial working environment within the ISE. FAD personnel were treated with respect and warm regards. As with any FAD function, there was food involved -- a treat of fresh carp from the Tigris and vegetables, all grilled on top of the INIS building! The Iraqis were friendly and dedicated to their mission, while working under the tremendous pressure of death threats to both themselves and their families.

[Redacted]

(U) US Embassy - formerly Saddam Hussein's palace

[Redacted]

(U) Baghdad

(U//FOUO) This article is reprinted from the *Foreign Affairs Digest*, April edition. For some background on the ISE, see the article [What a Difference a Year Makes! -- Reconstructing an Iraqi SIGINT Service](#).

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DERIVED FROM: NSA/CSSM 1-52, DATED 08 JAN 2007 DECLASSIFY ON: 20320108