



(S//SI) How the 'Accommodation Buy' Process Came To Be

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(S//SI) Most of you are familiar with today's Accommodation Buy process whereby NSA would facilitate the purchase of modern SIGINT technology and equipment by our foreign partners. This process originated in the mid-to-late 1980s when the US was moving closer to partners in COMSAT (communications satellite) collection, and other more sophisticated signals of the day.

(S//SI) Prior to this, most of the Third Parties had been mired in the Morse-voice-printer era, but knew that NSA was dealing with much more difficult problems. While the partners welcomed the idea of broadening their technical capabilities, they were unprepared to handle the new signals. So each one had to build collection and processing systems using their own money, but NSA expertise and (often) American contractors. In many cases they were buying sophisticated technology directly from NSA.

(S//SI) US law prohibiting NSA from receiving money under those circumstances was changed in 1998 as a result of efforts by the Foreign Relations Office, working with the T242 Partner Program Division (now DP3) and the NSA Office of the Comptroller, to present a compelling case to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees staffs. The result became known as an "accommodation contract" in which NSA could accept money directly from foreign governments. This opened a new era in Third Party relations, and today's Accommodation Buy process managed by the folks in DP3 handles tens of millions of dollars annually on behalf of our partners.

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