



(U//FOUO) SIGINTers Become Mock Terrorists

FROM: [REDACTED]
Intelligence Analysis Intern
Run Date: 06/02/2006

(U//FOUO) NSAers think like terrorists in simulated training camp in North Carolina.

(U//FOUO) So there I was... about to run through a mock village firing live AK-47 rounds hoping I wouldn't shoot myself in the foot. I ran around the corner and shot at my first target. The instructor yelled at me as I fumbled to change magazines, "There's a target! Hurry up! Fire!" My first tour in the Intelligence Analysis Development Program (IADP) was turning out to be more athletic than expected.

[REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) This excitement took place at the weeklong Mirror Image course run by the Terrorism Research Council (www.terrorism.com) at the Blackwater facility in Moyock, North Carolina. I attended the course with three other intelligence analysts. (My fellow IADP participant, [REDACTED], alluded to this course in a [previous SID today article](#).) The intent of Mirror Image is to give insight into the terrorist mindset by recreating a terrorist training camp and providing background information on terrorism.

(U//FOUO) On arrival we changed into new clothing, received new identities, and became indoctrinated into camp life. Our indoctrination covered radical Islam, as the course focused on al-Qa'ida. The days were long, beginning with prayer at 0530, followed by briefings on topics such as cultural/sociological issues, tactics, strategy, and various terrorist attack case histories. These briefings included information from terrorist groups other than al-Qa'ida such as the IRA, 17 November, and Black September. All briefings were conducted from the terrorist perspective as if we were going to be conducting our own attacks. In the afternoons we would do just that. Simulated, of course. We practiced roadside ambushes, night infiltrations, kidnappings, and assassinations using paintball-like ammunition called Simunition rounds in real weapons with modified barrels.

(U//FOUO) One afternoon was dedicated to firing live ammunition. Our instructors first fired various weapons at a car to show us where we could find adequate cover. The engine block is your only safe cover from most ammunition and weapons -- a fact I never would have guessed I would learn from this job when I started at NSA last September. Seeing the rounds go through the car like butter was a more useful lesson in taking cover than I have received in my eight years in the Army (as a reservist). We then fired the weapons, including an AK-47, M-4, M-9 Pistol, and a Dragunov.

[REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) After this familiarization, we ran through the mock village firing the AK-47 while the instructor purposely stressed us by yelling. This day also found us riding on the back of a motorcycle firing Simunition rounds at a mock assassination target. Each busy day was followed by a late night spent planning and conducting reconnaissance for the next day's operation.

(U//FOUO) One benefit from the course was the opportunity to meet the other participants, including Marine Counter Intelligence and Los Angeles police, and discussing their experiences and perspectives. While thinking from the point of view of the "other side" was a bit disturbing at times, especially when I strapped on a mock suicide vest to "blow" myself up for the cause, I have since found myself approaching analytic problems with a more open mind and less of my own mindset. A good start to my career at NSA.

"(U//FOUO) SIDtoday articles may not be republished or reposted outside NSANet without the consent of S0121 ([DL sid comms](#))."

DYNAMIC PAGE -- HIGHEST POSSIBLE CLASSIFICATION IS
TOP SECRET // SI / TK // REL TO USA AUS CAN GBR NZL
DERIVED FROM: NSA/CSSM 1-52, DATED 08 JAN 2007 DECLASSIFY ON: 20320108