(U) Do's and Don'ts of Deploying

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(U) Some practical advice for civilian deployers...

(U) After sitting on the roundtable for NISTs* and other deployments, I thought I might try and write a concise guide of do's and don'ts for civilian Intelligence Analysts (IAs) deploying in support of military units.

(U) Disclaimer: I don't make this stuff up. As amusing as some of it may be, I've seen ALL of it happen before. Sometimes common sense is an uncommon virtue. This is my feeble attempt at offering advice and I absolve myself of any responsibility for bodily harm or tongue-lashings resulting from the use of this document.

(U) Do's

1. (U) Know your target set before you leave. Don't rely on just-finished products from the TOPIs covering the targets at NSAW. You may have to be a squeaky wheel to get access to some of the front-end information, but it will pay off in the long run.

2. (U//FOUO) Know the network topology and architecture of the region where you are deploying.

3. (U) Learn the structure and capabilities of the units you are supporting. You will have a much easier time determining the priority of collected SIGINT if you understand the value that it may or may not add to the units receiving it.

4. (U) Learn rank structures. This exhibits a great deal of respect and will never be received unfavorably. A general rule of thumb is to move to a first-name basis only if initiated by the military member. This is, of course, a generalization and there are exceptions to every rule. I can assure you; however, that you will receive quite a different reaction from a Sergeant Major than you would from a PFC if you call him "Bob" upon first introductions.

5. (U) Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. Know both of yours. Be candid in your answers and explanations. "I don't know" is an acceptable response in military circles as long as you make sure you find the answer at first chance. Deception and excuses don't sit well and will quickly get you ostracized.

6. (U) Praise in public, punish in private. If deploying in a leadership position, this is a good rule to follow. Berating junior members in front of their peers is not only in poor taste, but it's also cowardly. They often don't have the latitude to defend themselves and must swallow a great deal of pride while absorbing your criticism, regardless of how deserved it may be.

7. (U) Remain professional. There will be plenty of time for jokes and mischief OUTSIDE of daily briefings. You are representing the Agency in all of your actions, take that responsibility seriously.

8. (U) Enjoy and take pride in your work. Accuracy is paramount when presenting targets to operational units. Your analysis can ultimately decide the fate of another human being. Confidence and enthusiasm go a long way.

9. (U) Take advantage of any learning opportunities while you are deployed. If nothing else,

you will undoubtedly have the chance to enhance your knowledge of various collection platforms, many of which are simply fascinating.

(U) Don'ts

1. (U) Don't underestimate the ability of your military counterparts. There are some remarkably intelligent and dedicated professionals still wearing a uniform.

2. (U) Don't put your finger on the trigger!!! NSA pre-deployment weapons training is rudimentary at best. A negligent discharge of your weapon is one of the quickest ways to earn a ticket home. On that note, don't shoot someone or something to try and earn said ticket.

3. (U) Don't salute. It has nothing to do with protecting officers in a combat zone. If you are a civilian and you are saluting people, it's just plain goofy.

4. (U) Don't refer to every unit that jumps out of airplanes as "Special Forces." The only units designated as Special Forces in the United States are the U.S. Army Special Forces (popularized by JFK and John Wayne as the "Green Berets." In reality, that's just what they wear on their heads). Commonly known units such as U.S. Navy SEALS, USMC Force Reconnaissance (now MARSOC; it's about time), USAF Pararescue and Combat Control teams, and some others are collectively known as Special Operations Forces (SOF.) It's nitpicky, but they have all earned the right to be recognized appropriately.

5. (U) Don't hesitate to ask questions. Being inquisitive is an indispensable trait in the introverted world of SIGINT.

6. (U) Don't brief above the level of your audience. Immersing a military audience in technical jargon that they probably don't care anything about doesn't make you any more intelligent, it just wastes time.

7. (U) Don't hoard information. There is no excuse for the self-promoting corralling of intelligence. You are there to support our forces and help save lives, not accumulate P3 bullets. Share and share alike.

8. (U) Don't wash your reds with your whites, don't stare directly into the sun, and never trust a man in a tanktop.

(U//FOUO) I hope this tongue-in-cheek look at some of the finer points of deploying brought a knowing grin to those who have gone forward before. To those considering a TDY, I can honestly say that there is no more enriching experience available for an IA to have a direct impact in the shaping of an entire region. SIGINT is playing an enormous role in the Middle East and for those willing to make the sacrifice from the front; the rewards cannot be measured in accolades or dollars (although $5,000 might make paying for that Polartec fleece you lost a bit easier to swallow).

(TS//SI) ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ *is a CT-focused intern, and is finishing up his third tour in S2I24, Levant Sunni Extremism, DNI Development. His past tours include S2I23 CT Iraq, a deployment to SCS Mosul and NETA 3001. He plans on taking his fourth tour in the Network Analysis Center (NAC). Before starting at the NSA,* ▮▮▮▮ *was a Force Recon Marine with the 2nd Force Reconnaissance Co., based out of Camp Lejuene, NC.*

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*(U) Notes:
NIST = National Intelligence Support Team

(U) Editor's note: Do YOU have some useful tips for deployers? Post them on the [SID *today blog*](#)
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