(TS//SI) Breakthrough: Previously 'Unfindable' Internet Cafes in Iraq Can Now Be Located

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(TS//SI) Terrorists who visit Internet cafes associated with the [redacted] ISP can now potentially be located and arrested.

(TS//SI) There are a number of terrorists now in prison whose last moments of freedom went something like this: Each terrorist woke up in the middle of the night, finding his bed surrounded by U.S. troops. As he was detained and dragged out the door of his safehouse, he may have wondered, "How did they know I was here?"

(TS//SI) Answer: SIGINT had detected the terrorist's activity in an Internet café earlier that day and tipped his location to the appropriate forces in Iraq within minutes of his activity. Then, through various means, the target was tracked from the café to his safehouse, leading our forces not only to him, but also to other members of his terrorist network staying with him. (See an earlier SIDtoday article on this topic.)

(TS//SI) We've had success in targeting cafes over the past year, but until recently there was a major gap in our capabilities. Namely, we could not precisely locate cafes that were served by the [redacted] ISP*, a large, entirely wireless operation. Because of [redacted] complex network structure, use of dynamic ip addresses, etc., we could narrow down a user's location to which city he was in - but nothing more precise than that.

(TS//SI) The picture changed this spring, however, with two important developments. First, in late April, we intercepted (via Timberline FORNSAT and TAO collection) the customer database for [redacted] Next, in May, two new systems (WealthyCluster2 and X-KEYSCORE) were installed at SCS Mosul that made it possible to process wireless collection in the region. SIGINT now had the capability to intercept signals passing between [redacted] neighborhood communications towers and the users.

(TS//SI) Putting these pieces of information together, the SIGINT System now had the ability to detect terrorist use of the [redacted] network and to even find the location of the café. As the SIGINT started coming in, the Network Analysis Center (NAC), in coordination with Counterterrorism (CT), began issuing tippers with precise locational information to other SIGINTers and military customers.

(TS//SI) The outcome so far has been this: previously un-locatable cafes have been found and at least four "wanted" terrorists have been captured. The NAC is working closely with CT to share their techniques, and CT is in the process of taking over future responsibility for tipping [redacted] café locations being used by wanted terrorists.

(TS//SI) Let's hope that we "net" more terrorists at these cafes in the coming months as well!

POCs:
(U//FOUO) If you have questions about this topic, please contact [redacted] of the Advance Network Development & Analysis (ANDA) Iraq Wireless Team (SSG211) at [redacted] or the team at [redacted].

*(U) Notes:
ISP = Internet Service Provider