(TS//SI//REL) Improving Our Capability to Collect Against the Thuraya Satellite

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(S//SI//REL) New system represents a five-fold increase in capability over its predecessor.

(TS//SI//REL) SID is greatly expanding its capacity to collect communications from the Thuraya satellite, a major source of intelligence on some of the Agency's highest priority targets in the Middle East, Europe, North and Central Africa, and parts of Asia. With the older system for collecting against Thuraya - PARHELION - quickly becoming obsolete, SID is replacing them with an upgraded system known as MAGICHELION.

(U) Deployments to Iraq and Throughout the Region

(TS//SI//REL) Most recently, two MAGICHELION-1 systems were installed in Baghdad and activated on 6 September. Thirteen hours after activation, over 50,000 calls were collected, a significant increase in previous call volume. As of that date, a total of 59 PARHELIONs/MAGICHELIONs were deployed to 23 sites, and tasked with 74 distinct Thuraya spot beams.

(TS//SI//REL) In the past five months alone, the Mobile Satellite Services Branch, in close collaboration with SCS, has deployed 16 MAGICHELION-1 systems at the following 12 SCS sites:

1. Abu Dhabi, (UAE)
2. Amman, (Jordan)
3. Baghdad (Iraq)
4. Baku, (Azerbaijan)
5. Cairo (Egypt)
6. Damascus (Syria)
7. Jeddah (Saudi Arabia)
8. Karachi, (Pakistan)
9. Kandahar (Afghanistan)
10. Kabul (Afghanistan)
11. Kuwait City (Kuwait)
12. Rome, (Italy)

(TS//SI//REL) FY07 deployments will include the following sites:

1. Islamabad (Pakistan)
2. Sanaa (Yemen)
3. Riyadh (Saudi Arabia)
4. Tbilisi (Georgia)
5. Athens (Greece)
6. Istanbul (Turkey)
7. Algiers (Algeria)
8. Monrovia (Liberia)
9. Khartoum (Sudan)

...and two other secret locations.

(U) Top Sites in Volume

(TS//SI//REL) Based on recent 24-hour collect, the top four volume sites for Thuraya collection were:

1. Kabul (152,806 calls)
2. Kandahar (93,100 calls)
3. Islamabad (91,796 calls)
4. Baghdad (50,024 calls in first 13 hours).

(U) Background: What is Thuraya?

(U) Thuraya is a geosynchronous satellite that provides voice, circuit-switched data, fax, and now packet data access at data rates up to 144 Kbps. See the map below for its area of coverage:

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