



(U) Bear Hunters Gather in Alaska

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(S//SI//REL) *Russia-watchers from Japan, Fort Meade and Alaska meet in Anchorage.*

(C) Long the symbol of the Russian people, a BEAR is also the NATO designator for the workhorse of the Russian Strategic Aviation fleet, the nuclear-capable Tupolev Tu-95. During the Cold War, both Japan and the US were pestered by frequent incursions into their airspace by Bears. After more than a decade of sleepy passivity, the Bears have become restless again.

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(S) Foreign partnerships are the answer. The not-so-simple question is, "How do you cover a massive, nuclear-capable, strategic aviation target when all of the money, most of the collection assets, and a good chunk of the people are shifted to the Global War on Terrorism?"

(S//SI) Participants at the 2006 iteration of the **Russian Analytic Conference (RAC)** held at the Alaska Mission Operations Center (AMOC) in Anchorage, Alaska, already knew the answer to that question. That's why the Japanese Directorate for SIGINT (DFS) sent three senior front-line analysts to the September conference to exchange analytic techniques with their American counterparts from the AMOC and the Office of Russia (S2H). Japanese and American SIGINT services are collaborating to share information and resources in order to keep closer tabs on a post-Cold War "Russian Bear" that seems to be coming out of a 15-year hibernation.

(S//SI) Bears were not the only topic on the agenda at the RAC. Both the US and Japan still have a critical need for accurate and timely SIGINT Threat Warning to provide their respective "Blue Forces" (i.e. their own country's forces), so there was a healthy serving of "fighter scramble" on the analytic menu as well.

(S//SI) Although S2H and its predecessors have held the RAC since the mid-1980s jointly with the DFS, alternating between Tokyo and Ft Meade, this was the AMOC's first foray into serious analytic exchange with a foreign SIGINT partner, so there was a significant amount of "getting-to-know-you" activity at the conference. There were several good ice-breaker cultural events, and numerous stories of run-ins with the Soviets were swapped.

(S) A convenient halfway point between Washington and Tokyo, the Alaska locale also provided the Office of Russia an opportunity to get some partnership-maintenance work done, in addition to making introductions and laying the groundwork for what promises to be a mutually beneficial AMOC-DFS partnership. Foreign Affairs Directorate's Tokyo liaison staff was also well represented at the conference, which facilitated a lot of valuable work on straightening out the "data pipelines."

(U) The final note of the conference was one of unanimous success, but also of strong necessity for closer continuing collaboration against our daunting common target set.

(S//SI//REL) See also a related article: [Flying BEAR Approach Alaska -- SIGINT Is Watching](#).

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