



(U) Letter to the Editor: The Importance of Target Knowledge

FROM: the SIDtoday editor
Unknown
Run Date: 11/14/2006

(U//FOUO) The article [\(U//FOUO\) A&P Unveils Strategy for FY07-FY13](#) prompted the below Letter to the Editor and response from A&P's Carl Johnson:

Letter to the Editor:

(U//FOUO) Your #2 goal mentions skills, tradecraft, and technology. Seems you may have missed the key foundational ingredient of *target knowledge*. I see a vast and distinct difference between analytic skills and real-world target knowledge, without which my skills and tradecraft and the use of technology are not going to produce at the desired levels as stated in your #1 goal.

(U//FOUO) The Agency has frequently rewarded people who move around to many, often high-visibility, jobs (the butterfly effect) in lieu of rewarding people who stick with a target for long enough to gain meaningful target knowledge.

-- [REDACTED]

Carl Johnson's response:

(U//FOUO) Norman, you make an excellent point, and I want everyone to know that we are addressing this issue under Goal #2, objective #2: "(Targets) Increase the capability for analysts to track known targets and discover new targets."

(S//SI) One of our major thrusts is to make target knowledge widely available. The [Target Knowledge Base](#) (TKB) is being developed to "serve as a platform for collaboration and data sharing between NSA and other intelligence community entities and to provide our customers and users with common access to target related information. The types of data in the TKB will include such things as personalities, organizations, military order of battle, and target communication structures. The TKB will facilitate interaction with various internal and external organizations and analysts to determine the types of data needed to support analyses, and will ultimately deliver the platform for storage, retrieval, extraction, and update services for target knowledge data."

(U//FOUO) Although still in development, the TKB is available to NSA analysts now, and about 17% of our analytic work units/branches across the Enterprise are using it. As this tool becomes more robust, we expect that percentage to grow to 100% by FY13.

(U//FOUO) Of course, no knowledge repository can supplant the human experience. I am counting on analysts to share their knowledge, use tools such as the TKB, and apply critical thinking to solve complex intelligence problems. I intend to reward those who make significant contributions to our mission in this manner.

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