



(U//FOUO) From SIGINT to HUMINT to SIGINT (through HUMINT) -- conclusion

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Here's the conclusion of the story of a SIGINT'er who went to Iraq to perform HUMINT. (Click [HERE](#) for part 1.) (S)

(S) Iraq had been an overwhelming experience and it was difficult for me to know what I was to do once I got home. Fortunately, [REDACTED], directors of the IA skill community, had stayed in touch with me and welcomed me back with open arms. I hadn't yet taken the time to think how my experience with HUMINT in Iraq would benefit me in the world of SIGINT, but it became apparent once I was assigned my first tour here at NSA.

(S) I was assigned to S2E22 (the Iraq Branch) and placed on a team responsible for sorting through HUMINT reports and finding ways to develop SIGINT leads. The reports that I read through, often summaries of interrogations and interviews from Iraq, were the same reports I had been writing for the last six months. I was able to read the reports and get a feel for when an interrogator was on to something important, or when he or she may have been following a false lead. I could sense when a source quoted in a report may have been holding back, or more often than not, may have been exaggerating his access and knowledge. It allowed me to sort through the large volume of reports more efficiently and kept me involved in the world of HUMINT.

(S) My exposure at S2E22 to the developmental side of SIGINT was a tremendous challenge to me. Though frustrating at first to be thrown into an assignment and forced to quickly learn a variety of complicated technologies and tools, I was fortunate enough to fall under the tutelage of two experienced analysts and benefit tremendously from their advice and direction. There were days of course when I felt overwhelmed and thought I had no chance of ever understanding what was actually expected of me. The daily task of sorting through endless HUMINT reports in order to develop what at times seemed like insignificant results often became a test of my patience, but the opportunity to take what I had learned in Iraq, and see it developed into intelligence here at NSA was invaluable.

(S) In many ways, knowing what I know now about how crucial HUMINT can be to the SIGINT process, I wish I could go back to Iraq and work again as an interrogator. There are still a number of walls that need to be broken down between the two disciplines for them to work more effectively together. HUMINT needs to have a better understanding of the specifics that will enable the SIGINT process, and SIGINT needs to continue to gain a better understanding of just how difficult HUMINT can be.

(S) As the two disciplines continue to find common ground, and as they continue to understand what they need to do to make one another more effective, it is exciting to think how much more dynamic the collection process can become. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be involved in these two types of collection, and though I will not recommend anyone resign their NSA position, I can certainly say that finding ways to learn how other intelligence disciplines affect the work we do here at NSA is an invaluable experience.

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