



(U) Have a Seat, Ambassador

FROM: [REDACTED]
International Security Issues, Operations Staff (S2C094)
Run Date: 11/15/2005

(U//FOUO) Recent articles on [NSA Daily](#) and [SIDtoday](#) have dealt with ambassadorial visits to NSA. Here's how a SID Product Line handles such visits...

(U//FOUO) Possibly the greatest benefit of ambassadors' visits is that they open paths of communication between the Ambassador (and his/her staff) and the reporting elements here at NSA. Product Lines across SID have had the pleasure of hosting visits from ambassadors preparing for their future assignments.

(U//FOUO) To encourage open discussion as well as a realistic understanding of what the Agency can do, A&P's International Security Issues (ISI) Product Line divides these visits into two parts: a roundtable discussion and a visit to an analyst workstation.

(S//REL) The **roundtable discussions** often involve representatives from multiple Product Lines, including analysts whose backgrounds are both regionally and transnationally focused. These discussions provide the visiting Ambassador with both a general overview of targets, and specific target information. They are centered on current issues that are of relevance to the Ambassador.

(S//REL) For example, during a recent visit, an Ambassador discussed his views on the complex issues facing NATO and Europe's defense efforts. Of course, SID is eager to explain the "hows" and "whys" of SIGINT with the aim of giving the Ambassador a clear view of the things NSA can and cannot do to support him/her in this new assignment.

(S//REL) **At the workstation, the Ambassador is able to see the SIGINT reporting process from start to finish:** (scanning, transcribing, analyzing, reporting, etc.). This is an eye-opening experience for some because they are not always aware that the analysts do the transcription themselves. If the Ambassador has a foreign language capability, he/she can listen to a preselected voice cut in the language, preferably one which is personally relevant. The analyst also demonstrates the tools used in his daily work, to include the various working aids that assist the analyst in completing the transcript, and explains the reporting and checking process.

(U//FOUO) Both the Ambassadors and NSA clearly benefit from these visits. With an understanding of how the SIGINT system works, Ambassadors learn that they can help steer the SIGINT system by identifying top priority needs. SID also acquires keen insight into the type of information needed so Ambassadors can do their jobs well. NSA expects to continue hosting Ambassador visits--particularly since Ambassador to France Craig Stapleton indicated during his recent visit to NSA that he would like to return to NSA for a follow-on visit.

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