



**(S) Using SIGINT to Sniff Out Phony Passports (and Other Persona Identifiers)**

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*(S) Team looks at ways to single out suspicious travelers.*

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(S) Have you gone through passport control recently and wondered what flags might have alerted security officials to single out a person for further questioning? Since September 11 various elements throughout the intelligence and law enforcement communities have worked together to provide border officials with the necessary tools to identify false passports without compromising sensitive intelligence information. Something as simple as the date or place the passport was issued can indicate that a passport is fraudulent or altered, alerting immigration officials that they are dealing with an individual who warrants greater scrutiny.

(S//SI) The Counterintelligence and HUMINT Support Product Line's Persona Analysis Team (PAT) was formed to explore ways that SIGINT could further contribute to this effort. Some work had already been accomplished on the issue of passports, including the development of new tools to parse travel-related information. SIGINT was also used to identify irregular travel documents.

(S//SI) One line of reporting focused on Pakistani passports used by people traveling between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Other reports alerted border guards to the use of Iranian passports that did not fit the Iranian national passport model, alerting border officials to suspicious travelers.

(S//SI) Recognizing the potential of using SIGINT to identify networks and individuals who create and use fraudulent persona identifiers - like passports and national identification cards -- the PAT's goals are to **explore and develop persona identifiers as SIGINT targets** and encourage collaboration among Intelligence Community analysts. The team's first target is Venezuela, a country demonstrating much corruption (including in its passport issuance authority) has close ties to Cuba, and a prominent Ba'athist element within its government.

(S//SI) The effort involves research of open-source material and Anchory, the use of new tools such as [FASTSCOPE](#) to identify patterns, organizations and individuals of interest, the development of key terms for query and collection efforts, and collaboration with other product lines, directorates and members throughout the Intelligence Community.

(S//SI) One example of such collaboration can be seen in the effort to identify passport checksums. Some countries issue passport serial numbers that contain a checksum, so when certain mathematical calculations are done against a portion of the number, the result corresponds to another part of the serial number. Collaboration between the CIA, NSA's PAT and S3T, and mathematicians from IDA/CCR-Princeton\* have helped to identify checksums used by various countries, which can then be used to scrutinize passports issued by those countries to determine validity. By comparing identified checksums against passport numbers appearing in traffic, NSA can then alert law enforcement officials to suspicious travelers.

(S//SI) **The team's efforts have already shown promise.** In four months, when the team provides a second SITR brief to Gen Quirk, it is likely that not only will the recommendation be to continue the tiger team's work but to make it part of an expanded target tracking effort integrating persona analysis tools with Social Network Analysis, geolocation, SITA travel data, and contact chaining for a truly robust, multidiscipline, cross-organizational capability to track targets.

\*(U) Notes:

IDA/CCR = Institute for Defense Analyses/Center for Communications Research (see [further info](#))

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