



(S//SI) Spanish Partner Seeks NSA Assistance with Deployment to Afghanistan

FROM: Michael Clifford
Country Desk Officer (CDO) Spain (DP12)
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(S//SI) Spanish SIGINT unit going to Herat in November; first-ever such deployment for the Spaniards.

(S//SI) Although Spain's coalition efforts in Afghanistan have been ongoing for some time, the NSA SIGINT relationship with Spain hasn't directly contributed to the effort. The scenario will change dramatically this autumn when the Spanish intelligence service, the National Intelligence Center (Centro Nacional de Inteligencia, CNI), deploys a SIGINT Unit to Herat, Afghanistan. Spain currently has a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Herat and a Forward Support Base in Qaleh-Ye Now. The planned deployment of a SIGINT Unit, however, will be a first for CNI and has generated a laundry list of questions and requests for NSA support.



(U) Spanish soldier at Herat Airport in Afghanistan (Reuters)

(S//SI) In response to CNI queries for assistance, the CDO and Country Team rapidly assembled a cadre of NSA experts on the Afghanistan SIGINT environment, NSA capabilities, support to military operations, personnel training requirements, and our own information needs. The goal is the development of a qualified CNI SIGINT Unit that will successfully meet Spain's national force protection and counterintelligence goals and satisfy NSA and coalition informational needs in the theater.

(S//SI) In July, FAD [NSA/Foreign Affairs Directorate] hosted four CNI representatives from Madrid to attend a two-day conference to discuss CNI's deployment schedule and offer lessons learned from NSA experiences in Afghanistan. SID's Office of Regional Targets and the National Tactical Information Office played important roles in characterizing the environment and helping CNI prepare the SIGINT Unit to operate as an "expeditionary force." Additionally, the International Crime and Narcotics (ICN) Product Line discussed the physical dangers of operating in the narco-trafficking regions of Western Afghanistan. ICN also emphasized NSA's specific information needs as we currently have no SIGINT coverage in the Herat region. FAD also provided updates to the CNI visitors on coalition operations in Afghanistan and the scheduled deployment of CENTER ICE, the tactical, secure multi-communications platform allowing real-time SIGINT information sharing and collaboration among coalition partners.

(S//SI) Now that the CNI delegation has returned to Spain, our task is to fulfill our commitments to provide informational and technical solutions. FAD has initiated a request for release of specific Digital Receiver Technology (DRT) capabilities to enable the SIGINT Unit to exploit the communications they are expected to encounter. Pending approvals, the FAD Technical Services Group will develop a scalable, shareable solution that will address CNI's needs and NSA collection gaps. Finally, in response to approved recommendations, FAD will direct a timeline for DRT programming, operator training, deployment, and installation that will culminate in CNI's November SIGINT Unit deployment.

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