(U) SIGINT Mission Thread 3

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Achieving a Balance Between Discovery and Production

(U//FOUO) The key to good decision making is not knowledge. It is understanding. We are swimming in the former. We are desperately lacking in the latter."* In the afterward to his 2005 #1 national bestseller *Blink -- The Power of Thinking Without Thinking,* author Malcolm Gladwell provides his perspective on the danger of confusing information (collection) with understanding (analysis). Gladwell has captured one of the biggest challenges facing SID today. Our costs associated with this information overload are not only financial, such as the need to build data warehouses large enough to store the mountain of data that arrives at our doorstep each day, but also include the more intangible costs of too much data to review, process, translate, and report. SID's first strategic goal for 2011-2015, the challenge to revolution analysis, is aimed squarely at this tension between information and understanding.

(U//FOUO) In order to revolutionize intelligence, we must "fundamentally shift our analytic approach from a production to a discovery bias, radically increasing operational impact across all mission domains."** With so much data at our fingertips, we must learn how to push the lesser value data to the side, move data that needs less analysis directly to our customers, and provide ourselves the needed agility to dig deep into the toughest analytic problems to produce understanding from well-hidden information.

(U//FOUO) SIGINT Mission Thread 3 challenges us to "achieve a balance between discovery and production that enables analysts to maximize their focus on uniquely cryptologic problems, to include large-scale data analysis and the discovery of new targets and their communications."*** Our first task in achieving this goal is to build a strong foundation of existing analytic techniques. The Analytic Body of Knowledge (ABoK, for short) defines common terminology and captures existing analytic methodologies. The ABoK web portal opened for business on 17 May 2011, and has seen a steady increase in use as your fellow analysts document useful tradecraft and explore new ideas. Through 13 June 2011, over 100 analysts have visited the ABoK portal. You can learn more about the ABoK by visiting the web portal directly or reading the accompanying WikiInfo article.

(U//FOUO) In a closely related activity, we are also working to document the depth and breadth of analytics and the function they perform or will perform. This knowledge is being captured in the Analytics Taxonomy (A-Tax, for short). Once substantially populated, A-Tax will provide the mechanism to effectively track and promote collaborative analytic development across the 5-eyes enterprise. The number of users accessing the taxonomy has more than doubled to over 80 just in the last three weeks. Working together, the ABoK and A-Tax will provide analysts access to and influence over shared analytic tradecraft and automated analytics. We invite you to visit the ABoK and A-Tax portals and start documenting existing tradecraft and analytics.

(U//FOUO) We will use the SigDev Training Roadmap to baseline existing discovery skills across the analysis enterprise, identify critical knowledge gaps, and work to provide the necessary training and skills needed to develop new tradecraft. These advanced tradecrafts could include things such as target behavioral modeling and cyber attribution. The training will also include familiarization with new discovery frameworks such as those described in the Question Focused Dataset (QFD)

Strategy and the Revised Metadata Strategy. These strategies define on-going additions to the corporate analytic architecture. Of course, NSA and the FVEY community have been coming up with (and implementing) QFDs for years. What has long been missing is a central location where QFDs and related analytics can be easily shared, discovered and evaluated among the analytic community. That's the basic idea behind GAMBIT, a new prototype web portal that will serve as a key enabler of the AMOD QFD Strategy. GAMBIT is slated for an alpha release in late July. We encourage you to learn more about it on the AMOD QFD Strategy SpySpace page.

(S//SI//REL) In addition, over the next 18-24 months, we will work with each of the S2 GCMs to develop product line discovery strategies, to help them shift emphasis towards discovery activities and to increase the customer impact of our intelligence production.

(S//SI//REL) SIGINT Mission Thread 3 is working to empower the enterprise to leverage our existing tradecraft arsenal, to equip the enterprise with the capability and skills to forge new tradecrafts, and to imbue the enterprise with a new culture that values and encourages the development of understanding over the collection of information. Please join us in the journey.

(U) Footnotes

* p. 256.

** SIGINT Strategy: 2011-2015 (1/25/2011), http://████████/files/1027/pdf/2011-01-25_SIGINT_Strategy.pdf (last visited 6/13/2011), p. 4.

*** AMOD_FY11.12_Deliverables.Feb11.pptx.