



(S//SI) CSG CIA: What Would the President Want to Know on Inauguration Day?

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(TS//SI) The NSA presence in the DCI Operation Center on the 7th floor of CIA's Old Headquarters Building at Langley is known as CSG CIA. On 12 hour shifts, among other duties, the NSA Representative selects 20 to 30 SIGINT reports from a continuous stream of about 500 reports which flow in from NSAW, the RSOCS, and SIGINT partners worldwide. One factor remains paramount in the selection: what would the President, Vice President, and other "Principals" want to know about today?

(TS//SI) Every day, the Director of Central Intelligence is responsible for providing intelligence briefings to the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, the National Security Advisor, and several other principals. The briefings are put together by knowledgeable, poised, hard-working CIA agents assemble on the 7th floor at Langley. Junior analysts, known as the President's Analytic Support Staff, or PASS, arrive around midnight to fuse all-source intelligence into professional-quality desk-top published briefings known as the President's Daily Brief (PDB) and the Senior Executive Intelligence Brief (SEIB).

(TS//SI) Their first stop is to collect the papers from their box in the DCI Ops Center -- 3 inches or more of photocopies filled over the past 24 hours by Ops Center analysts and watch officers, including NSA'ers. Around 0330 the Senior briefers arrive, first checking in with the desk officers in the DCI Operation Center, and assemble their briefing packages, which will be dressed in gold-embossed leather binders. By 0630 limousines with drivers take on their passengers to travel to the White House, State Department, the Pentagon, or wherever else the Principals may be that day.

(U) But today is no ordinary day. It is 20 January 2005, President Bush's Inauguration Day. The entire front wall of the DCI Op Center displays streaming video feeds from CNN, BBC, and the major news networks, showing scenes from last night's "Black Tie and Boots Ball", the slushy streets closed for the parade, black limousines and white police cars set against a gray sky, and newscasters in wool coats standing before the steps of the Capitol.

(TS//SI) Such images are in my mind as I scan incoming reports, on topics ranging from Russian missile launches to the Sunni insurgency, Indonesian tsunami relief to unrest in the Middle East. Which near real-time SIGINT report is important enough to warrant interrupting the festivities today? Is one of them yours? As I place each printed report from NSA into a box labeled "POTUS" (President of the U.S.), I think of the dedicated work and consistency of our chase for the intelligence that makes a difference.

(S//SI) The author is a Greek language intern, on a 90-day PCS tour to CSG CIA.

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