



**(U//FOUO) Interview with ... [REDACTED] Chief, SIGINT
Development - Strategy and Governance (SSG)**

FROM: [REDACTED]
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(U) Here's another in our series of interviews with SID leaders...

- (U) What was your most memorable SIGINT job?

(S//SI) I was a contractor Mission Director for SIGINT Operations aboard the USS Observation Island launch-support ship. We sat near the coast of the Kamchatka Peninsula for three months at a time and collected telemetry associated with Soviet Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM), Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBM), and Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBM) reentry vehicles.



USS Observation Island

(S//SI) Soviet Navy trawlers used to follow us around, attempting to do SIGINT collection of their own against us! Their boats were relatively small, and the seas could get pretty rough in that part of the Pacific. Sometimes we could see Soviet operators sitting with their headsets on, listening, even as their boat was being tossed about. Because of its larger size, Observation Island is much more stable. In fact, when a huge new X-Band radar antenna was installed on the ship at our homeport in Japan some years ago, steps were taken to make sure that the ship would not be too top-heavy: dozens of cement trucks dumped their loads into the hold of the ship for three days running. Weather permitting, the antenna could be turned into the wind and used as a sail when the ship was in transit.

- (U) What was your first job at the Agency?

(U//FOUO) After retiring from a career in the U.S. Army (Chief Warrant Officer), I hired on with the company ESL/TRW as a system engineer responsible for maintaining a mainframe-based digital signal processing system. I worked as a TRW contractor here at NSA in the Office of Weapons and Space for many years. Then, in 1989, I became an Agency employee. My first job was branch chief of W323, Analysis Engineering, where we managed the development of digital recorders, intercept receivers, and signals analysis tools.

- (U) If you could change one thing at the Agency, what would it be?

(U//FOUO) I think that we could consider the idea of designing our tools and interfaces so that personnel at different skill levels can use them. Many of our applications seem to be designed for expert users, one-size-fits-all. Yet, there will always be entry level employees, to include junior military, who may not have the background knowledge to make full use all of the tools' capabilities without considerable training investment. If we could run different "levels" of our applications - one for beginners, another for experts - it would really help the new people become productive faster. The "beginners" version would be more intuitive and do more to help guide the users on how to use it. In effect, the software would be helping perform OJT.

- (U) What's the most exciting project for the future that your organization is currently working on?

(S//SI) SID is standing up the Global Network Development Activity (GNDA) as a means for closing the SIGINT Development gap for Special Source accesses and pursuing the development of targets across multiple accesses. To the greatest extent possible, Special Source, end point and FORNSAT access data feeds will be exploited in the GNDA in order to create as accurate a view of Global Information Infrastructure access environments. Appropriate components from

Corporate and Target Office SIGINT Development organizations - SSO (Special Source Operations, S332), CES (Cryptanalysis and Exploitation Services, S31), and RAD (NSA/Research Associate Directorate) are co-locating in the GNDA to team on these tasks. In this way, we are removing stovepipes and bringing about close cross-organizational collaboration on high priority targets and SSO access programs.

(U//FOUO) For more information on GNDA, see their [webpage](#).

(U//FOUO) *See other interviews in this series:*

- [Interview with... Fran Fleisch, China & Korea \(S2B\) Production Manager](#)
- [Interview with... Deborah Maklowski, NSA/CSS Senior Intelligence Authority and IA Skill Community Advocate](#)
- [Interview with... Carl Johnson, Assistant Deputy Director for Customer Relationships \(S1\)](#)
- [Interview with... \[REDACTED\] Technical Director, Strategic Intelligence Issues \(S17\)](#)
- [Interview with... Jim Cusick, SID/Assistant Deputy Director for Data Acquisition \(S3\)](#)

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