

**(S//SI//REL) Special-Delivery SIGINT: How NSA Got Reports to US Negotiators In Time for Them
To Be of Value**

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(S//SI//REL) Imagine that you represent the US at an international forum. You and your allies from other nations are trying to win a key vote, but the opposition camp is lobbying furiously and it's really coming down to the wire. You would dearly love to obtain some SIGINT that lets you know what the other side is up to, wouldn't you? But if the meetings are being held in a remote location, how can NSA get it to you?

(S//SI//REL) For scenarios like the above, NSA improvises! Recently I was fortunate to serve as the NSA on-the-ground support to just such an international forum - the meeting of the International Whaling Commission. "*The International Whaling Commission?*" you ask. The IWC recently held its 59th annual meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, where the 77-member commission voted on several whale conservation measures, which the US government supports. When the meeting ended on 1 June, the anti-whaling camp won, but the outcome was not clear going in.

(S//SI//REL) Japan again hoped to end the 21-year-old moratorium on commercial whaling, but failing that, lobbied for votes supporting other pro-whaling proposals. New Zealand had the target access, and collected and provided insightful SIGINT that laid out the lobbying efforts of the Japanese and the response of countries whose votes were so coveted. US officials were anxious to receive the latest information during the actual negotiations in Anchorage. But how do you get GCSB* SIGINT to the IWC Chair at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage?

Japanese

(U) Japanese delegates listen on the opening day of the International Whaling Commission meeting in Anchorage, Alaska in this handout photo taken May 28, 2007. (Reuters)

(S//SI//REL) Everything comes together in the global cryptologic enterprise. We contacted the Alaska Mission Operations Center (AMOC) at Elmendorf AFB in Anchorage and were assured that they could accommodate us, even though we would be showing up at work on the Sunday before Memorial Day and working the holiday. Department of Commerce funded the TDY for a Commerce Intelligence Analyst and me, NSA's External Representative to Commerce. I admit to being skeptical that we would get all AMOC had promised - immediate access to NSANet and MAUI. But it was really true! In no time the airmen on duty had me up and running on NSANet with access to MAUI and a working printer.

(S//SI//REL) The time difference from New Zealand to Alaska worked in our favor, as the very latest collection was ready for distribution first thing in the morning, before the IWC convened. The AMOC is located about 20 miles from the hotel where the IWC meeting took place. I took a 30-minute cab ride to the AMOC daily at 7:00 a.m. in order to retrieve the latest SIGINT products, which I placed in my locked bag. My Commerce colleague picked me up in her rented vehicle and together we couriered the SIGINT to the hotel. The US delegation had a private conference room with a lock. We arranged to have the room emptied at a specific time and then distributed the material to the fully cleared delegates to read in silence. When everyone finished we couriered the material back to the AMOC and shredded it.

(S//REL) We knew the delegates valued the material simply because they took time from their very hectic schedules to be there and read it. The pointing and nodding was also a good indicator. Two US delegates from Commerce and two from State read, as well as two New Zealand and one Australian delegate. Was the outcome worth the effort? The Australian, New Zealand, and American delegates would all say "yes." I believe the whales would concur.

(U) Notes:

*GCSB = New Zealand's Government Communications Security Bureau