

(S//SI//REL) A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the NSA-Ethiopian Relationship

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(S//SI//REL) The NSA-Ethiopian SIGINT relationship continues to thrive.*

(S//SI//REL) I recently had an opportunity to travel to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to conduct training in traffic analysis for our Ethiopian partners in SIGINT. This was my first trip to the Deployed SIGINT Operations Center (DSOC), aka Operation Lion's Pride, and an excellent opportunity for me to interact firsthand with those who work so hard in our behalf.

DSOC

(S//SI//REL) My first week in country included a visit to the US Embassy and briefs on each of the three missions conducted at Lion's Pride by the deployed analysts from the 741st MI Battalion. I was familiar with the outstanding work produced by the analysts and the Ethiopian linguists but I didn't have an appreciation of all the hard work that goes into running the site. Working with the partners to process traffic and produce reportable transcripts is enough to keep everyone busy, but the job doesn't end there. The additional duties each of the deployed soldiers has -- from working with vehicle contracts to the maintenance of equipment at the three remote sites -- are just as time-consuming as the mission. The language barrier is significant, and something as simple as arranging to have the grass cut at the site can easily take several hours.

(S//SI//REL) I began teaching the class the following week; it was attended by both soldiers from the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and Ethiopian civilians from the Information Network Security Agency (INSA). The relationship between the ENDF and INSA at the site is similar to the one our own military shares with NSA as the "[CSS](#)" part of NSA/CSS.

(S//SI//REL) Everyone in the class was excited and eager to learn. The students' enthusiasm was important, as it helped overcome some of the challenges involved in teaching a group of non-native English speakers with varying degrees of English comprehension and SIGINT analysis experience. The proficiency level of the students ranged from soldiers with no analysis background to professionals who had many years of SIGINT experience and the ability to instantly recognize a [Fibonacci sequence](#). The latter helped immeasurably as they worked with their colleagues in their native Amharic to ensure everyone had full comprehension of the course material.

(S//SI//REL) The two-week class ended with a graduation ceremony for all 32 students. The ENDF Signal Regiment Commander was on hand to present each of the graduates with a Certificate of Training signed by the INSA Technical Intelligence Director. I felt this cross-organizational recognition was appropriate, as it was symbolic of the cooperative nature of the soldier-civilian relationship at Operation Lion's Pride.

Ethiopian soldier and civilian pose together

class photo

(S//SI//REL) Left: Similar to NSA/CSS, soldiers and civilians work hand-in-hand at Lion's Pride. Right: Class photo

(Click for larger view)

(S//SI//REL) The trip was a great success for two very important reasons. First, this was the first time many of the students had received any type of SIGINT training. The Ethiopians who support Lion's Pride now possess the ability to conduct analysis on HF message externals where none was previously being done. More importantly, however, is the strengthening of the relationship between NSA, the ENDF and INSA. Feedback from Ethiopian leadership of both the DSOC and INSA has been positive and we in Georgia are eager to continue developing the relationship between us and our Ethiopian counterparts.

(U) Notes:

* (U) See earlier articles on this topic:

- (U//FOUO) [In the Intelligence Business, What's the Most Important Language to Understand? ... English! -- An Interview with \[REDACTED\]](#) (posted 10/24/08)
- (S//SI//REL) [Third Party Relationship with Ethiopia Fills Intelligence Gap](#) (posted 3/14/07)
- (S//SI//REL) [NSA, Ethiopians Take SIGINT Partnership to New Level](#) (posted 8/25/06)
- (S//SI//REL) [Expanding Joint US-Ethiopian SIGINT Collection](#) (posted 4/06/06)
- (U) [LION'S PRIDE - Fighting Terrorism on the Horn of Africa](#) (posted 3/01/05)

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