



(U) Deep Target Knowledge

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(U//FOUO) Now that you know where your target is and you have an idea of how it operates and who its friends are, its time to really learn who it is and what makes it tick. Analysts often overlook the importance of understanding the psychology and culture of their target. They may erroneously allow themselves to categorize certain scenarios or actions as "unthinkable".

(C//SI) One way of avoiding such failures of imagination is to operate, to the maximum extent possible, inside our target's Conceptual Space. This is not to be confused with the target's Information Space, which has come to mean the target's systems of communicating and storing information and their content. The Information Space is tied to the target's technology and is, in fact, what we as SIGINT analysts target and collect against.

(C//SI) The target's Conceptual Space on the other hand is the entirety of his frame of reference - its culture (social, religious, ethnic, national, organizational) and, at the level of the individual, its personality. To try to operate within the target's Conceptual Space is to try to live inside its head, to understand enough about it and its milieu that we have a good sense of what it means, what it is capable of doing, and how it should react. This has little, if anything, to do with technology or what we collect and everything to do with how we assess what we have collected and the context into which we put it for our readers.

(C//SI) The objective is to be able to understand the target's communications and documents as their originators did and as their intended recipients were to have understood them. Clearly that requires having knowledge of the subject domain (nuclear physics, trade, avionics, etc). But it also requires a deep understanding of the relevant cultural context (national, religious or ideological, ministerial, professional, etc, and their various permutations). The key to understanding that cultural context is command of the relevant language(s), both at the general and the culture-specific level. Vocabulary can, and often does, have more than denotative value; it can carry culture-bound baggage that elicits a predictable emotional response from the cultural insider. For the intelligence analyst, "getting" the cultural reference is often critical to fully understanding what is going on. Unfortunately, there are any number of examples of analysts in the Intelligence Community coming to erroneous conclusions because they lacked sufficient language and target depth to understand material, actions, or events within the proper cultural framework.

(C//SI) Once an analyst has the skills and knowledge to operate inside their target's Conceptual Space, gaining access to the target's Information Space, particularly its private Information Space, can lead to a virtuous circle where access to the Information Space improves the analyst's knowledge of the Conceptual Space, further increasing the ability to exploit what is

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extracted from the Information Space.

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