



(U) Translators for Hire

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(U) There's a new acronym floating around the Intelligence Community: NVTC. Have you heard of it? The **National Virtual Translation Center**, established in February of 2003, serves as a clearinghouse for interagency use of translators. There are fifteen different IC agencies enjoying the services of the NVTC -- and due to the recent emergence of a finalized policy, NSA is now one of them!

(U) So the obvious question is: Why do we need the NVTC when the Intelligence Community already employs translators? The answer is that the members of the IC are faced with an overwhelming volume of material requiring translation, some of which is in uncommon languages or dialects. The NVTC was not designed to replace the foreign language translation efforts of existing agencies, but rather to augment and supplement those capabilities.

(U) The NVTC hires government employees, academics, and people from the private sector to translate government documents on a full-time, part-time, and contractual basis. They also employ linguists who are military reservists (their work on behalf of NVTC counts towards their reserve duties) and students at the Defense Language Institute in California. The NVTC provides competitive rates of \$26-\$38 an hour depending on the language. They recruit linguists via advertisements in U.S. newspapers, publicity on radio and television, etc.

(U//FOUO) While the center itself is located in Washington, DC, the majority of the center's work is completed in the field. First, client agencies send their untranslated documents to the NVTC, which provides an estimate on what the translation job will cost. (Very short translation jobs are done for free.) Once the estimate has been accepted, the job is farmed out to linguists wherever they may be in the country. The linguists are not told where the documents originated or which agency is the client. Linguists who work on classified materials (as high as TS//SI) receive their assignments via secure channels in NVTC branch offices or other government facilities. For unclassified projects, linguists are able to work from home.

(U//FOUO) All translations undergo quality control before release to the client. For example, documents in Russian are checked by the same level 4-5 linguists who support the "hotline" between Moscow and Washington!

(U//FOUO) As noted above, SID has a newly established policy on how it will interact with the NVTC. See this document (SID Management Directive Number 408) at this URL:

(U) In part two of this article (coming soon), we will interview Everette Jordan, the NVTC director.

(U) For more information on the NVTC, see its Internet web page at: <http://www.nvtc.gov>.

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