



Counterintelligence News and Developments

News, Trends, and Analysis on CI and Security Issues

Foreign Video Crews: A Multidiscipline Threat

Introduction

During the past year, the Defense Investigative Service (DIS) has received numerous reports of suspicious requests for foreign video crews to visit cleared US companies. Following a similar pattern in most cases, a foreign television news crew requests to do a documentary on a US company's advanced or critical (dual-use) technology of known collection interest to the foreign country.

The Technique

As a *modus operandi* (MO), the use of a video film crew proves a highly effective method for collecting technical information, falling under the more general MO known as a "foreign visit." According to cleared US industry reporting to DIS of security countermeasures concerns, the foreign visit continues to be the second most frequently used MO to collect information after the "unsolicited request for information." While the foreign visit puts the collector at greater risk, it also positions them to possibly do great damage to cleared US companies.

A foreign entity, which gains access to a cleared facility, usually fills some collection requirements. More specifically, a foreign film crew can provide a historical audio and video record that can be reviewed numerous times. This record becomes the "ground truth" to calibrate other imagery or measurement and signature intelligence collection systems: it can capture biographic data; it catches audio "slip-ups" and background noises; and it provides excellent background cover for human intelligence (HUMINT) operators to ask questions. *This MO is one of the best for intelligence collection because a trained human collector, in conjunction with a video camera, combines HUMINT, imagery intelligence (IMINT), and signals intelligence (SIGINT) disciplines into one collection package resulting in a "multidiscipline" collection effort.* Depending on the type of film used (infrared), a video camera can also record differences in temperature, thereby adding measurement and signature intelligence (MASINT) to the collection equation.

While some of these foreign visit requests are legitimate, two requests were identified as economic espionage attempts. In these incidents, probably either foreign companies attempted to dominate a particular technology area or a foreign government attempted to acquire technology to avoid the costs and time associated with lengthy R&D. Often, these foreign companies lead the *world in one aspect of a technology such as hardware* but lag in other aspects such as software, making them less efficient and not competitive with industry leaders. In one request, the foreign individual repeatedly inquired about the location of "classified research."

In another instance, the foreign video crew hired a US consultant to act as a potentially unwitting "researcher" for identifying and locating US targets of interest. This also fits a known MO of many nontraditional threat countries of hiring consultants and researchers to identify and locate technology for exploitation.

Lesson Learned

Oddly enough, while cleared facilities often prohibit US employees from bringing cameras onto the grounds, these same facilities all too frequently allow foreign video film crews onto their same grounds. Who is the greater threat? The best security countermeasure prohibits access of any foreign video film crew into a cleared facility. Often, a video presentation can be prepared by the company public affairs or marketing office, under controlled conditions, for public release.

This story reflects an actual incident discovered by Murray Associates during the course of an electronic eavesdropping detection assignment. Location: the headquarters of a multinational US corporation. We were able to afford the client an opportunity to monitor the activities of the spies in real time. This case is documented and verified. Call us. We can help you keep your information where it belongs too.



908-832-7900
www.spybusters.com
Box 668, Oldwick, NJ 08858