

Quarterly message from the Counterintelligence (CI)/Counterterrorism (CT) Office

In September of this year, I introduced the CI/CT Office to the JSC community. My plan is to communicate with you on a quarterly basis to pass information with a CI/CT focus that should be of interest to you. This quarter I'll focus on the Constellation Program and the effect of this effort on the JSC community from a CI perspective. NASA is the recognized, preeminent global leader when it comes to space exploration. When President Bush directed NASA to return to the moon and ultimately to Mars, it reflected the nation's confidence in NASA's capabilities and set the course for the organization's future. While this recognition and exceptional ability is reflective of NASA's scientific and engineering community, it is also noticed by our adversaries.

Every year, the Defense Security Service (DSS) publishes a report called "Technology Collection Trends," which identifies collection trends related to foreign collection attempts directed at the defense industry. In layman's terms, this report provides a snapshot of the technologies that generate the most foreign interest during a specific period in time (usually the previous year). Without providing a thesis on the 2006 DSS report, here is a sample of the breakdown of targeted technology (reported):

Information Systems – 21.8 percent
Aeronautics – 9.7 percent
Space Systems – 6.5 percent

A quick review of the statistics provided above reveals that technology associated with NASA accounts for 38 percent of targeted technology! This figure is actually lower than the true figure. I omitted most of the listed technologies for the sake of brevity. In order to avoid being an alarmist, I should mention that the DSS report/study is written/conducted with a focus on the military environment; however, we are all aware of the fact that space applications may be dual use, and therefore, vulnerable.

The challenge facing all NASA employees is conducting the vital mission of space exploration while protecting current/emerging technologies from becoming part of the DSS statistic. The global price tag on economic espionage is staggering. There is ample available literature describing how this type of activity has been used to cripple corporations and governments. Fortunately, the U.S. government and NASA have protective measures in place to help safeguard information. However, these mechanisms are only good if practiced. Unfortunately, the majority of information sought after and received by unauthorized individuals is received through human interaction. While this is a chilling realization, it also means that it can be prevented.

The Constellation Program represents the best space technology any nation can offer with regards to space exploration. This recognition is precisely why the JSC community is vulnerable to solicitation attempts. It should be the goal of every NASA employee to do their part in preventing our technologies from falling into the hands of unauthorized individuals or being illicitly collected by a foreign intelligence agency. Keeping our information secure will not only keep our great country technologically advanced, but

can ultimately save lives. Sharing information only with those entitled to the information is one way to help us stay off the pages of the DSS review. Reporting unauthorized attempts to obtain information to the CI Office is the best way to help protect our information “infrastructure.”

The U.S. government is spending vast sums of money to realize the dream of colonizing the moon and exploring Mars – the goals of the Constellation Program. It is everyone’s obligation to ensure we protect NASA’s technologies, maintain the advantage in space and fulfill the dreams of our nation.

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