

SID Today



Welcome! Saturday, 10 Nov 2012



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**(U) Japan: Eternal Land of the Rising Sun**

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(U//FOUO) *Introduction:* In advance of the upcoming PCS recruitment/information session ("[go PCS](#)"), SIGINT Deputy Director ██████████ shares his thoughts on his recent travels to Japan and the post-earthquake/ tsunami environment. SID encourages all employees to explore field opportunities now and in the future.

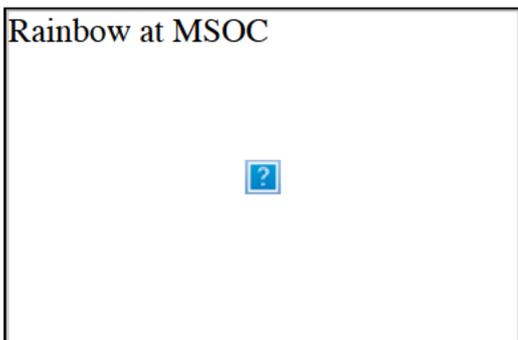
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(C//REL) Land of the Rising Sun and a home away from home-- for the last three decades I have always viewed my travels to Japan as returning to my home away from home. When assigned to Misawa Air Base, Japan, in 1980 for my first Cryptologic assignment, I was immediately taken with the country's beauty, the dignity and honorable nature of the Japanese people, and the wonderful mission that we had "on the hill" in Misawa. My three-year assignment, which provided the foundation for my SIGINT career, introduced me to lifelong friends and launched a love of electronics and new gadgets (I bought one of the first commercially available video cassette recorders, complete with a hard-wired (as in 8 ft long tethered cord) remote control.) My colleagues and I were blessed with a great mission, abundant cherry blossoms, terrific food and culture, and a great host nation -- we all wore a smile 24/7.

(S//REL) You can imagine my dismay when I received a call from [NSOC](#) during the early morning hours of March 11th alerting me to the magnitude 9.0 earthquake that triggered a tsunami on Japan's eastern coast and that wrought unimaginable destruction on this beautiful nation.

Rainbow at MSOC



We all know the story of the massive humanitarian effort that ensued and the concerns of a contaminated environment that essentially proved to be very much overstated. We established an Event Lead, ██████████ who did a masterful job of leading NSA's crisis response as our personnel played a key role in keeping policymakers apprised of what was actually unfolding on the island by reporting around-the-clock during the crisis. We worked closely with our Japanese counterparts who, not surprisingly, contacted our representative at Yokota Air Base to offer Japan's assistance to NSA

(remember what I stated about honorable), to ensure that our SIGINT mission was maintained.

(U) *Photo: Rainbow at Misawa, Japan.*

(S//REL) Worldwide newscasts carried stories of evacuations and departures for weeks on end. What has gone untold is how quickly life for Americans stationed in Japan returned to normal. I had the opportunity to visit our personnel stationed at Yokota (home to SUSLAJ--Special U.S. Liaison Activity Japan) and Misawa Air Bases earlier this summer, and can report that morale and esprit-de-corps was phenomenal. While everyone had a vivid recollection of what occurred the day of the magnitude 9.0 earthquake and tsunami (those of you at NSAW certainly remember where you were when the moderate 5.8 earthquake struck on August 23rd), the attitude in both locations was one of moving forward from the event and focusing on the future. Indeed, instead of locking in on the earthquake itself, the work force focused their comments on how adeptly and creatively mission was recovered and how they quickly regained a sense of normalcy in their daily lives. Knowing the phenomenal professionals that serve in our Extended Enterprise, this was no surprise.

(U//FOUO) What I did not anticipate prior to my most recent trip was how much our personnel contributed to the humanitarian clean-up and support effort following the quake. When I met with the Commander of Misawa Air Base, COL ██████████, USAF, to thank him for his outstanding support to the Misawa Security Operations Center ([MSOC](#)) immediately following the quake, he wanted to solely focus on the tremendous contributions that NSA's personnel had made in assisting the local populace with clean-up, food donations, and other support. Our NSAers and their families volunteered with the Red Cross, helped to prepare and distribute "grab-and-go" meals for the 13,000+ relief workers that funneled through Yokota Air base, and

comforted and assisted travelers temporarily stranded by diverted airline flights.

(S//REL) This sentiment was echoed during a stop in Tokyo while en route to Yokota, when I was hosted by Japan's National Director for SIGINT, Mr. [REDACTED], who spent an evening recalling the events of March 11th and thanking NSA, and the US Government writ large, for its support to his nation. I was left with a remarkable sense of pride in the resiliency of both the Japanese and US citizens who demonstrated great character and caring during such a dire time.

hot pools in Onsen, Japan



(U//FOUO) Speaking to the lingering after-effects, while the situation at and directly surrounding the most severely damaged nuclear power plants in Japan was and is very serious, the danger is very localized, and personnel at Misawa and Yokota were never at any point in danger of being exposed to radiation at a level to be of concern. During my TDY, it was amazing to see that across Japan, both in the big city of Tokyo, and in the more rural areas and towns in Northern Japan, the incredible state of buildings, overpasses, bridges, which seemed untouched by this 9.0 magnitude earthquake. The extraordinary engineering expertise and building standards in Japan limited damage from the earthquake itself, with the coastal areas that took the direct hit of the unprecedented tsunami suffering the most catastrophic damage. Events of the past few weeks here on the East Coast have reminded us that earthquakes and natural disasters, i.e. Hurricane Irene, can and do happen everywhere.

(U//FOUO) Japan has made remarkable strides in its recovery efforts. Although life in some regions will never be as it was before March 11th, it is true to say that the Japan's best days are ahead and its citizens are optimistically looking forward to the future. There is a concerted rebuilding effort in the areas affected by the tsunami, and the Japanese society has rebounded as probably no other nation could.

(S//REL) One more impression from my travel that I'd like to leave with you: the SIGINT mission continues and if you have been contemplating an assignment to the Far East, I strongly encourage you to look to Japan. There is a vibrant cryptologic community and one of the most hospitable, extremely family-friendly environments that our Agency has to offer; our personnel there continue to enjoy the outstanding Japanese cultural sites and traditions. Information will be forthcoming in the coming weeks on the benefits of taking a field assignment in Japan, and I strongly encourage you to consider a tour. With all of its natural beauty and splendid citizens I believe that you will readily understand why Japan is called the "Land of the Rising Sun."

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