



# Proper Use of NOFORN and REL TO Dissemination Control Markings

*A Quick Reference Guide for Two Dissemination Control Markings*

References:

- DODM 5200.01, Vol. 2, “DOD Information Security Program: Marking of Information”
- DODI 5200.48, “Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)”
- USD(I&S) Memo “Amplifying Guidance for Marking and Protecting DOD Information”

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# NOFORN

## Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals

“Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals” is an intelligence control marking indicating that information must not be shared with foreign nationals, international organizations, or anyone who isn’t a U.S. person. The authorized banner line marking is “NOFORN” and the authorized portion marking is “NF”. Its use must align with Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 710 and Intelligence Community Policy Guidance (ICPG) 403.1. It may only be applied to specific types of non-intelligence DOD information.



NOFORN is a necessary and important information dissemination control marking.



Use NOFORN only when necessary and authorized by regulations.



Improper use or misuse of NOFORN is an obstacle to collaborating with U.S. allies and partners, especially FIVE EYES (FVEY).



The NOFORN control marking is authorized only when the information **must not** be disclosed to any foreign entity — governments, organizations, or individuals — in any form, and its application is limited to specific types of information.

### 1. Intelligence Community (IC) – Classified Information

Applied to intelligence information only when warranted in accordance with the following:

- ICD 403, "Foreign Disclosure and Release of Classified National Intelligence," March 13, 2013
- ICPG 403 .1, "Criteria for Foreign Disclosure and Release of Classified National Intelligence," March 13, 2013

### 2. Department of Defense (DOD) Non-Intelligence – Classified Information

DOD personnel may apply the NOFORN dissemination control marking **only** to the following non-intelligence information categories (unless otherwise authorized):

- Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information (NNPI)
- Information under the National Disclosure Policy 1 (NDP-1)
- DOD Cover and Cover Support Activities
- Certain Intelligence information under ICD 710 or ICPG 403.1

ICD 710 is not applicable to classified military intelligence under NDP-1. Absence of NOFORN does not imply automatic foreign disclosure.

### 3. Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) – Unclassified

The NOFORN marking is authorized for use on specific types of CUI **only** if an FDO reviews and determines that there are international agreements or other arrangements in place that prohibit sharing it.

- Unclassified intelligence information that is properly designated as CUI
- NNPI marked as CUI
- DOD Unclassified Controlled Nuclear Information (UCNI)
- CUI related to DOD Cover and Cover Support Activities
- CUI subject to licensing or export control requirements

When appropriate, DOD Component Heads should create releasable versions of NOFORN-marked material to support information sharing, in alignment with:

- ICD 208, "Maximizing Utility of Analytic Products," January 9, 2017
- ICD 209, "Tearline Production and Dissemination," September 6, 2012



## Example



TOP SECRET//NOFORN

U.S. Prairie Command South  
Washington, D.C.

30 August 2025

(U) **Subject:** Special Report

(TS//NF) **Summary:** This section provides a high-level overview of the intelligence gathered regarding [specific adversary capabilities or actions]. Release of this information is strictly prohibited to foreign governments, foreign nationals, or non-US citizens without originator approval.


(TS//NF) Further detailed analysis reveals [specific details about adversary actions and capabilities]. This intelligence is not releasable to foreign nationals.

Classified By: Joseph Smith, DoGW Analyst  
Reason: 1.4(a)  
Downgrade To: Confidential on 20251115  
Declassify On: 20300515

TOP SECRET//NOFORN



## Example

	<p style="text-align: center;">CUI</p> <p style="text-align: center;">U.S. Prairie Command South Washington, D.C.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">August 2025</p> <p>(U) <b>Subject:</b> Special Report</p> <p>(U) <b>Summary:</b> This report contains sensitive intelligence information related to [SPECIFIC UNCLASSIFIED INTELLIGENCE TOPIC].</p> <p>(CUI) Dissemination of this information is strictly limited to U.S. citizens with a need-to-know, and is prohibited from release to foreign governments, foreign nationals, foreign organizations, or non-U.S. citizens.</p> <p>(CUI) Further detailed analysis reveals that [DETAILS OF THE ANALYSIS].</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Controlled by: OUSD(I&amp;S)IAP CUI category: UCNi LDC: NOFORN POC: Rob Williams, 703-555-1324</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CUI</p>
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# REL TO

## Releasable To

REL TO is a dissemination control marking signifying that the authorized information is releasable to U.S. citizens with the appropriate need-to-know, eligibility, and access, and to specific foreign nationals of specified countries, governments, or international organizations as approved by the responsible FDO.



Release to additional countries/international organizations requires an approved foreign disclosure decision by an FDO and must be applied only when warranted and consistent with law, regulation, or government-wide policy.



International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 3166 codes are used, with "USA" listed first (<https://www.iso.org/iso-3166-country-codes.html>).



When foreign disclosure is authorized, DOD and IC personnel should implement REL TO whenever possible to support mission and partner collaboration.





REL TO supports strategic, operational, and tactical level information sharing.



REL TO is authorized for use on all classified information once a favorable foreign disclosure decision has been made.

REL TO may be applied to CUI only if:



-  It is warranted and consistent with applicable law, regulation, government-wide, or DOD policy, and
-  The information is properly designated as CUI in accordance with the DOD CUI Program and DODI 5200.48, and an international agreement or arrangement is in place.



NOFORN must not be combined with REL TO or RELIDO in the banner line.



If a document has different portions marked with NOFORN and other foreign release markings, use only NOFORN in the banner line markings as it is the most restrictive and takes priority, per DODM 5200.01, Volume 2, Enclosure 4.



REL TO cannot be used in the overall classification of a document containing Foreign Government Information (FGI) portions unless the entire document is releasable to all countries listed.



“USA” must always appear first in REL TO country codes, with additional countries’ trigraphs or international organizations’ tetragraphs listed in alphabetical order.



Ensure all listed countries/international organizations are authorized to access the entire document; otherwise, restrict country listings to applicable portions only.



## Use REL TO:



When releasing information to foreign nationals of specific countries or international organizations.



In the banner line and portion markings when listing specific country/group trigraphs or tetragraphs (e.g., USA, FVEY).

### Example:

(S//REL TO USA, FVEY) The United States plans to send advanced missile systems etc.

## Use REL:



In portion markings when you are not listing all applicable countries/groups.



When there is more than one country.

- Country codes may be omitted from portion markings unless they are different from banner markings.

### Example:

(S//REL) The United States plans to send advanced missile systems etc.

\* Using the “REL” portion marking allows you to avoid listing multiple country codes:  
(S//REL TO USA, CAN, GBR, IKR, AFG, IRN, CHN, RUS, EST, AUS)





## Example



SECRET//REL TO USA, GBR

U.S. Prairie Command South  
Washington, D.C.

August 2025

(U) MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

(U) **SUBJECT:** Sample of a SECRET//REL TO USA, GBR Document

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(U) 1. This is a sample document showing the proper placement of classification and dissemination markings when information is SECRET and releasable to the United States and the United Kingdom (GBR).

(S//REL TO USA, GBR) 2. This paragraph contains classified information at the SECRET level that has been authorized for release to the governments of the United States and Great Britain. Only these two countries may receive this information.

(S//REL TO USA, GBR) 3. Markings in the banner line and portion markings must match and include "REL TO USA, GBR" to specify which foreign partners are allowed to access the content.

Classified By: Cynthia Watson, Director  
Derived From: SecDef Memo,  
dtd 20250824, Subj: \_\_\_\_\_  
Declassify On: 203000924

SECRET//REL TO USA, GBR



## VERIFY NOFORN/REL TO

### Original Classification:

Original Classification Authorities will adhere to the foreign disclosure process guidance as outlined in DODM 5200.45, “Original Classification Authority and Writing Security Classification Guide (SCG).”

### Derivative Classification:

Before applying NOFORN or REL TO control markings to your derivative document, verify by ensuring you are referencing authorized sources—such as a properly marked source document, an SCG, or other guidance issued by the OCA.

#### ☒ Confirm:

- Is the dissemination control authorized for use on this type of information?
  - IC Classified Information
  - DOD Non-Intelligence Classified Information
  - CUI, as specifically authorized

#### ☒ NOFORN:

- Is the information authorized?
  - IC
  - Authorized type of DOD non-intelligence information
- Does the classified information meet foreign disclosure restrictions in accordance with regulatory guidance, beyond just being classified?
- For CUI, has an FDO reviewed and confirmed that an agreement or policy prohibits foreign disclosure?

#### ☒ REL TO:

- Does an international agreement, favorable foreign disclosure determination, or arrangement exist?
- Has an FDO determined that release is authorized to specified country(s)/international organizations?
- Does an international agreement support disclosure if marking CUI with REL TO?

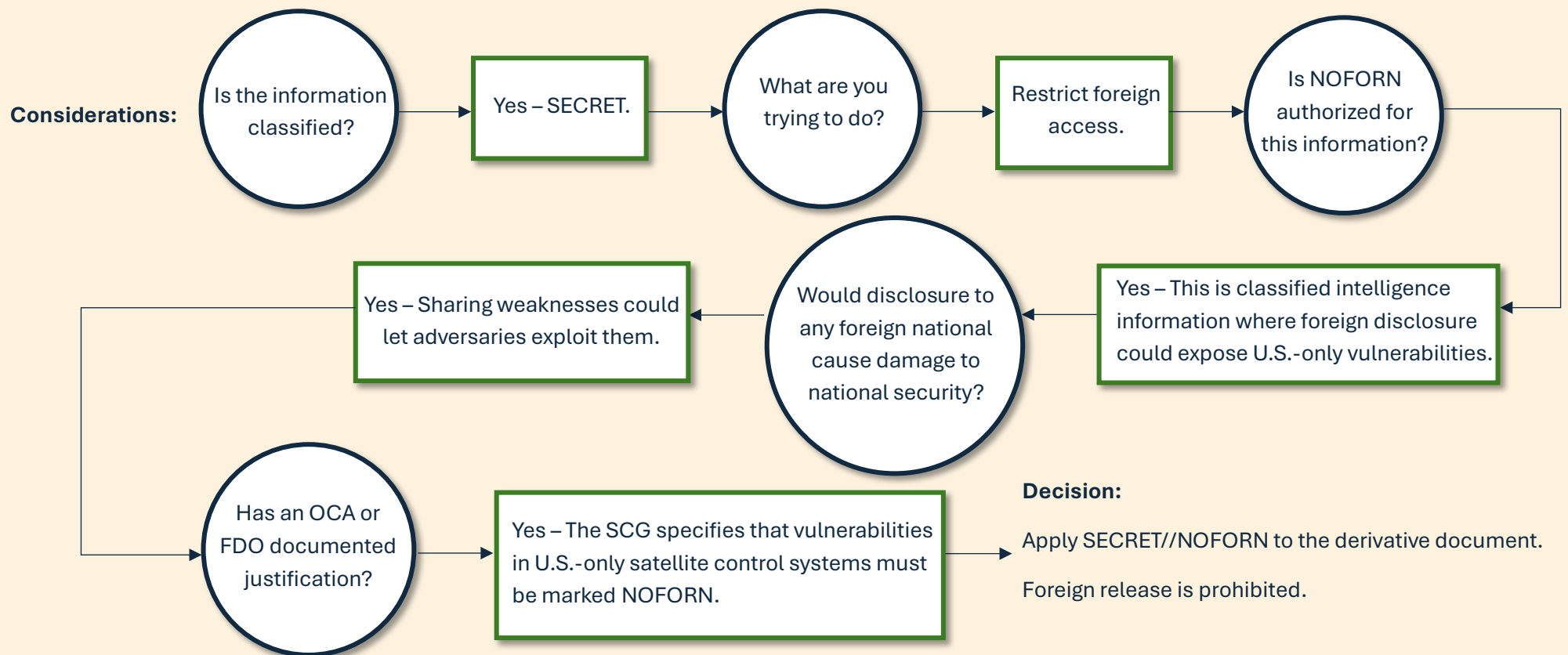


## NOFORN Sample Scenario

### Scenario:

A derivative classifier is preparing a classified report on vulnerabilities discovered during cybersecurity testing of a U.S. satellite command-and-control system.

- Source materials: An SCG and a previously classified **SECRET//NOFORN** report from the OCA.
- Content: The new report contains **classified details about specific weaknesses in the U.S. satellite control network** and internal mitigation strategies.



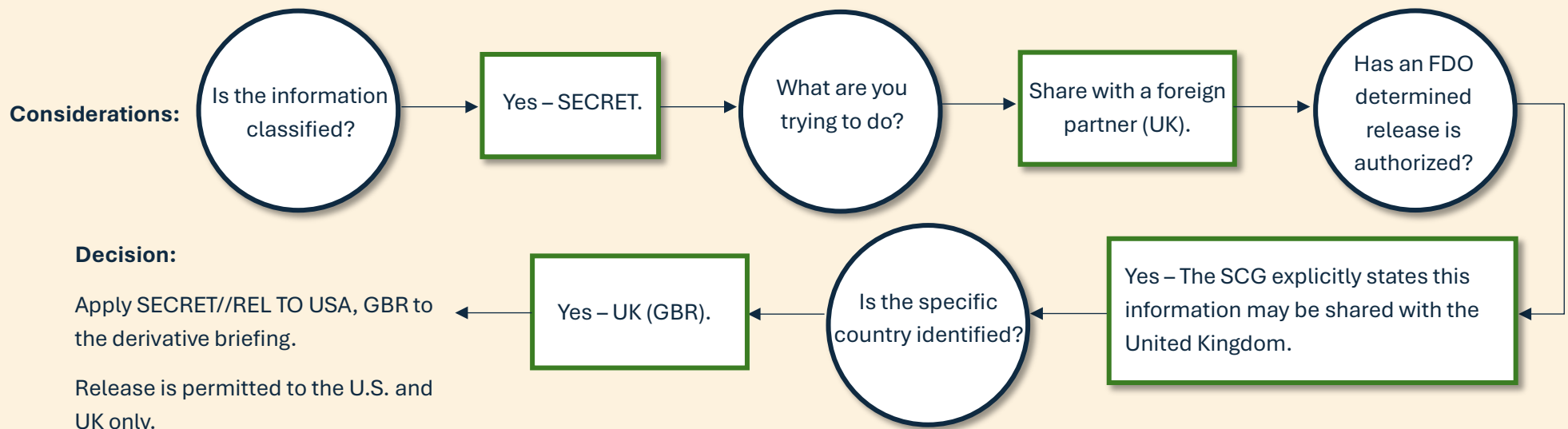


## REL TO Sample Scenario

### Scenario:

A derivative classifier is preparing a classified briefing on joint anti-piracy operations in the Indian Ocean that involve the United States and the United Kingdom.

- Source materials: An **SCG that authorizes the release of specific operational details to the United Kingdom (UK)** under a bilateral agreement.
- Content: The briefing discusses joint tactics, schedules, and lessons learned. The SCG specifies that operational details about these joint anti-piracy operations are classified at the **SECRET** level.



Questions regarding the requirements for use of the NOFORN or REL TO dissemination control marking on information should be directed to your organization's Security Manager. Additional resources are available at:

<https://www.cdse.edu/Training/Toolkits/Information-Security-Toolkit/>.