

# IBM Z TechBytes: MQ for z/OS Security 101

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## MQ RACF basics

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Channel encryption – securing communication

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Advanced message security – security end-to-end

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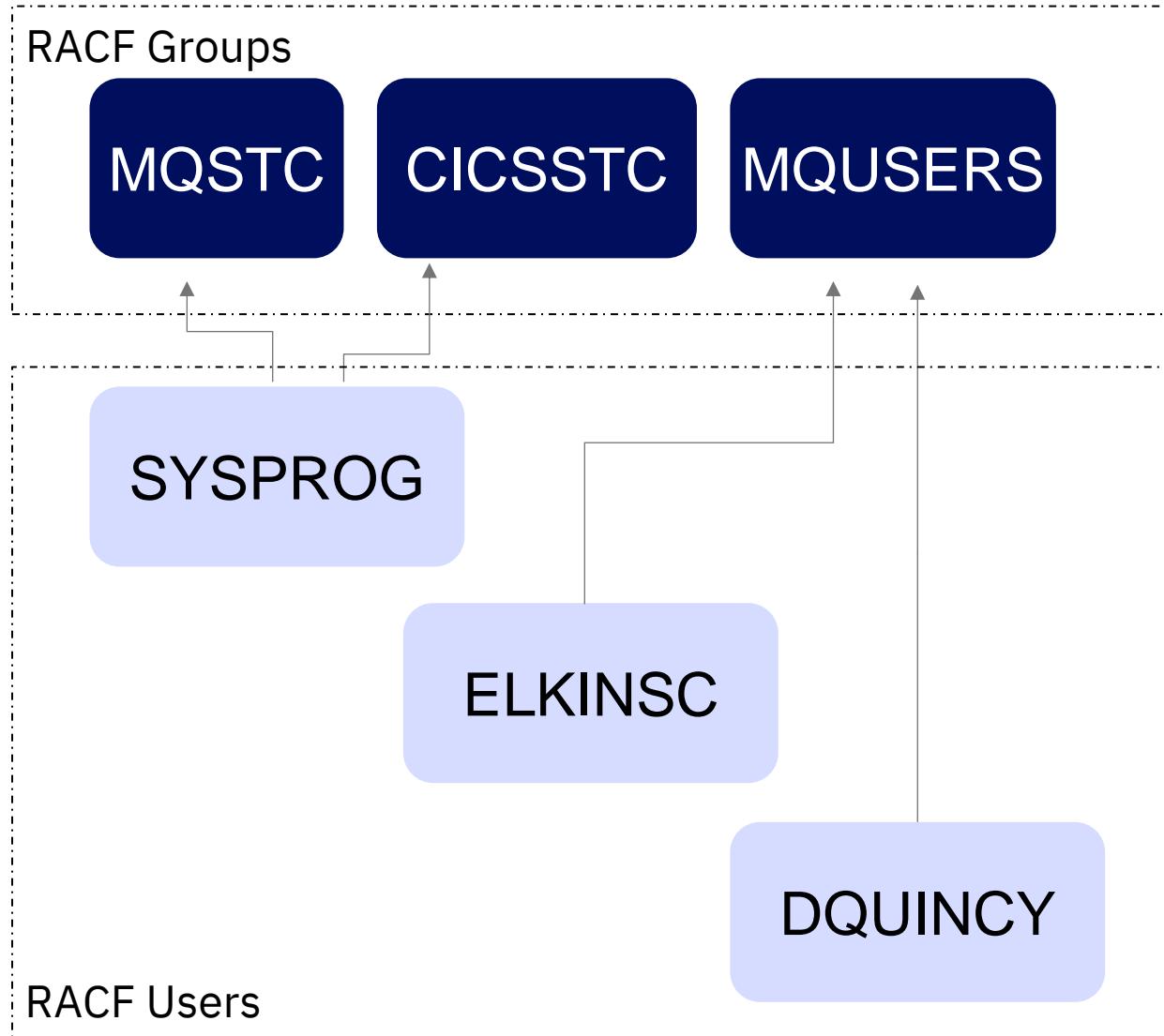
Data set encryption – securing data sets

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Performance considerations and what's new

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## RACF Groups and Users



```
//USER1R JOB NOTIFY=&SYSUID,MSGCLASS=H
//RACF EXEC PGM=IKJEFT01,REGION=0M
//STDERR DD SYSOUT=*
//STDOUT DD SYSOUT=*
//SYSTSPPRT DD SYSOUT=*
//SYSTSIN DD *
ADDGROUP MQSTC
CONNECT (SYSPROG) GROUP(MQSTC)
ADDGROUP CICSSTC
CONNECT (SYSPROG) GROUP(CICSSTC)
ADDGROUP MQUSERS
CONNECT (ELKINSC,DQUINCY) +
    GROUP(MQUSERS)
```

# Concept check: enabling security

```
ZQS1 DISPLAY SECURITY
CSQH015I ZQS1 Security timeout = 54 minutes
CSQH016I ZQS1 Security interval = 12 minutes
CSQH037I ZQS1 Security using uppercase classes
CSQH030I ZQS1 Security switches ...
CSQH031I ZQS1 SUBSYSTEM: OFF,
'ZQS1.NO.SUBSYS.SECURITY' found
CSQH040I ZQS1 Connection authentication ...
CSQH041I ZQS1 Client checks: OPTIONAL
CSQH042I ZQS1 Local bindings checks: OPTIONAL
CSQ9022I ZQS1 CSQHPDTC 'DISPLAY SECURITY' NORMAL
COMPLETION
```

Enable  
security



```
CSQH024I ZQS1 CSQHINIT SUBSYSTEM security switch
set ON, profile 'ZQS1.NO.SUBSYS.SECURITY' not found
CSQH024I ZQS1 CSQHINIT CONNECTION security switch
set ON, profile 'ZQS1.NO.CONNECT.CHECKS' not found
CSQH024I ZQS1 CSQHINIT COMMAND security switch set
ON, profile 'ZQS1.NO.CMD.CHECKS' not found CSQH021I
ZQS1 CSQHINIT CONTEXT security switch set OFF,
profile 'ZQS1.NO.CONTEXT.CHECKS' found CSQH021I
ZQS1 CSQHINIT ALTERNATE USER security switch set
OFF, profile 'ZQS1.NO.ALTERNATE.USER.CHECKS' found
CSQH021I ZQS1 CSQHINIT COMMAND RESOURCES security
switch set OFF, profile 'ZQS1.NO.CMD.RESC.CHECKS'
found CSQH021I ZQS1 CSQHINIT PROCESS security
switch set OFF, profile 'ZQS1.NO.PROCESS.CHECKS'
found CSQH021I ZQS1 CSQHINIT NAMELIST security
switch set OFF, profile 'ZQS1.NO.NLIST.CHECKS'
found CSQH024I ZQS1 CSQHINIT QUEUE security switch
set ON, profile 'ZQS1.NO.QUEUE.CHECKS' not found
CSQH021I ZQS1 CSQHINIT TOPIC security switch set
OFF, profile 'ZQS1.NO.TOPIC.CHECKS' found
```

# MQ Security Profiles

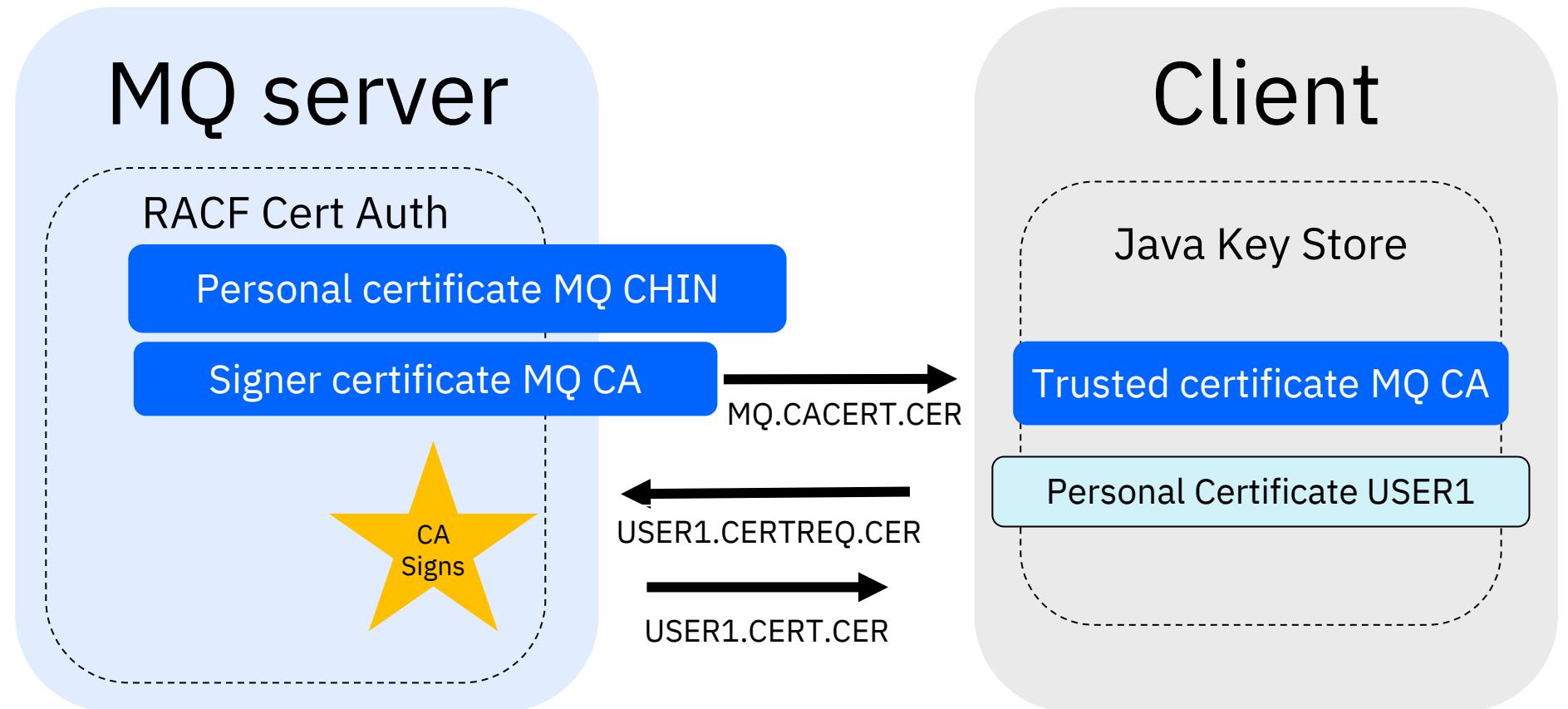
Security Profile	Corresponds to...	Example of security ON	Example of security OFF
MQADMIN or MXADMIN	All	-	ZQS3.NO.SUBSYS.SECURITY
MQCONN	Connection security	PERMIT ZQS3.BATCH CLASS(MQCONN) ID(MQSTC,MQUSERS) ACC(READ)	ZQS3.NO.CONNECT.CHECKS
MQPROC or MXPROC	Process security	-	ZQS3.NO.PROCESS.CHECKS
MQCMDS	Command security	PERMIT ZQS3.DEFINE.** CLASS(MQCMDS) ID(MQSTC,MQSYSP) ACC(ALTER)	ZQS3.NO.CMD.CHECKS
MQQUEUE or MXQUEUE	Queue security	PERMIT ZQS3.SYSTEM.** CLASS(MQQUEUE) RESET PERMIT ZQS3.SYSTEM.** CLASS(MQQUEUE) ID(MQSTC) ACC(UPDATE)	-
MQNLIST or MXNLIST	Namelist security	-	ZQS3.NO.NLIST.CHECKS
MXTOPIC	Topic security	-	ZQS3.NO.TOPIC.CHECKS

```
Top of Data
//USER1R JOB NOTIFY=&SYSUID,MSGCLASS=H
//RACF EXEC PGM=IKJEFT01,REGION=0M
//STDERR DD SYSOUT=*
//STDOUT DD SYSOUT=*
//SYSTSPRT DD SYSOUT=*
RACF - G//SYSTSIN DD *
OPTION ===> SEARCH CLASS(MQQUEUE) FILTER(ZQS3.**) CLIST('RDELETE MQQUEUE ')
EXEC EXEC.RACF.CLIST
ENTER THE FOLLOWING PROFILE INFORMATION
CLASS      ===> MQQUEUE      RDEFINE MQQUEUE ZQS3.** OWNER(SYS1)
                           PERMIT ZQS3.** CLASS(MQQUEUE) RESET
                           PERMIT ZQS3.** CLASS(MQQUEUE) ID(MQSTC) ACC(READ)
                           RDEFINE MQQUEUE ZQS3.SYSTEM.** OWNER(SYS1)
                           PERMIT ZQS3.SYSTEM.** CLASS(MQQUEUE) RESET
                           PERMIT ZQS3.SYSTEM.** CLASS(MQQUEUE) ID(MQSTC) ACC(UPDATE)
                           RDEFINE MQQUEUE ZQS3.SYSTEM.CLUSTER.COMMAND.QUEUE OWNER(SYS1)
                           <==end PERMIT ZQS3.SYSTEM.CLUSTER.COMMAND.QUEUE CLASS(MQQUEUE) RESET
                           PERMIT ZQS3.SYSTEM.CLUSTER.COMMAND.QUEUE CLASS(MQQUEUE) +
                           ID(MQSTC) ACC(ALTER)
                           PERMIT ZQS3.SYSTEM.CLUSTER.COMMAND.QUEUE CLASS(MQQUEUE) +
PROFILE    ===> ZQS1.**
```

NOTE: Embedded Blanks are NOT ALLOWED in class or profile names.  
The profile name may be case sensitive. View the help and select PROFILE NAME for more detail.

# Setting up the infrastructure for TLS

At a high-level



On z/OS, generate the signer certificate

```
racdcert certauth gencert subjectsdn(CN('MQ CA')  
OU('ATS') O('IBM') C('US')) withlabel('MQ CA')  
keyusage(certsign) notafter(date(2029/12/31))
```

Signer certificate  
MQ CA

On z/OS, generate the personal certificate

```
racdcert id(SYSPROG) gencert subjectsdn(CN('MQ CHIN')  
OU('ATS') O('IBM') C('US')) withlabel('MQ CHIN')  
signwith(certauth label('MQ CA'))  
notafter(date(2029/12/31))
```

Personal certificate  
MQ CHIN

# Why is the ID SYSPROG?

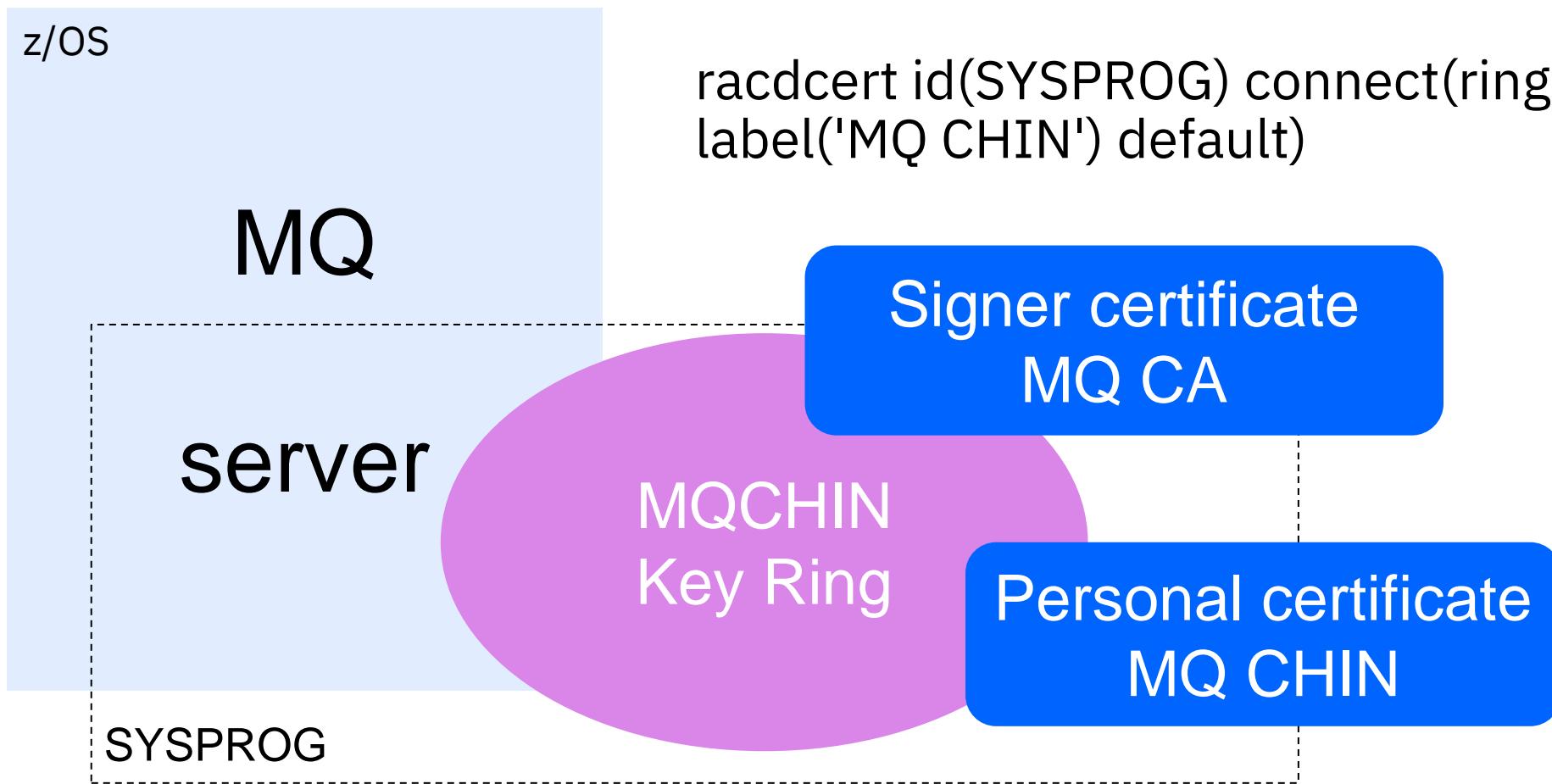
```
Display Filter View Print Options Search Help
-----
SDSF OUTPUT DISPLAY ZQS1CHIN STC03052  DSID      2 LINE 0      COLUMNS 26- 105
COMMAND INPUT ==> _                      SCRROLL ==> CSR
***** TOP OF DATA *****
S 2  J 0 B  L 0 G  --  S Y S T E M  M Q S 1  --  N 0 D E  M Q P L E X 1
EDNESDAY, 19 MAR 2025 ----
5I START ZQS1CHIN WITH JOBNAME ZQS1CHIN IS ASSIGNED TO USER SYSPROG , GROUP SYS1
373 ZQS1CHIN STARTED
```

On z/OS, create keyring and add certificates to keyring

```
racdcert id(SYSPROG) addring(MQCHIN.KeyRing)
```

```
racdcert id(SYSPROG) connect(ring(MQCHIN.KeyRing)  
label('MQ CA') certauth usage(certauth))
```

```
racdcert id(SYSPROG) connect(ring(MQCHIN.KeyRing)  
label('MQ CHIN') default)
```



List certificates for SYSPROG's key ring:

racdcert id(SYSPROG) listring(MQCHIN.KeyRing)

```
Digital ring information for user SYSPROG:

Ring:
  >MQCHIN.KeyRing<
  Certificate Label Name          Cert Owner   USAGE   DEFAULT
  -----                         -----       -----   -----
  MQ CA                          CERTAUTH   CERTAUTH  NO
  MQ CHIN                         ID(SYSPROG) PERSONAL YES

Ring:
  >SecureFTPKeyRing<
  Certificate Label Name          Cert Owner   USAGE   DEFAULT
  -----                         -----       -----   -----
  Verisign Class 3 Primary CA    CERTAUTH   CERTAUTH  NO

***
```

```
racdcert certauth export(label('MQ CA'))  
dsn(mq.cacert.cer)
```

The screenshot shows a terminal window with the following details:

- Menu** **Utilities** **Compilers** **Help**
- BROWSE** **USER1.MQ.CACERT.CER**
- Line 0000000000 Col 001 080**
- \*\*\*\*\* Top of Data \*\*\*\*\***
- BEGIN CERTIFICATE-----**
- END CERTIFICATE-----**
- Command ==> F1=Help F2=Split F3=Exit F5=Find F7=Up F8=Down F9=Swap**
- Scroll ==> PAGE**

The certificate content is a long string of characters, starting with "-----BEGIN CERTIFICATE-----" and ending with "-----END CERTIFICATE-----". The content is encoded in Base64.

# Export the CA certificate to workstation

## 1. sftp user1@zos

- cd //’USER1’
- ls /+mode=text
- mget mq.cacert.cer

## 2. keytool –import –v –trustcacerts – alias “MQ CA” –file MQ.CACERT.CER –keystore USER1.jks

```
PS C:\Users\2J3381897> keytool -list -keystore USER1.jks
Enter keystore password:

Keystore type: PKCS12
Keystore provider: SUN

Your keystore contains 2 entries

mq ca, Apr 8, 2025, trustedCertEntry,
Certificate fingerprint (SHA-256): B9:E3:EA:CF:05:36:83:21:86:C
4:5A:8E:B7:7D:EA:0A:7F:A7:F6:1F:99:0B:64:DB:8E:02:5D:EA:58:52:B
3:90
```

Client

Trusted Cert  
MQ CA

Key Store: USER1.jks

On the client-side, generate self-signed certificate and export certificate to certificate request file to a certificate authority

1. keytool –genkeypair –alias “USER1” – dname “CN=USER1, OU=ATS, O=IBM, C=US” –keystore USER1.jks –keyalg RSA
2. keytool –certreq –alias “USER1” –file certreq.cer keystore USER1.jks

```
PS C:\Users\2J3381897> keytool -list -keystore USER1.jks
Enter keystore password:

Keystore type: PKCS12
Keystore provider: SUN

Your keystore contains 2 entries

mq ca, Apr 8, 2025, trustedCertEntry,
Certificate fingerprint (SHA-256): B9:E3:EA:CF:05:36:83:21:86:C
4:5A:8E:B7:7D:EA:0A:7F:A7:F6:1F:99:0B:64:DB:8E:02:5D:EA:58:52:B
3:90
user1, Apr 8, 2025, PrivateKeyEntry,
Certificate fingerprint (SHA-256): 32:A8:C3:14:50:AF:76:0C:8E:2
2:1F:E3:A6:44:6C:FF:F0:7C:15:30:85:5A:DC:C3:8E:63:D9:8D:86:2C:9
A:CE
PS C:\Users\2J3381897> |
```

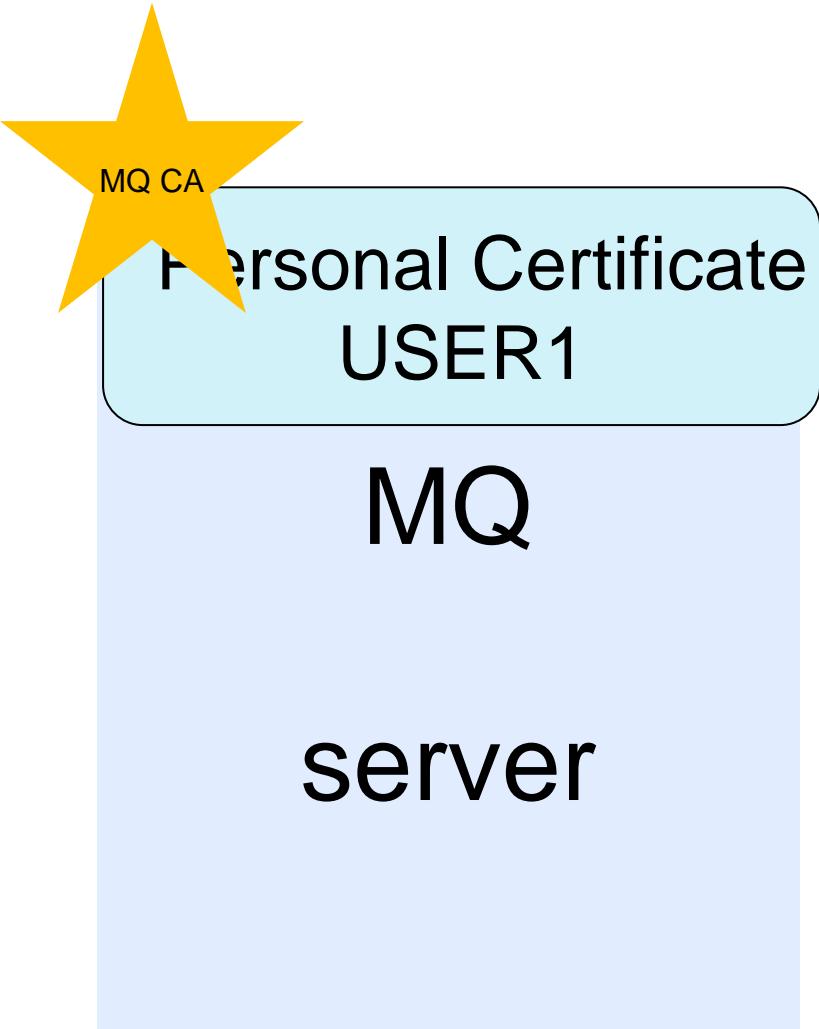
Client

Trusted Cert  
MQ CA

Personal Certificate  
USER1

Key Store: USER1.jks

# Move CERTREQ.CER back to z/OS and sign it



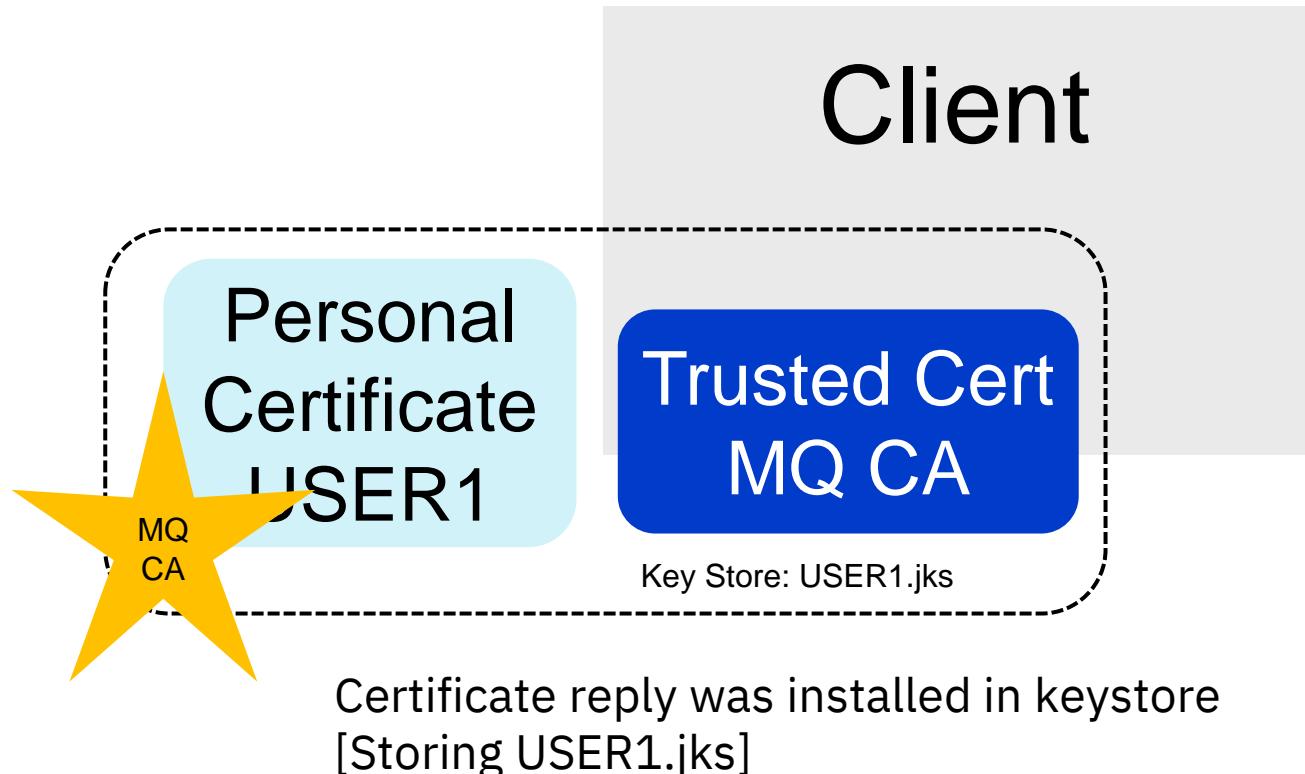
1. sftp user1@zos
  - cd //'USER1'
  - ls /+mode=text,lrecl=256,recfm=vb,blksize=0
  - mput certreq.cer
2. racdcert id(USER1) gencert(certreq.cer) withlabel('USER1') signwith(certaauth label('MQ CA')) notafter(date(2029/12/31))
3. racdcert id(USER1) export(label('USER1')) dsn(cert.cer)

```
BROWSE      USER1.CERTREQ.CER                                         Line 0000000000
***** BEGIN NEW CERTIFICATE REQUEST ***** Top of Data *****
-----BEGIN NEW CERTIFICATE REQUEST-----  
-----BEGIN CERTIFICATE-----  
-----END CERTIFICATE-----
```

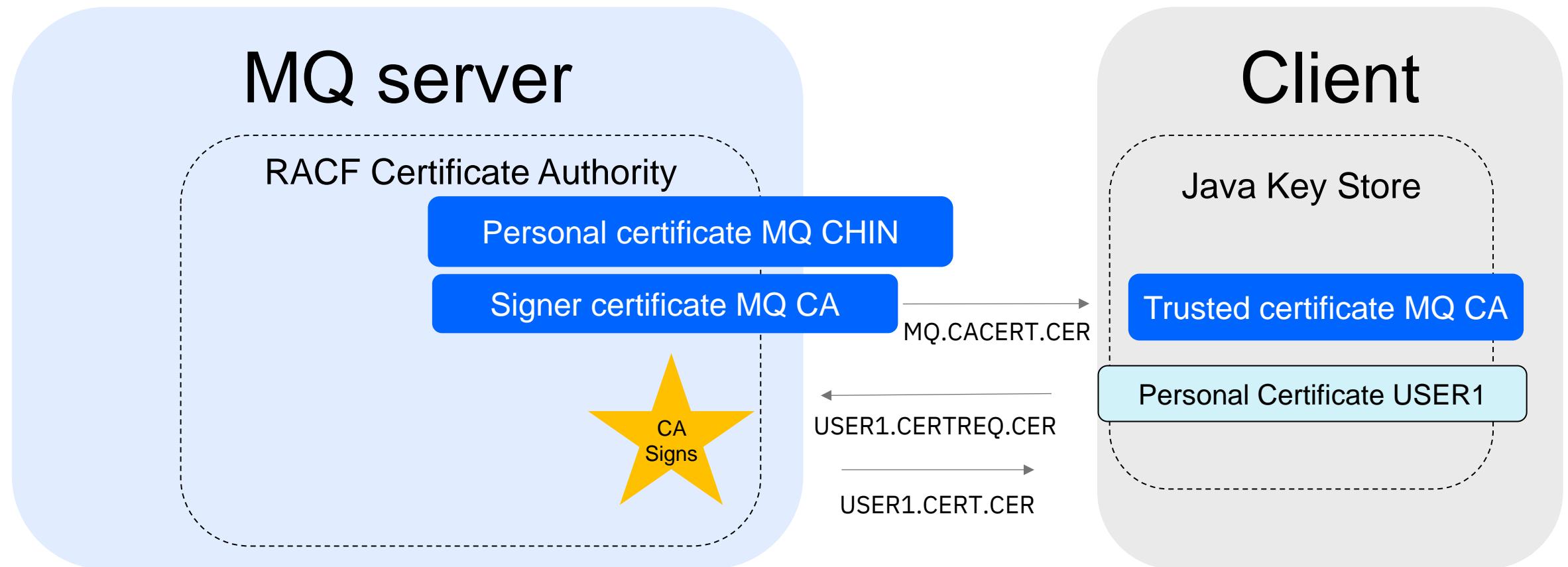
The image shows two terminal sessions. The top session shows the creation of a certificate request for 'USER1'. The bottom session shows the resulting signed certificate for 'USER1'. A large white arrow points from the 'BEGIN CERTIFICATE REQUEST' line in the top session to the '-----BEGIN CERTIFICATE-----' line in the bottom session, indicating the movement of the certificate request to the z/OS system for signing.

Export signed certificate back to workstation, into USER1.jks

1. keytool -v -import -alias "USER1" -file CERT.CER -keystore USER1.jks
2. keytool -list -keystore USER1.jks



At a high-level



# In labs, we can use self-signed certificates

Use this procedure to create a self-signed personal certificate.

1. Generate a certificate and a public and private key pair using the following command:

```
RACDCERT ID(userid2) GENCERT SUBJECTSDN(CN('common-name') T('title') OU('organizational-unit') O('organization') L('locality') SP('state-or-province') C('country')) WITHLABEL('label-name')
```

2. Connect the certificate to your key ring using the following command:

```
RACDCERT ID(userid1) CONNECT(ID(userid2) LABEL('label-name') RING(ring-name) USAGE(PERSONAL))  
where:
```

- *userid1* is the user ID of the channel initiator address space or owner of the shared key ring.
- *userid2* is the user ID associated with the certificate and must be the user ID of the channel initiator address space.

*userid1* and *userid2* can be the same ID.

- *ring-name* is the name you gave the key ring in RACDCERT ID( *userid1* ) ADDRING( *ring-name* )
- *label-name* must be either the value of the IBM® MQ **CERTLBL** attribute, if it is set, or the default ibmWebSphereMQ with the name of the queue manager appended.

# In production, its required to use personal certificates

To apply for a personal certificate, use RACF as follows:

- 1.Create a self-signed personal certificate. This certificate provides the request with the attribute values for the Distinguished Name.
- 2.Create a PKCS #10 Base64-encoded certificate request written to a data set, using the following command:

RACDCERT ID(userid2) GENREQ(LABEL(' *label\_name* ')) DSN(' *output\_data\_set\_name* ')

where

- userid2* is the user ID associated with the certificate and must be the user ID of the channel initiator address space
- label\_name* is the label used when creating the self-signed certificate

3. Send the data set to a Certificate Authority (CA) to request a new personal certificate.
4. When the signed certificate is returned to you by the Certificate Authority, add the certificate back into the RACF database, using the original label, as described in [Adding personal certificates to a key repository on z/OS](#).

# Channel encryption

At this point, we have our certificate set up, but now we need to configure MQ to use the certificate for channels

1. Modify RACF key ring (SSLKEYR) to be accessed for personal and certificate authority digital certificates
2. Modify the number of SSL sub tasks (SSLTASKS) for processing SSL calls
3. Restart CHINIT address space

QML1 - Properties

General Extended Cluster Repository Communication Events **SSL** Statistics Online monitoring Statistics monitoring Accounting monitoring Channels Publish/Subscribe

**SSL**

SSL key repository  
Certificates used by this queue manager are held in a key repository  
SSL Key repository: **MQCHIN.KeyRIng**

Authentication information  
 Check certificates received by this queue manager for revocation  
Revocation namelist:

Certificate label: **MQ CHIN**

Queue-sharing group certificate label:

SSL reset count:

SSL FIPS required:

SSL tasks:

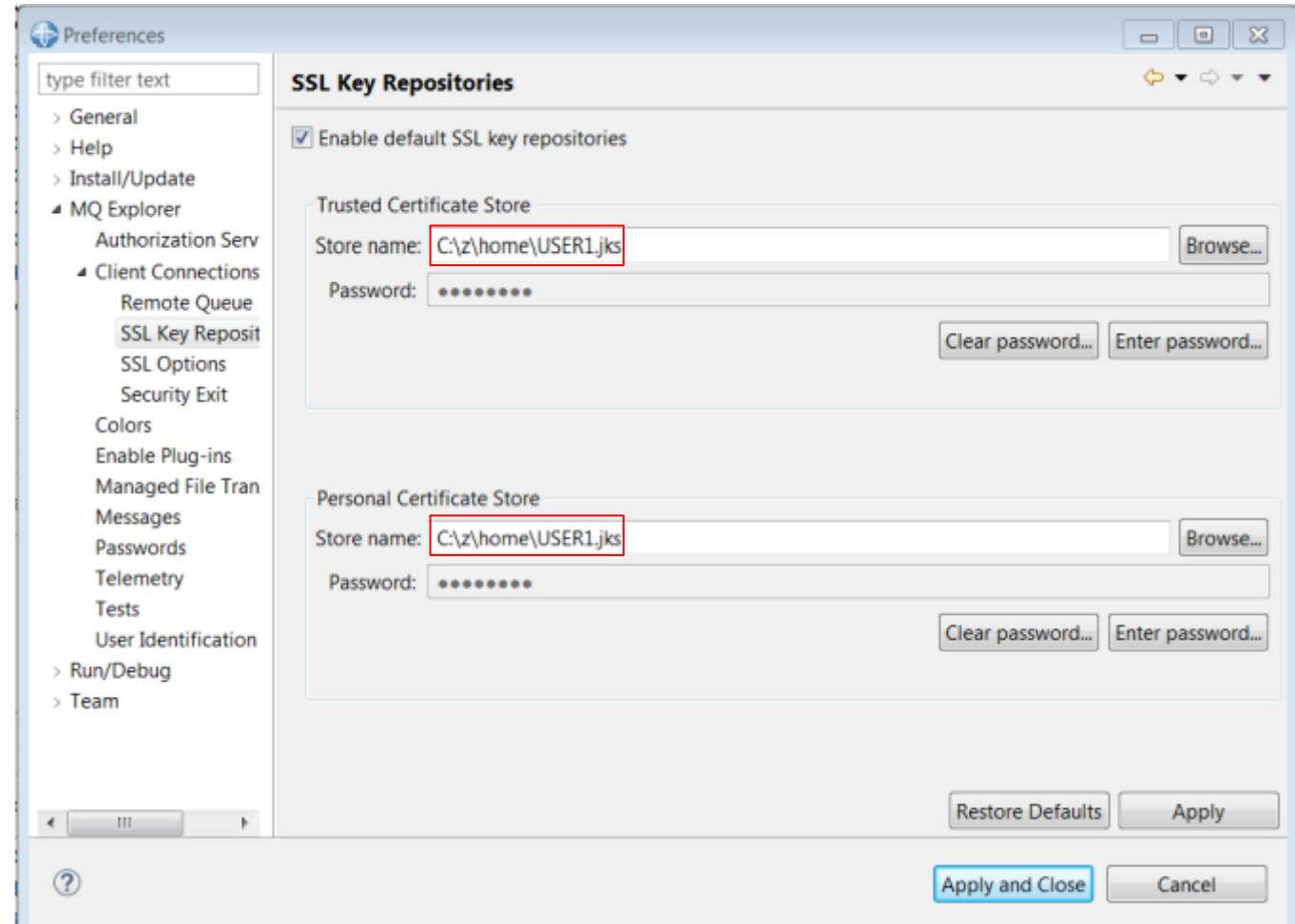
System Command Extension

==> [/zqs1\\_ALTER\\_QMGR\\_SSLTASKS\(5\)](#)

==> [/zqs1\\_ALTER\\_QMGR\\_SSLKEYR\(5\)](#)

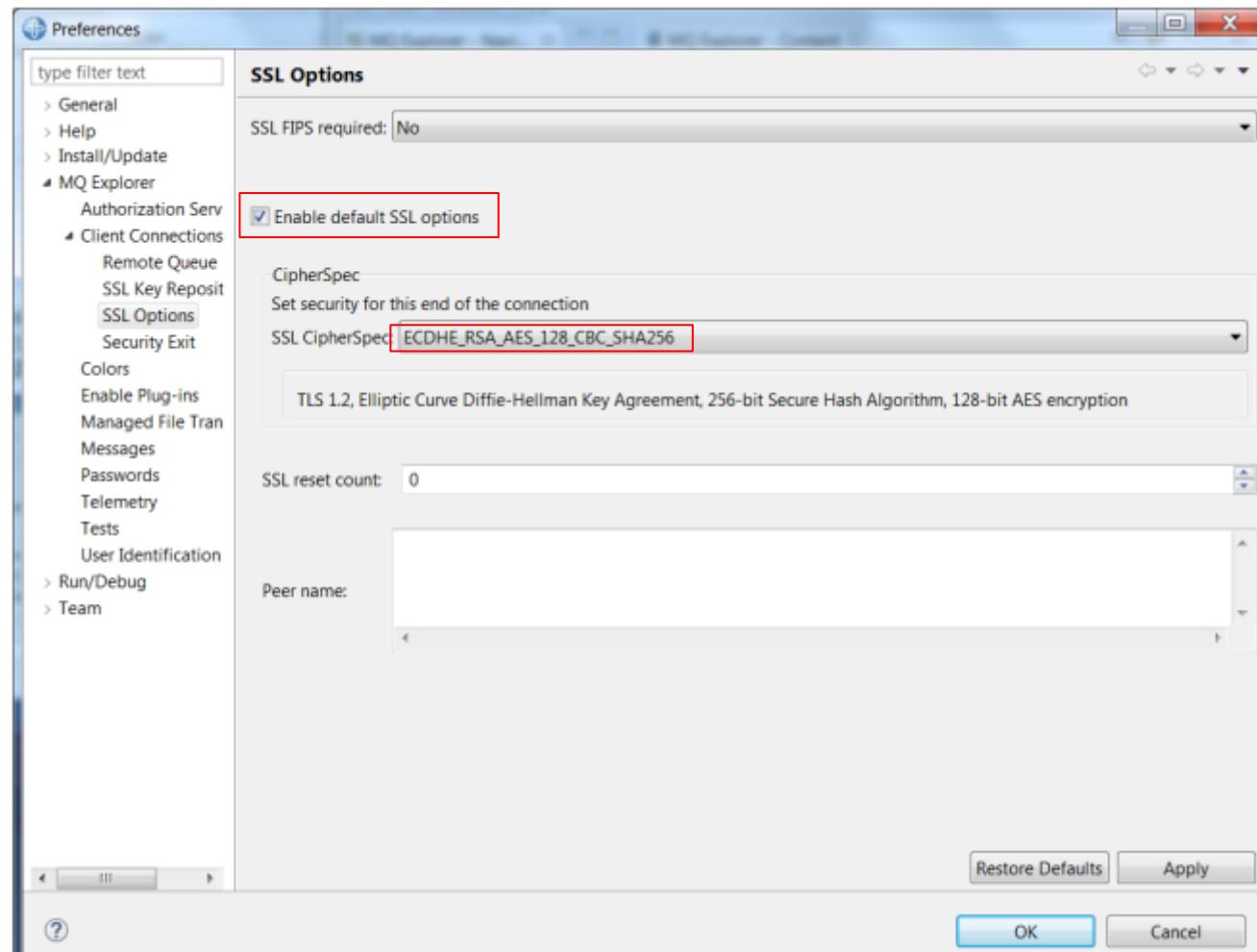
STORELIMIT

# Specify client keystore location on MQ Explorer

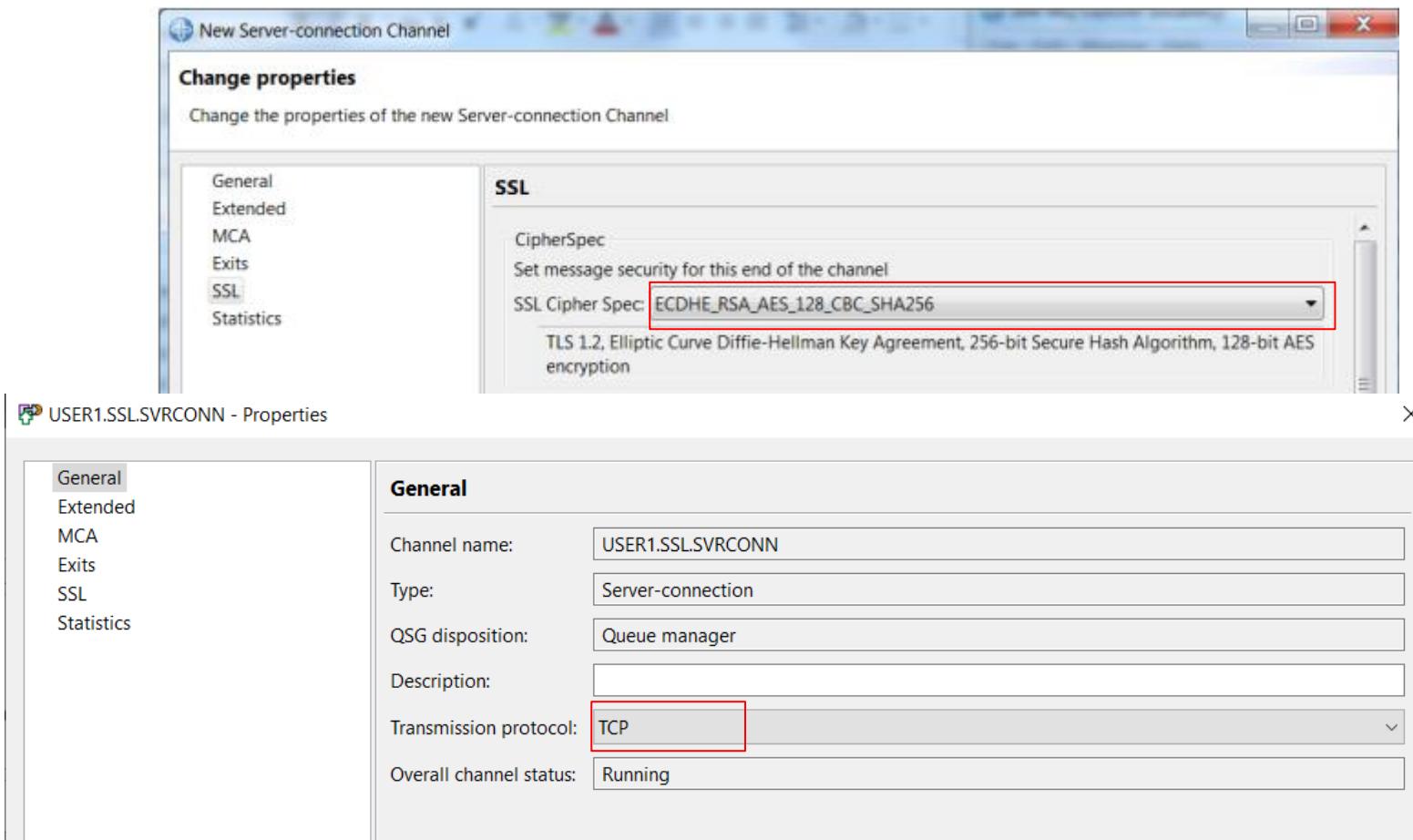


# Specify SSL CipherSpec

CipherSpec must be consistent on both ends of a TLS connection

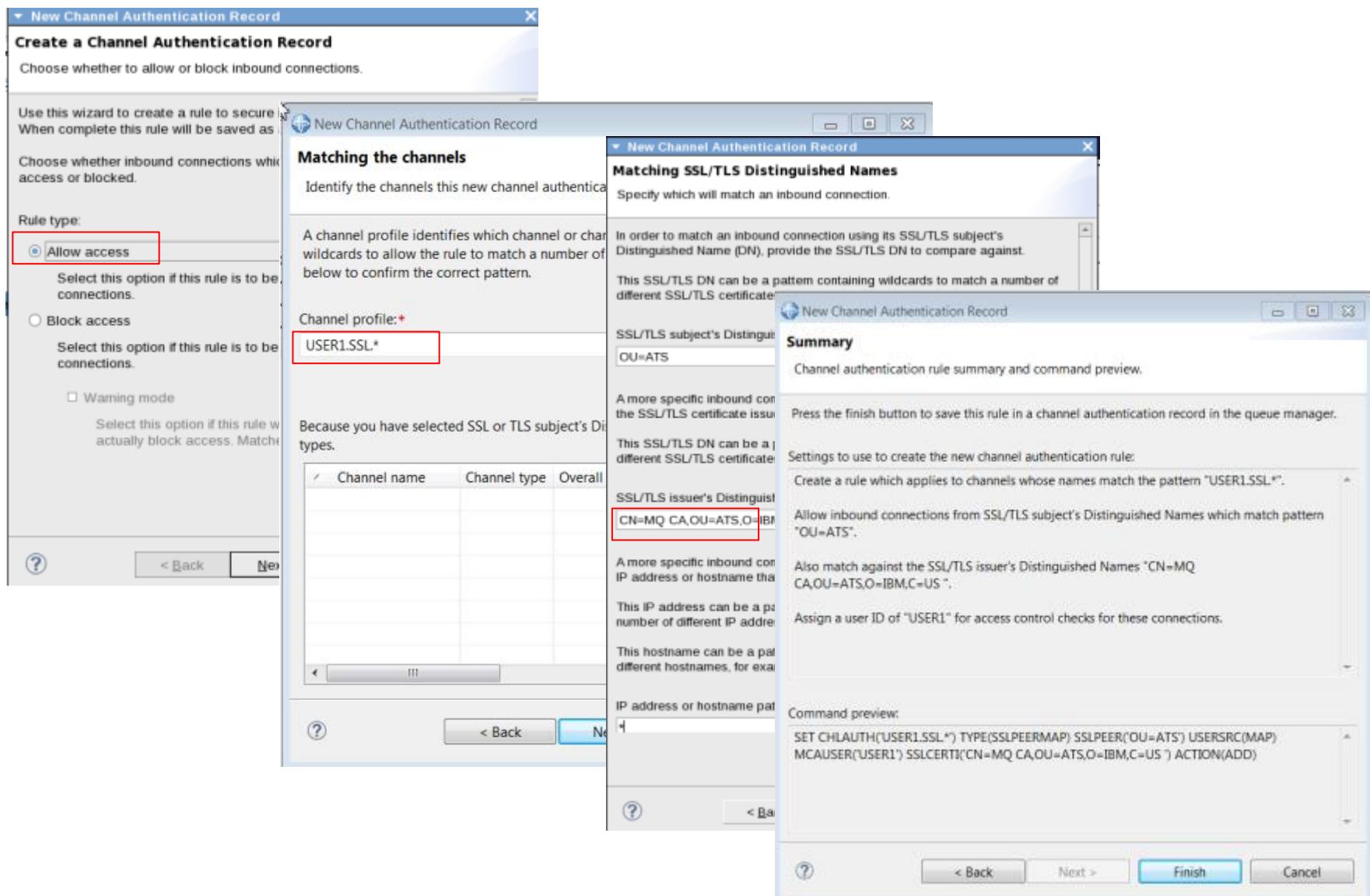


# Create channel USER1.SSL.SVRCONN under queue manager ZQS1



# Create channel authentication record under queue manager ZQS1

Channel authentication records allow you to specify how inbound connections to the queue manager should be allowed or blocked, based on identities



# Create a new remote connection to queue manager ZQS1

Add Queue Manager

## Specify new connection details

Provide details of the connection you want to set up

Queue manager name:

Connection details

Host name or IP address:

Port number:

Server-connection channel:

Is this a multi-instance queue manager?

Connection details to second instance

Host name or IP address:

Port number:

Server-connection channel:

Automatically connect to this queue manager at startup or if the connection is lost

Automatically refresh information shown for this queue manager

Refresh interval (seconds):

?

< Back

Next >

Finish

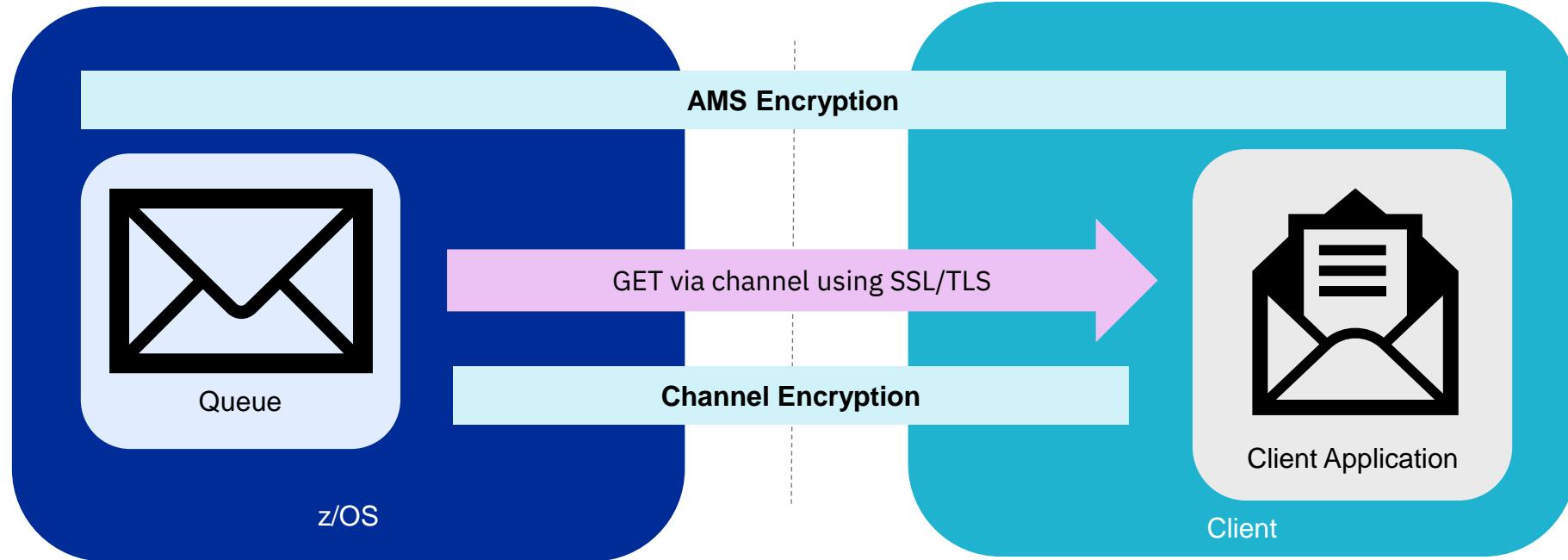
Cancel

# Woo-hoo!!!

```
SDSF MENU 3.1      MQPLEX1   MQS1          LINE 1-19 (94)
RESPONSE=MQS1      CSQM293I  ZQS1  CSQMDRTC 1  CHSTATUS FOUND MATCHING REQUEST
RESPONSE=CRITERIA
RESPONSE=MQS1      CSQM201I  ZQS1  CSQMDRTC  DISPLAY CHSTATUS DETAILS
RESPONSE=MQS1      CHSTATUS(USER1.SSL.SVRCONN)
RESPONSE=MQS1      CHLDISP(PRIVATE)
RESPONSE=MQS1      CONNAME(9.61.145.201)
RESPONSE=MQS1      CURRENT
RESPONSE=MQS1      CHLTYPE(SVRCONN)
RESPONSE=MQS1      STATUS(RUNNING)
RESPONSE=MQS1      SUBSTATE()
RESPONSE=MQS1      STOPREQ(NO)
RESPONSE=MQS1      RAPPLTAG(MQ Explorer 9.4.1)
RESPONSE=MQS1      SSLCERTU(SYSPROG)
RESPONSE=MQS1      MCAUSER(USER1)
RESPONSE=MQS1      END CHSTATUS DETAILS
RESPONSE=MQS1      CSQ9022I  ZQS1  CSQMDRTC ' DISPLAY CHSTATUS' NORMAL
RESPONSE=COMPLETION
```

- >  ZQS1 on '129.40.114.132(1424)'
- ✓  ZQS1 on '129.40.114.132(1424)' using 'USER1.SSL.SVRCONN'
  - ↳ Queues
  - ↳ Topics
  - ↳ Subscriptions
  - >  Channels
  - ↳ Listeners
  - ↳ Process Definitions
  - ↳ Namelists
  - ↳ Authentication Information
  - ↳ Storage Classes

# Comparing Channel Encryption to AMS



What does this mean? You have to take into account what you're using for security when the data is at-rest

## Advanced message security



Integrity protection is provided by digital signing, which provides assurance on **who created the message**, and that the **message has not been altered**.



Privacy protection is provided by a combination of digital signing and encryption. Encryption ensures that **message data is viewable by only the intended recipient**, or recipients.



Confidentiality protection is provided by **encryption** only

# AMS Security Policies

Policies enable us to control on a per-queue level, message integrity, privacy, encryption and get access

Example policies:

```
setmqspl -m ZQS1
-p AMSDEMO.INTEGRITY.QUEUE
-s MD5
-e NONE
-a CN=USER1,O=IBM,C=US
```

```
setmqspl -m ZQS1
-p AMSDEMO.PRIVACY.QUEUE
-s MD5
-e AES256
-a CN=USER2,O=IBM,C=US
-r CN=USER2,O=IBM,C=US
```

```
dspmqspl -m ZQS1 -p AMSDEMO.INTEGRITY.QUEUE
```

```
dspmqspl -m ZQS1 -p AMSDEMO.PRIVACY.QUEUE
```

# Data set encryption

Encrypts at-rest data in bulk, performing efficiently at speed and for low-cost.

Data set type	Considerations
Active and archive logs	4 encrypts and 1 decrypt per message for dual logging
Page set I/O	Depends on types of I/O done to the page set, namely GETs, Immediate WRITES, and WRITEs
SMDS	Encryption costs mainly charged to application. Decryption costs mainly incurred to QM MSTR; Sufficient buffers can help with encryption costs

# Performance considerations

When do you pay for encryption?

1. Starting and stopping of a channel
2. Re-negotiation of secret key
3. Cost of encryption and decryption of data

How can you manage costs?

1. Change re-negotiation frequency to change keys less often
2. Encryption level via CipherSpec
3. Channel start/stop versus long running channels
4. Cost versus data security
5. Consider the use of channel compression
6. Running on the latest possible hardware
7. Offloading work onto Crypto Express cards

The Transport Layer Security (TLS) 1.3 protocol is a major rewrite of prior TLS protocol standards.

## TLS 1.3

In z/OS 2.4, System SSL added support for the TLS 1.3 protocol in order for z/OS applications to take advantage of the security updates.

1. All handshake messages after the initial client and server handshake messages are now encrypted.
2. Encrypted handshake messages are presented as payload messages and must be decrypted in order to determine whether the message is a handshake, payload or alert message.
3. The RSA key exchange is no longer supported. It was replaced with Elliptic Curve DiffieHellman Ephemeral (ECDHE), which provides forward secrecy.
4. Prior to TLS 1.3, the negotiated key exchange was part of the cipher suite. In TLS 1.3, the negotiated key exchange is no longer part of the cipher suite and is negotiated separately.

## What about quantum?

### What's at risk?

Asymmetric encryption. IBM MQ uses asymmetric encryption in:

- TLS communication
- Password protection
- Advanced message security

### What can you do?

1. Upgrade to TLS 1.3
2. Consider your management of certificates so you don't become overwhelmed
3. Use AES-128 (or higher) within AMS policies and the TLS Cipher Spec.
4. Use SHA-256 (or higher) within your AMS policies and the TLS Cipher Spec.

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## MQ RACF basics

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Channel encryption – securing communication

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Advanced message security – security end-to-end

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Data set encryption – securing data sets

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Performance considerations and what's new

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## More resources

[Getting SSL to work with MQ for z/OS | Colin Paice](#)

[IBM Documentation](#)

[IBM Docs | Planning for AMS](#)

[MP16: Capacity Planning & Tuning Guide](#)

[IBM WSC GitHub](#)

[IBM MQ Performance Report | AMS performance](#)