

**TOP SECRET**

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**REVIEW OF THE INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS BRANCH (IAB)**

**(SIRC STUDY 2007-03)**

**Security Intelligence Review Committee  
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

A key objective for contemporary western intelligence agencies is to provide timely and relevant advice to government concerning threats to national security. In Canada, section 12 of the *CSIS Act* directs CSIS (the Service) to collect, analyse and retain "information and intelligence respecting activities that may on reasonable grounds be suspected of constituting threats to the security of Canada" and to "report to and advise the Government of Canada" accordingly.<sup>1</sup> It is from this legislative basis that the Service works to provide the Government of Canada with comprehensive and policy-neutral intelligence assessments.

The Service accomplishes its intelligence mandate through a variety of operational branches, programs and initiatives. The Intelligence Assessments Branch (IAB), formerly known as the Research, Analysis and Production (RAP) Branch, plays an integral role in this process, providing both strategic and tactical intelligence assessments in support of the Service's priorities and to inform government. Through a multifaceted program of intelligence research, the IAB generates a variety of products and reports, works with key partners throughout Canada's security intelligence community, liaises with internal, domestic and foreign clients and participates in various security-related conferences and fora.

The analysis and reporting of security intelligence is challenging work. Rarely are issues of national security uncovered in a straightforward and linear fashion. Instead, the process entails the use of specialized knowledge to assess various and complex sources of information and provide an accurate and overall picture of the threat environment.

In recent years there has been an increased demand from across government for intelligence assessments and products. In part, this stems from the heightened sense of national security following the events of 9/11 and subsequent terrorist-related activities worldwide. At the same time, however, it represents a growing desire to understand increasingly complex security intelligence issues. For example, as one observer suggests, contemporary foreign intelligence operations aimed at western

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<sup>1</sup> The 2006-2008 Ministerial Direction also notes that one of CSIS's primary responsibilities is to forewarn and advise the Government of Canada through the provision of accurate, relevant and timely information and analysis on issues within its mandate. Ministerial Direction National Requirements for 2006-2008 p. 5.

nations are "...more diffuse, more aggressive, more technologically sophisticated, and potentially more successful than ever before."<sup>2</sup> Within this context there are pressures to produce timely and accurate intelligence assessments.

In May 2006, in response to this still-evolving security intelligence environment, the Service undertook a major realignment and reorganization.

As part of this process, the Intelligence Assessments Branch (IAB) was tasked with consolidating the analytical functions and centralising the main intelligence reporting mechanisms within CSIS.<sup>4</sup>

Given the complex and changing environment within which the IAB carries out its work, including the recent reorganization efforts, SIRC believed it was timely to review this Branch to understand the nature, scope and effectiveness of its work. SIRC last reviewed the work of this branch in Study 1998-09, "A Review of Intelligence Production."

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<sup>2</sup> Van Cleave, M. "The Question of Strategic Counterintelligence: What is it, and What Should we do About it?" *CIA Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51(2), 2007, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> SIRC Question/Response R466.02, CSIS Realignment (April 25, 2007), answer to q. 2. p. 2.

## 2 OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

This review had three main objectives. First, SIRC examined the IAB's production of strategic and tactical intelligence analysis, particularly in relation to how these terms were defined and operationalized. Second, given the increased expectation for integration and cooperation across the security intelligence (SI) community, SIRC explored the IAB's role in this changing intelligence gathering context. In particular, we explored how the IAB cooperates with various partners in producing intelligence assessments, as well as how they determine the intelligence requirements of domestic clients. Third, SIRC examined how the IAB disseminates timely and relevant intelligence products, which represents a fundamental aspect of their mandate to provide advice to the Government of Canada.

The review period was November 1, 2005 to October 31, 2006. However, information was requested outside this timeframe to gain further insight into the IAB's reorganization.

### 3 METHODS AND SOURCES

SIRC's review of the IAB consisted of three main data collection strategies. First, we requested preliminary information and documentation to understand how the IAB fulfills its primary responsibilities. Second, we selected a sample of IAB products (e.g. studies, intelligence briefs (IB), threat and risk assessments (TRA),

along with all corresponding documentation to file, to analyse against some of the study's main objectives. Third, we met with IAB staff at all levels to gain further insight into the nature and scope of their work (see Appendix A for a list of meetings).

#### 4 STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Intelligence assessment consists of both strategic and tactical considerations. As identified in IAB's 2006/2007 Annual Plan, a key goal for the branch is to "meet operational requirements by providing timely, open information and intelligence assessments from a strategic and tactical perspective."<sup>5</sup> However, notwithstanding this commitment, a cursory examination of the academic literature suggests that defining what is meant by these terms, and subsequently operationalizing them, can be a challenging and somewhat elusive task.

Historically, there have been common misconceptions across the security intelligence community as to what constitutes strategic or tactical analysis. Of particular note is an overall misunderstanding, or a lack of consensus, regarding the concept of strategic analysis.<sup>6</sup> This can be attributed in part to the fact that strategic assessments, particularly long-range forecasting, often take a backseat to the pressures associated with, and priorities accorded to, current tactical requirements. Although the demands for intelligence that assists with immediate and short-term operational needs are easily tangible, there are unique challenges associated with developing the capacity to analyse long-term trends and to access and anticipate future security threats and potential policy needs.<sup>7</sup>

In Canada, the MacDonald Commission identified the relative paucity of long-term and broad-based intelligence assessments as part of its inquiry into certain activities of the RCMP. Similar sentiments were expressed in SIRC's 1986-87 annual report, which noted that the Service's assessments failed to meet the "expectations of the MacDonald Commission or the needs of Government." In response, the (then) Solicitor General commissioned the Osbaldeston Study, whose findings led to substantial changes to the way in which the Service provided intelligence assessments. In particular, Osbaldeston recommended that the Service develop the strategic capacity for long-term analysis that would assist the government in creating policy and decision-making relating to national security. Subsequent SIRC reviews of the Service's intelligence production found that, although some products addressed strategic issues,

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<sup>5</sup> 2006/2007 IAB Annual Plan, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Heidenrich, J.G. "The Intelligence Community's Neglect of Strategic Intelligence." *CIA Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51(2), 2007, p. 16; Van Cleave, M. "The Question of Strategic Counterintelligence: What is it, and What Should we do About it?" *CIA Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51(2), 2007, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Heidenrich, J.G. "The Intelligence Community's Neglect of Strategic Intelligence." *CIA Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51(2), 2007. Hess, M. "Strategic Intelligence Analysis." *Intelligence Essentials for Everyone: Occasional Paper Number 6*. Joint Military Intelligence College, 1999.

more work was needed in this area to meet the needs of both internal and external clients. As SIRC noted, "the decrease in strategic analysis may result in the government being less well informed than it could be."<sup>8</sup>

This chapter builds from previous lines of inquiry by examining how the IAB undertook both strategic and tactical analyses during the review period, focussing primarily on how they defined and operationalized these key terms and the strategies they have employed to meet the challenges of balancing these two priorities. Overall, SIRC's analysis suggests that the Service's recent reorganization of the IAB represents an important opportunity to implement a more systematic and holistic program of strategic and tactical analysis. For this reason we believe that there is reason for optimism, but also that certain challenges remain.

#### 4.1 What is Strategic Analysis? What is Tactical Analysis?

There is not one, standard definition of either strategic or tactical analysis. As the Osbaldeston Committee noted, tactical intelligence is "related to the investigation of particular activities considered threatening to the security of Canada." In comparison, they stated that strategic intelligence, "relies more heavily on research using information from all sources, tends to be longer term and more global in scope and is produced for an interdepartmental audience or for the government as an entity."<sup>9</sup>

The Service defines its use of strategic and tactical analysis in various vehicles, including the Director's public report and the IAB's annual plans. In general, these definitions relate well to those laid out by the Osbaldeston Committee. The IAB's strategic analyses provide in-depth examinations of a particular problem or phenomenon, while also situating it within its broader context and wide-ranging security implications.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, they help examine current and emerging trends or issues that might affect national security in the future.<sup>11</sup> Strategic analysis is produced in a variety of forms, from examinations of short- or medium-term problems and issues, to long-term forecasting. The IAB's strategic advice and products are generated for clients within the Service, as well as various Government of Canada decision-makers and a growing number of foreign clients.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> SIRC Study 1998-09, A Review of Intelligence Production.

<sup>9</sup> Rankin, M. "Reforming the CSIS Act." A Draft Position Paper Presented by the Security Intelligence Review Committee for the Parliamentary Review. April 1989.

<sup>10</sup> 2004/2005 CSIS Public Report p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> 2004/2005 CSIS Public Report p. 10; Meeting, SIRC and a strategic analyst (September 20, 2007); Review Meeting, November 15, 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Review Meeting, July 26, 2007.



By contrast, the IAB's tactical analyses are oriented toward operational needs, focussing on an individual, a target area or an immediate issue.<sup>13</sup> They provide operational support, often on a daily basis, and can take the form of oral or written advice (e.g., briefing note), or a formal report.<sup>14</sup> Tactical analysis assists CSIS operational branches by providing assessments of an individual, group or organisational target

Although they serve distinct purposes, strategic and tactical analyses nevertheless frequently overlap and compliment each other in terms of providing an overall assessment. It would be erroneous to think that strategic analysis always has to be long-term in its outlook to be strategic, and that, conversely, tactical analysis must be short term in order to be tactical.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, there are many occasions in which the IAB's advice or products contain both strategic and tactical elements. One way to understand the complimentary nature of both types of analyses is to consider the Service's assessment of a suspected terrorist group. Analysis at the tactical level might include an examination of specific targets and their tradecraft. Strategic analysis might assess broader questions regarding how individuals become radicalised and the potential implications for national security, which may include short-, medium- or long-term implications.

#### 4.2 IAB's Production of Strategic and Tactical Intelligence

Almost all of IAB's assessments coincide with a predetermined set of branch priorities, including issues relating to terrorism, espionage/foreign interference (e.g. proliferation (e.g. efforts) and transnational criminal activity (e.g. .<sup>16</sup> Please see Appendix B for a complete listing and description of these products.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Review Meeting, November 15, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Review Meeting, November 15, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Heidenrich, J.G. "The Intelligence Community's Neglect of Strategic Intelligence." *CIA Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51(2), 2007, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup> Review Meeting, July 27, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Within the review period, the IAB generated the following products: 3 commentaries; 27 intelligence briefs (IBs); 22 studies; 350 summaries; 84 Reports and 20 Threat and Risk Assessments (TRAs). SIRC reviewed 3 1 commentary, 6 IBs, 7 studies, 23 11 reports and 7 TRAs.

Those within intelligence communities commonly note that analysts undertake a much broader range of work, particularly within the strategic realm,<sup>18</sup> than is commonly reported and reflected through official documents. This perception applies to the IAB in that tangible products (i.e. reports and briefs) are not the only methods that they use to convey tactical and strategic information. For example, the IAB provides advice and assessments to the various branches on both an informal (e.g. face-to-face meetings, responses to requests for information) and formal (e.g. briefing notes, presentations and reports) basis. Our emphasis in this section focusses on the more formal end of the spectrum.

A majority of the IAB's products assess intelligence at both the strategic and tactical levels. That is, IAB assesses current threats related to CSIS' mandate (tactical), while also examining emerging issues pertaining to a specific region or issue area (strategic). For example, the IAB's \_\_\_\_\_ provide an overall assessment of both current and emerging issues related to a specific threat (e.g. suspected area

IAB Studies and TRAs are two examples that fulfill strategic needs. IAB Studies consist of in-depth reports that examine all elements of a particular threat, including its current

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<sup>18</sup> For example, see Heidenrich, J.G. "The Intelligence Community's Neglect of Strategic Intelligence." *CIA Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51(2), 2007, p. 17.

<sup>19</sup> For example,

Although the IAB plays an important and growing role in providing strategic analyses, challenges remain. First, as is commonly experienced across security intelligence communities, there is a need for more strategic analyses that include long-term forecasting that identifies future threat-related issues and concerns.

In particular, as previous reviews and academic studies have illustrated, the demands of current and emerging threat-related issues oftentimes means that longer term, strategic assessments languish at the margins.<sup>26</sup> In both instances the IAB's management has taken steps to address these challenges. We discuss each issue below.

#### 4.2.1 Long-Term Strategic Analysis and Forecasting

Long-term analyses and forecasting are challenging to undertake in that they involve prediction and hypothesis—they consider the difficult questions of what could happen in the future. In particular, they often encompass "...an array of often quite disparate, incomplete and unfamiliar data, all requiring considerable skill in developing hypotheses

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<sup>26</sup>

Heidenrich, J.G. "The Intelligence Community's Neglect of Strategic Intelligence." *CIA Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51(2), 2007.

about events, trends, and potentialities that, of their very nature, defy precision."<sup>27</sup> However, they also represent a fruitful line of inquiry given their preventative possibilities. Long-term outlooks and forecasting can warn of threats to vital national security interests and assess trends of interest to senior government officials.<sup>28</sup> In this respect, they are critical in planning for the future.<sup>29</sup>

The IAB's senior management has established the need to produce more strategic intelligence in a broader, longer-term context.<sup>30</sup> This desire stems from growing demands from various government clients for this type of information, as well as the 2006-2008 Ministerial Direction which underscores the importance of assessments that "forewarn and advise the Government of Canada."<sup>31</sup>

A further example of how the IAB is working to produce long-term strategic assessments includes efforts to cooperate with other members of the security intelligence community to explore future threats to Canadian national security (e.g. We consider the issue of cooperation in chapter 5 of this report.

#### 4.2.2 Tactical Analyst Program

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- <sup>27</sup> McDowell, D. Strategic Intelligence and Analysis: Selected Writings. Istana Enterprises, Pambula, Australia, 2000, p. 31.
- <sup>28</sup> Loch K. Johnson, Strategic Intelligence: Windows into a Secret World (2004) p. 2.
- <sup>29</sup> McDowell, D. Strategic Intelligence and Analysis: Selected Writings. Istana Enterprises, Pambula, Australia, 2000, p. 6. Strategic Forecasting, inc., Definition of strategic forecasting [http://www.stratfor.com/about\\_stratfor](http://www.stratfor.com/about_stratfor) (date accessed: January 23, 2008).
- <sup>30</sup> Meeting, SIRC and a strategic analyst (September 20, 2007); Meeting, SIRC and IAB senior management (November 15, 2007).
- <sup>31</sup> Ministerial Direction National Requirements for 2006-2008 p. 5.

#### 4.3 Resources and Supplementing a Strategic/Tactical Analyst Capability

Although the introduction of new initiatives with respect to both strategic and tactical analysis provides important opportunities, it also creates unique challenges. For example, strategic analysis is difficult and highly intellectual work that requires the individual analyst to have considerable knowledge and expertise.<sup>38</sup> Given the ongoing need for the Service to recruit new candidates, it will continue to be a challenge for the IAB to attract analysts who have the required language skills, expertise and practical experience to undertake such work.<sup>39</sup> The 2006/2007 Annual Plan also highlighted

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<sup>37</sup> As part of this process, the IAB recently hired \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Review Meeting, November 15, 2007.

<sup>38</sup> McDowell, D. Strategic Intelligence and Analysis: Selected Writings. Istana Enterprises, Pambula, Australia, 2000, p. 37.

<sup>39</sup> Review Meeting, July 26, 2007; SIRC Question/Response R466.07, Intelligence Assessments Branch (May 2, 2007), answer to question 2. p. 1.

Both the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 IAB Annual Plans acknowledged two additional challenges. First, the IAB has developed a training program for new analysts to educate them about the Service's investigations and operations.<sup>42</sup> The program includes training that reviews the roles and responsibilities of the Service's branches, followed by specific analytical skills training.<sup>43</sup> Second, the IAB also wants to ensure there are appropriate levels of integration and cooperation

To help with this integration, the IAB has developed strategic and tactical analysts and branches working collaboratively in support of investigations and to address long-term issues and concerns. The goal is to have both

For SIRC, this type of initiative will be vital for helping to foster a dynamic learning environment, as well as for the development of analysts, who will, ideally,

#### 4.4 Facting and Sources in Production

As a final element of our examination of the IAB's strategic and tactical work, we considered the "facting" used to support statements and conclusions within the branch's various products. Both open and classified information sources are the building blocks of intelligence analysis. When drafting an IAB publication, analysts use both open source (e.g. media articles, academic journals, periodicals) and classified sources (e.g. operational reporting, signals intelligence (SIGINT), foreign and domestic agency information).

SIRC reviewed the facting sources for select IBs, CSIS Studies, and TRAs. We compared the sources with the products reviewed, assessing their factual accuracy to ascertain whether IAB's sources of information substantiate its intelligence

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<sup>42</sup> Review Meeting, November 15, 2007.

<sup>43</sup> Review Meeting, November 15, 2007.

assessments. For example,

SIRC also noted that IAB analysts use, to the extent possible, open sources to substantiate their publications. The use of open sources is important as it allows as wide an audience as possible to access the information contained within the analysis. For example,  
sources

Overall, SIRC determined that the facting supported the assessments reviewed.

## 5 IAB AND COOPERATION WITH THE SI COMMUNITY

The historical challenges of information sharing within the security intelligence community have served to limit the nature and scope of assessments produced.<sup>47</sup> However, in recent years there has been a concerted effort across government to reduce these barriers and create opportunities for partnerships and cooperation. This change is reflected in the IAB's recent and increased role within the Canadian intelligence community.

At the informal level, IAB analysts cooperate with various contacts across the intelligence community on a regular basis. In addition to consulting with other specialists in the field to share ideas, IAB analysts rely on contacts to assist with the collection and corroboration of intelligence information. This can be accomplished through face-to-face meetings, interaction at conferences, or

At the more formal level, IAB analysts participate in ongoing government initiatives to strengthen cooperation across the intelligence community.

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<sup>47</sup> This is particularly the case for strategic analysis. Van Cleave, M. "The Question of Strategic Counterintelligence: What is it, and What Should we do About it?" *CIA Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 51(2), 2007, p. 9.





## 6 DISSEMINATION OF PRODUCTS TO DOMESTIC CLIENTS, COLLECTION OF CLIENT REQUIREMENTS AND FEEDBACK

The IAB plays a key role in advising government of threats to the security of Canada, through the dissemination of relevant and timely information. As part of its review, SIRC examined how the IAB disseminates intelligence assessments to domestic stakeholders. offices within the branch are directly responsible for the dissemination of intelligence,

This chapter examines three issues. First, it examines how the determines client requirements. Second, it explores the challenges encountered when disseminating products. Finally, it discusses consumer feedback.

### 6.1 Determining Client Requirements

The determines client requirements through regular consultation. There are two types of government clients: Core clients are members of the security intelligence community, Special interest recipients are selected stakeholders outside the

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security intelligence community (e.g. In both cases, staff have regular interaction with departmental representatives to determine client requirements.<sup>61</sup>

To determine whether clients are receiving products that meet their needs, SIRC selected a random sample of client requirements for eleven different stakeholders<sup>62</sup> and compared them to the IAB's products that were disseminated to those clients. Based on this exercise, SIRC found that IAB's clients received products that corresponded to their needs.

## 6.2 Dissemination Challenges

Intelligence briefs and studies are two products that are commonly disseminated to government clients.

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<sup>61</sup> Office staff attempt to ascertain how products can be tailored to meet client needs. Review Meeting, September 13, 2007.

### 6.3 Client Feedback

The [redacted] collects feedback from clients on all IAB products. Various methods are used to collect this information, including personal contact (liaison), correspondence and feedback forms.<sup>70</sup> Although personal contact, or face-to-face meetings, is one of the most effective ways to collect feedback, the [redacted] resource considerations limit the number of personal visits they can make at any given time. During the last quarter of 2006, [redacted] staff met with [redacted] clients, or slightly more than half of the approximately IAB [redacted] clients. In general, most clients noted the usefulness of the IAB's information and typically requested more products. No negative comments were reported from clients concerning the relevance of the IAB's publications.<sup>73</sup>

A key challenge for the IAB is to find new and innovative ways to collect feedback. For example, the IAB attempts to solicit feedback through comments attached to products (intelligence briefs/studies) and feedback forms [redacted]. The problem here is that a majority of clients do not complete the forms.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> A comment feature is linked to each product on the [redacted] (IB, studies) and there are feedback report forms with [redacted] products.

<sup>73</sup> Meeting, SIRC and the [redacted] (September 13, 2007).

<sup>75</sup> Review Meeting, September 17, 2007.

In reviewing a sample of feedback forms, SIRC found that a majority of clients found the IAB's information to be useful and relevant. Generally, clients requested clarification concerning certain issues, additional information to further on-going investigations or permission to use information in their own reports. Even so, based on the limited number of feedback forms returned, this method does not produce a very rich or necessarily representative source of client feedback.

In an effort to address ongoing issues relating to collecting client feedback, the [redacted] recently modified its [redacted] to enable them to track and store feedback. Previously, client commentary that was collected during liaison was not stored in a systematic way, raising questions about the retention of corporate knowledge. Although it is still too early to determine, the [redacted] should assist in addressing the ongoing need of collecting client feedback.

Overall, it is apparent that the [redacted] continues to search for different methods of collecting feedback. SIRC encourages the IAB to continue its efforts in this regard.

## 7 CONCLUSION

This review has examined how the IAB produces and disseminates strategic and tactical assessments, as well as the branch's role within the security intelligence community. Overall, SIRC believes that the IAB is an effective and professionally organized group that has worked diligently in recent years to respond to growing demands, both within the Service and across government, for various intelligence assessments and products. However, as recognized by IAB management, and evidenced by their ongoing work to improve and expand the branch's role, considerable work remains. In the hopes of contributing to these ongoing efforts, the Committee offers a few final observations.

First, the reorganization of the IAB should help enhance the branch's capacity to produce strategic and tactical intelligence analyses for government consumption. In particular, although it is still too early to appreciate the full impact of these changes, the Committee believes that they represent an important step towards addressing the need for more long-term strategic analysis. However, previous SIRC studies have noted that frequent restructuring and insufficient resources have limited the Service's intelligence assessment capabilities. For this reason, the Committee encourages CSIS's senior management to provide the necessary leadership and resources to ensure the branch has the necessary organizational stability to complete the many important initiatives and objectives that we heard about throughout this review.

Second, based on our observations, the Committee believes that there will be increased pressures from across the SI community for the IAB's assessments and related products. The challenge herein will be for the Service, and the IAB in particular, to continue to develop the capacity to meet these needs.

Finally, this report highlighted various challenges for the IAB in disseminating products and collecting client feedback. The Committee recognizes the efforts of the Service to improve its methods of liaising with clients to ensure that they receive relevant and timely commentary. We encourage them to continue their work in this regard.

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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

There are no findings arising from this review.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations arising from this review.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

DG	Director General
ER&L	External Review and Liaison
HQ	Headquarters
IAB	Intelligence Assessments Branch
IAS	International Assessment Staff
IB	Intelligence Briefs

RAP	Research, Analysis and Production Branch
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SI	Security and Intelligence
TRA	Threat and Risk Assessments

**APPENDIX A: Meetings/Interviews with IAB**

Number	Date	IAB personnel, unit
1	June 4, 2007	IAB senior management
2	July 26, 2007	IAB senior management
3	September 13, 2007	
4	September 17, 2007	
5	September 20, 2007	Strategic analyst
6	September 26, 2007	Coordinator/Tactical analyst
7	October 4, 2007	
8	October 17, 2007	Threat and Risk Assessment analyst
9	November 15, 2007	IAB senior management

**APPENDIX B: IAB Products**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Description</b>
Intelligence Brief (IB)	This product analyses current threats or emerging issues related to CSIS's mandate.
CSIS Study	In-depth reports that examine elements of a threat and assesses its wide-ranging security implications related to CSIS's mandate.
Threat and Risk Assessment	Provides specific security and intelligence advice to various government departments and agencies.