

TOP SECRET

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**STATION
(SIRC STUDY 2008-01)**

**Security Intelligence Review Committee
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1 INTRODUCTION

The Service maintains a presence throughout the world. With the exception of three CSIS Stations - London, Paris and Washington - their locations are classified. Traditionally, the primary function of Stations was to liaise with the Service's foreign partners and conduct immigration and security screening.

Each year the Committee reviews the activities of a CSIS Station. This year, the Committee reviewed Station, which is responsible for managing foreign arrangements in countries.¹ the Station particularly important given the close relationship between the Service and its allies, especially This close relationship is the result of a number of factors, including a respect for democratic traditions and cultural diversity. As well, there are similarities in what these countries perceive to be the most serious threat to their security - that is, Al Qaeda inspired terrorism

As would be expected, there is a high level of cooperation and information-sharing between the Service and the agencies for which is responsible.

¹ According to section 17 of the CSIS Act, the Service may, with the approval of the Minister of Public Safety, enter into an arrangement or otherwise cooperate with the government or an institution of a foreign state.

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2 OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of this review is to gain a better understanding of how the roles and responsibilities of CSIS Stations in general, and Station specifically, have changed

The secondary objective of this review is to examine the Service's relationship with other Canadian agencies working alongside Station

As the Service takes on a more active role internationally, it will be expected to work effectively not only with its foreign counterparts, but increasingly with other federal agencies as well.

3 METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

SIRC examined a variety of documents for this review, including operational exchanges and emails between CSIS Headquarters and Station as well as CSIS internal correspondence and planning documents referring to Station. We also reviewed Station's Post Profiles and the Agency Assessments and 'Cooperation With' files for the foreign agencies for which the Station is responsible.

The Committee's Executive Director and a Senior Research Analyst conducted an on-site visit in March 2009, during which there were meetings with Station personnel and with representatives from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).² SIRC also met with officials from Station and International Region (IR) in Ottawa.

The review period was April 1, 2006 to December 31, 2007.

² SIRC had also requested to meet with representatives from the RCMP, CBSA and CSE during the on-site visit. However these meetings did not take place due to operational requirements at the Mission.

4 ON THE JOB AT STATION

Service employees posted abroad attend a pre-posting course at Headquarters, which is regularly amended to reflect the changing nature of the work at Stations.

As is often the case when taking on new responsibilities, much of the learning occurs on the job, at Station.

In terms of dividing the workload at Station, the Head of Station is responsible for relationship building and corporate issues, responsible for immigration files carries out the administrative duties. Despite having specific responsibilities, there is nonetheless a great deal of fluidity at the Station,

4.1 Traditional Liaison Activities

International Region provides every Station with specific requirements based on the priorities identified in the branch Annual Plans. These requirements outline what each Station is expected to deliver in terms of intelligence, liaison and security screening.

Station is in regular contact with representatives from the agencies for which it is responsible.

the majority of the work is still devoted to liaising with partner agencies. Liaising with these agencies is the foundation upon which fruitful relationships are built. On a number of occasions, after having engaged in preliminary discussions, the Station facilitated meetings between the Service and a partner agency.

An important aspect of the liaison function is managing the Service's relationships with partner agencies. At Stations where there is extensive cooperation between the Service and the foreign agencies - as is the case with Station - this is no small feat.

In terms of managing the Service's relationships with foreign agencies, sometimes the most important contribution is simply to appreciate the significance of a particular issue or event.

The Station is also involved in cooperation on a corporate level, in terms of learning about programs and initiatives undertaken by partner agencies.

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5 TRADITIONAL LIAISON

In recent years CSIS has commented on the need to increase Canada's foreign intelligence capabilities.

6 INTERACTION WITH CANADIAN OFFICIALS ABROAD

Fifteen Canadian government agencies and departments work at the (the Mission). Generally speaking, Station has a positive relationship with all its Mission partners.

Two of the Service's partnerships - with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade - are key, and deserve closer examination.

6.1 Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Citizenship and Immigration Canada is Station's most important domestic partner, with over people working at the Mission. The Mission is the Regional Processing Centre for Permanent Resident visas

Last year, CIC officials at the Mission processed approximately visa requests, The Station assesses that approximately of its workload is related to immigration files.³⁶

Although the background checks constitute formal cooperation, a great deal of informal cooperation is also taking place. For instance, the Service provides briefings to CIC employees to explain how the Service can be useful during the application process.

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SIRC Visit to Station, March 2009.

³⁶ The Station does not consider the immigration files to be an impediment to successfully fulfilling other Station responsibilities. That being said, during the 2007-2008 fiscal year, the Service sent a Temporary Duty Officer to to assist with the immigration files. SIRC Visit to Station, March 2009.

For the Service, it is important that CIC employees, when uncertain about an applicant, know they can informally defer to CSIS to determine if a formal referral is necessary. Last year CIC officials at the Mission asked _____ Station to review approximately _____ files that had already been processed, to ensure that appropriate decisions had been made. The CSIS officer who reviewed the files agreed with CIC's judgements. The exercise is considered to have been worthwhile in that it demonstrated that the Service and CIC are of like minds when it comes to identifying potential threats.³⁷

6.2 Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

The Head of Mission (HoM), who is DFAIT's representative abroad, is accountable for the management and direction of the Mission and the activities of the domestic partners stationed at the Mission. The CSIS-DFAIT Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) refers to the Head of Station

6.2.1 Global Security Reporting Program

Since 2002, DFAIT has been posting Global Security Reporting Program (GSRP) officers abroad to collect security-related information for the foreign policy and intelligence communities in Canada.

³⁷ SIRC Visit to _____ Station, March 2009.

there are formal discussions at the HQ level regarding CSIS-DFAIT
interaction abroad.

The Service expects that it will sign an MoU with DFAIT that will include clear guidelines on CSIS-DFAIT consultation in Ottawa and at overseas Stations

7 COMMUNICATION AT STATION

The Station's management of the Service's foreign relationships, in a manner that is beneficial to all parties, requires that the Station have methods of exchanging information - both with CSIS and with the partner agencies - that are efficient and effective. This section examines the methods of exchanging information as well as the communication challenges experienced at the Station.

7.1 Communication Between Station and CSIS HQ

7.2 Flow of Information

It is important for Station to be aware of all operational exchanges and developments between the Service and the agencies for which it is responsible.

7.3 Communicating with Foreign Partners

8 CONCLUSION

In recent years, as the Service has engaged in more activities abroad, Stations have moved beyond their traditional function of liaising with foreign partners and conducting immigration screening.

Station liaison remains its mainstay. That being

said, Station has adapted

SIRC will continue to monitor the activities of both the Service and the Stations

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- The communication challenges at Station are inconvenient, but do not prevent the Station from doing its work. (Section 7.3)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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