

TOP SECRET

**File No.: 2800-140
(TD R480)**

**CSIS'S INVESTIGATION OF DOMESTIC EXTREMISM
(SIRC STUDY 2008-02)**

**Security Intelligence Review Committee
September 10, 2009**

ATIP version
MAR 25 2019
dated: _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 2

2 OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE 3

3 METHODOLOGY 4

4 INVESTIGATION 5

4.2 RTAs 8

4.3 Clarifying Inconsistencies 10

5 SPECIAL EVENTS 11

5.1 General Special Events Policy 11

5.2 Authority for Special Events 11

6 SPECIAL EVENT CASE STUDIES 13

6.1 Successes and Challenges 15

7 TOWARDS THE VANCOUVER OLYMPICS 17

8 VANCOUVER OLYMPICS 18

8.1 Background 18

8.2 CSIS's Role in Games Security 18

9 CSIS THREAT ASSESSMENTS 20

10 ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES 22

11 CONCLUDING REMARKS 24

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS 25

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS 26

1 INTRODUCTION

However, this investigation presents unique challenges to the Service. Although CSIS must gather the information required to fulfill its mandate, it must always refrain from infringing upon Canadians' protected rights to lawful advocacy and protest. Negotiating the line between legal protest and activist extremism requires a specialized, nuanced understanding of advocacy movements, protest tactics, and the ways in which otherwise well-intentioned protesters become radicalized.

The purpose of this review is to examine CSIS operational activities in the milieu of domestic extremism, taking into account its overlap with criminal investigations and with lawful advocacy, protest and dissent. Although this threat environment includes potential violence associated with

SIRC concentrated on the Service's investigation

As part of this review, SIRC examined the Service's approach to Special Events – large gatherings which also contain an element of political controversy,

The review also examined the Service's preparations for its contribution to Canada's largest special event in two decades, the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games (OPWG).

Overall, this study concludes that CSIS's investigation while built upon sound techniques and successfully incorporating several measures to ensure the maintenance of Canadians' right to legal dissent – requires some basic reconceptualization. SIRC found the investigation and its general parameters were problematically conceived, and that several key concepts upon which potential threats are evaluated are not universally understood, commonly defined, or consistently used.

2 OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

Part I of this review examines CSIS operational activities in the investigation of between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2007. Part II considers CSIS's role in supporting security for special events and assesses - as case studies - CSIS's investigation of security threats during the North American Leaders' Summit (NALS) and the Part III examines CSIS's planning and preparations for the OPWG.

3 METHODOLOGY

SIRC analysed a full range of documents related to the investigation. To support the review of primary documentation, SIRC met with CSIS staff representing at Headquarters, Ottawa Region, and British Columbia Region. In addition, SIRC met with Ottawa Region Special Events staff to discuss their role in supporting security arrangements

PART I

4

INVESTIGATION

CSIS policy, cognizant of the democratic value of legitimate and legal public dissent in Canada, states that "acts of minor violence with political overtones" should not be defined as potential threats or become target of investigation.⁵ One overarching challenge for investigation is therefore to thoroughly understand and carefully negotiate the line between lawful advocacy and dissent and the potential for serious violence. The importance of maintaining this delicate balance is recognized throughout CSIS.

Between 2006 and 2009, CSIS substantially modified its investigation

⁵ Acts of minor violence with political overtones are excluded from CSIS's interpretation of "serious violence" in OPS-100-Appendix 1.2.1(iv) dated January 22, 2001.

that in each instance, Counter Terrorism (CT) Branch and later the conceptual hurdle in defining the scope and subjects of investigation.

SIRC noted
faced a

Despite the Service's broad-based knowledge it is nevertheless difficult for them to determine when an individual's actions move from lawful advocacy to the potential for violence - or more specifically, the factors that cause an activist to become an extremist. Part of this difficulty arises because the Service does not have a uniform extremist profile for this milieu; there is no universal understanding of what actions indicate a threat of potential violence nor the processes of recruitment or radicalization. Two examples underscore the challenges faced by the Service in this regard.

ATIP version
MAR 25 2019

dated: _____

4.2 RTAs

A second example of inconsistencies within investigation emerges through an examination of related Requests for Targeting Authorities (RTAs), which underscore the difficulties that can arise when a firm set of tools and definitions differentiating protest activism from protest extremism are not available.

ATIP version

dated: MAR 25 2019

4.3 Clarifying Inconsistencies

SIRC believes that the inconsistent use of the term, along with the ambiguity within some of the Service's RTAs are indicative of the challenges that the Service faces. From our perspective it will be necessary for the Service to clarify these issues so that it might meet the investigation requirements. To help facilitate this process, the Committee believes that there are immediate steps that the Service could take to clarify its overall approach to the file. **SIRC recommends that take steps to develop stronger definitions and a better understanding of the threat environment, with the objective of building a more effective model to isolate and identify indicators of activist extremism and their potential for violence.**

PART II

5 SPECIAL EVENTS

5.1 General Special Events Policy

The Service considers a "special event" to be "any event, in Canada or abroad, which provides a heightened opportunity for carrying out activities which may constitute a threat to the security of Canada."²⁴ In practice, such events are often large, well-attended and well-advertised

A Canadian-hosted G8 Summit, or the Francophonie Summit might serve as good examples of a special event, though they can range in size, up to and including the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (OPWG).

5.2 Authority for Special Events

²⁴ OPS-504.1.2 dated May 1, 2006

ATIP version

dated: **MAR 25 2019**

6 SPECIAL EVENT CASE STUDIES

SIRC examined two Special Events to serve as case studies for its review. The first was the American Leaders' Summit and the second, in more detail, was the North American Leaders' Summit.

Held on August 20 and 21, 2007 in Montebello, Quebec, the NALS was a well-publicized, high-level meeting between Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, American President George Bush, and Mexican President Felipe Calderon.³¹

Preparation for the NALS Summit involved CSIS collaboration with its security partners

³¹ The event was part of an ongoing negotiation between the three countries for the creation of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP).

6.1 Successes and Challenges

7 TOWARDS THE VANCOUVER OLYMPICS

On balance, the Service successfully prepares for and participates in the maintenance of security surrounding Special Events. Moreover, its security partners have much to gain from its assessment and advice. The NALS post-action reports suggested a small series of internal recommendations concerning procedural and technical matters,

These lessons will be applied to future Special Events.

This also became a lesson to apply forward, especially as preparations began for the OPWG (see Part III), but on an exponentially more complex scale. While NALS was a single controlled location with no direct public access, Vancouver 2010 will be a multiple venue event with significant public integration;

PART III

8 VANCOUVER OLYMPICS

8.1 Background

In February of 2010, Canada will host the Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games (OPWG). Experts have predicted that ensuring safety at the 2010 Olympics will require the largest security operation in Canadian history. Planning for the Olympics has been undertaken by the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee (VANOC), while the lead responsibility of coordinating security for the Games has fallen to the RCMP.⁴⁷

Once it is over, the OPWG will have constituted one of the Service's major challenges between 2008 and 2010. The period reviewed in this study constitutes what might be called the "preliminary" or "advance assessment" stage of Olympic security preparation.

8.2 CSIS's Role in Games Security

CSIS was part of the original blueprint for Olympic security, which stated that the Service would provide "threat assessments and security intelligence reports to the Government of Canada, RCMP and police agencies responsible" for the 2010 Games. In addition, CSIS would conduct "security accreditation checks" on behalf of the RCMP. Finally, it was stated that a "joint intelligence group" would be created in advance of the Games to ensure cooperation and accuracy in intelligence sharing among security partners.⁴⁸ These three priorities have remained the central planks of CSIS's role.

The sheer size of the Olympic event will require something from every Branch in the Service.

Each department within the Service will also play a role: Finance will look after the budget, International Region will deal with foreign agencies, IAB will produce daily Situation Reports, Communications will prepare media reports and media lines, and so on.

⁴⁷ The total Canadian commitment to Olympic is of course much more complex, and involves former CSIS Director War Elcock's appointment as a Privy Council Coordinator for Olympic Security. Please see the attached Briefing Note for more details.

⁴⁸ Vancouver Olympics Bid Book ("The Sea to Sky Games"), Volume 3, Chapter 12.

Leadership and primary responsibility for the Olympic file has fallen to three specific branches within the Service: HSOS HQ, HQ, and British Columbia Region (BCR), in whose jurisdiction the Games take place.

The sharing of information with domestic and international partners is, in fact, a microcosm of the entire approach to the Olympics: the Service will use existing policy and procedure to approach it as "business as usual", but will, on the other hand, need

to recognize that some modifications will be needed along the way to reflect unique needs.⁵³

9 CSIS THREAT ASSESSMENTS

ATIP version

MAR 25 2019

dated: _____

CSIS's understanding of the Olympic threat environment continues to evolve, and will be greatly dependent upon their accurate assessment of the threat environment.

10 ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES

As part of its role in Olympic security, the Service produces assessments which are utilized by other branches of government to understand the threat environment.

While this analysis is critical to their role, the Service's challenge has been to develop and maintain consistency in the criteria and the definitions used in the investigation.

SIRC found that the assessments covering
properly articulate the threat environment.

did not

11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Both within investigation and notably in the case of Special Events, this study concludes that CSIS has enjoyed notable success. The Service has conducted regular reviews of the parameters of investigation, and has apportioned significant assets so as to maintain a robust understanding of the threat environment. In addition, the Service is clearly a crucial asset to its national security partners, and is committed to allocating the resources needed to contribute effectively to the security of major Special Events. It is clear that CSIS is set to play an important role in the security of the OPWG.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- On balance, the Service successfully prepares for and participates in the maintenance of security surrounding Special Events. Moreover, its security partners have much to gain from its assessment and advice.
- CSIS's understanding of the Olympic threat environment continues to evolve, and will be greatly dependent upon their accurate assessment of threat environment.
- SIRC found that the assessments covering not properly articulate the threat environment. did

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- SIRC recommends that _____ take steps to develop stronger definitions and a better understanding of the threat environment with the objective of building a more effective model to isolate and identify indicators of radicalization