

SECURITY INTELLIGENCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

TOP SECRET - CEO

SIRC REVIEW 2015-06

REVIEW OF STATION

SUMMARY

- SIRC found that CSIS's presence at _____ is seen as both welcome and necessary.
- The visit to _____ provided SIRC with valuable insight into the Station's challenges and opportunities and more importantly the context of on-going and up-to-date operations as well as strategies that are currently in development.
- The in-depth discussions held with _____ and the representatives of other Canadian Government Departments provided context to understanding CSIS's key role within a whole-of-government approach
- The study provided perspectives on how certain challenges in this part of the world are being countered through a number of opportunities, including: a new operational strategy, a renewed relationship with local partners, the promise of increased capacity building, and the possibility of an increased presence
- Overall, this review highlighted the value and need for CSIS to operate in various parts of the world to fulfil its mandate.

File No. 2800-201

ATIP version

FEB 20 2019

dated: _____

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1 INTRODUCTION

For a number of years, SIRC has been reviewing CSIS's "increased footprint abroad", which has resulted in an important growth of operational activities and personnel outside Canada. Against the backdrop of this new operational reality, SIRC has sought ways to use the information gleaned from its foreign station visits to feed its broader view of CSIS's activities abroad.

This was SIRC's first examination of Station. It provided perspective on how the threat situation in has changed drastically in the last two years, leading to a change in CSIS's role in this part of the world. SIRC also gained perspective on the work undertaken in a foreign setting that undertakes operations in hostile, dangerous and difficult environments. Finally, the review provided insight into new relationships that are being forged and tested to support CSIS's increased foreign operational presence.

Overall SIRC found that CSIS's presence is seen as both welcome and necessary. The relationships that CSIS has developed with Canadian domestic partners appear to be of mutual benefit, and those with foreign partners to be productive. This review highlighted the value and need for CSIS to operate in various parts of the world to fulfil its mandate.

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2 METHODOLOGY

This review had set out to examine two very different stations –
– with the goal of tying together common operational threads and other areas of interest. Given the intelligence services and substation status to as well as close proximity to these two locations provided the ideal candidates on which to juxtapose SIRC's analysis. In addition, information obtained from these two foreign station visits were intended to feed two other on-going SIRC reviews. Due to circumstances that prevented SIRC from travelling as well as changes in the focus of the other two reviews, the objectives set out in the original work plan were subsequently altered. SIRC's visit to took place as planned, but was chosen as an alternate foreign station.¹

This study examined all relevant documentation pertaining to activities at Station, including: station and country profiles, foreign arrangements, cooperation with files, relevant human source files, briefing notes, planning documents, security procedures, policy documentation, allied reporting, email correspondence and intelligence assessments. SIRC looked at all relevant operational and corporate documentation and held briefings with the operational desks at HQ, as well representatives of to help place the review into context.

During SIRC's on-site visit in late January 2016, the Executive Director and a Senior Research Advisor met with CSIS personnel in order to address a wide array of issues, as well as gain a better understanding of the working environment at Station. SIRC personnel met with as well as other relevant Canadian officials

SIRC would like to note the generous hospitality offered by CSIS personnel as well as HQ assistance in ensuring that SIRC was adequately prepared prior to departure for

The review covered the period from April 1 2013 to January 2016. Information obtained and discussed at Station covered operational and strategic elements that were very timely and current to the day.

¹ The information obtained from the visit to analysis will be used to feed the SIRC visit to

Station will still yield a SIRC product; however, this forthcoming in summer 2016.

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3.1 CSIS Presence in

Workloads at Station are continuously heavy;

Officers have been assigned for short term assignments. This was seen as beneficial, allowing for enhanced quality of intelligence products, as well as allowing for more focused collection efforts on the part of intelligence officers. Given the high volume of activity and significant workloads witnessed during the station visit, **SIRC sees the benefit of adding permanent analytical support at Station.**

3.2 Communications at Station

One of the biggest challenges that SIRC has noted in prior station reviews has been the lack of connectivity and the difficulty of communications at Station with HQ, as well as

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the difficulties in communications in country. As part of upgrade, Station

communication

intended to enhance efficiency

This connectivity is

Despite the benefits, some challenges still exist.

SIRC believes that CSIS HQ should be placing pressure on the responsible Government of Canada service providers to ensure that the appropriate bandwidth space be reserved for CSIS offices to accomplish its work abroad.

3.3 Operating at Station

The confirmed that the priority for CSIS is the targets

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3.4 Operating “through” Station

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SIRC looks forward to how operations develop over the years. In relation to this as well as all matters pertaining to Station, **SIRC found that all were up-to-date, in order and appropriately documented.**

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4 RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARTNERS AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to its new opportunities and changing direction, Station must also stay apprised of emerging issues. To fulfil this responsibility, CSIS personnel must maintain healthy relationships with Canadian partners as well as partners with whom foreign relationships exist.

4.1 Domestic Partners

During the visit SIRC met with representatives of all Canadian Government departments with whom CSIS regularly liaises. Discussions were held

Overall, SIRC found that CSIS maintained a positive relationship with all Canadian partners at the mission.

SIRC also asked questions about information sharing and the impacts that recently enacted legislation, namely the *Security of Canada Sharing Information Act* (SCISA), has had on relevant Government of Canada departments with regard to sharing information with CSIS. SIRC was told that the trickle-down effect of new the legislation has not yet been felt by any of the partners This is an issue that SIRC will likely broach in the context of other future foreign station reviews, as well as next year's planned review to examine the impacts of SCISA on CSIS operations.

SIRC found that CSIS's presence is of benefit to domestic partners and that its work assists other Government of Canada departments in running their programs effectively and safely. This view was noted by a number of partners,

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Another important role that was raised by power that CSIS brings with respect to intelligence partners

is the leveraging

4.2 Foreign Partners

In addition to dealing with Government of Canada partners, CSIS also deals with a number of foreign intelligence agencies. **Overall, SIRC found that Station maintains a productive relationship with the vast majority of its foreign partners**

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²⁴ In previous years SIRC had benefitted from CTCB funding to deliver presentations to intelligence partners in Columbia and Costa Rica.

5 CONCLUSION

Past SIRC studies have commented that foreign station reviews offer a unique opportunity to witness first-hand the day-to-day work of CSIS personnel posted abroad. The visit provided SIRC with valuable insight into the Station's challenges and opportunities and more importantly the context of on-going and up-to-date operations as well as strategies that are currently in development. the new strategy being employed at Station unfolds and how the challenges of working in a complex area are smoothed out.

The meetings Station allowed SIRC to gain appreciation for the work that is undertaken abroad and provided an opportunity to hold discussions on a number of timely and relevant matters that would otherwise be difficult to undertake from HQ. This level of openness is a testament to the type of personnel that CSIS is deploying in foreign stations In addition, the fact that relations with domestic and foreign partners are productive and continually improving is indicative of the personalities that drive these relationships.

The in-depth discussions held with the and the representatives of other Canadian Government Departments provided context to understanding CSIS's key role within a whole-of-government approach The conversations also allowed for a better comprehension of the various challenges that all partners face as well as those particular to Station. Equally important, these conversations provided perspectives on how the challenges are being countered through a number of opportunities,

Overall SIRC's visit to was deemed a success and provided great insight on which to plan for future review exercises.

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SIRC sees the benefit of adding permanent analytical support at Station.

SIRC believes that CSIS HQ should be placing additional pressure on the responsible Government of Canada service providers to ensure that CSIS offices to accomplish its work abroad.

SIRC recognizes

SIRC found that all were up-to-date, in order and appropriately documented.

SIRC found that CSIS maintained a positive relationship with all Canadian partners

SIRC found that CSIS's presence is of benefit to domestic partners and that its work assists other Government of Canada departments in running their programs effectively and safely.

SIRC found that Station

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