

# SECURITY INTELLIGENCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

TOP SECRET - CEO  
SIRC REVIEW 2016-12  
SIRC REVIEW OF FOREIGN STATIONS  
AND

## SUMMARY

- Two of CSIS's stations – and have cooperated on a number of files and share similar collection requirements.
- Both stations have had to make adjustments to changes in collection priorities. In addition, station's collection activities were scaled back as a result of work related to taking all available station resources.
- There are a number of challenges related to foreign partners within area of responsibility, including competition between the agencies, internal corruption and human rights concerns.
- SIRC found that CSIS responded swiftly to the allegations of abuse by a foreign partner. Additionally, SIRC found that CSIS attached all required caveats on its information exchanges as per operational policy and that the *DDO Directive on Information Sharing with Foreign Entities* was followed. SIRC recommended internal documentation be updated to reflect a serious issue
- SIRC found that CSIS Headquarters provided adequate support to . SIRC also found that the Heads of Station received timely operational support when required.
- Overall, SIRC found that the stations have maintained positive relationships with all of their partners and CSIS's presence is appreciated by its domestic partners at mission

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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Every year SIRC travels to a foreign station to undertake an in-depth examination of CSIS's work overseas in order to better appreciate the nature, scope and complexity of its activities abroad. This year, SIRC elected to visit two stations

which have cooperated on a number of files and share similar collection requirements. Although this represents SIRC's first on-site visit to either station, SIRC has previously examined activities undertaken at these two stations in the context of other reviews.<sup>1</sup>

The review had three broad objectives consistent with SIRC's traditional foreign station reviews. The first objective was to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and extent of operational activities at these stations, including any challenges related to the local environment. The second objective was to understand CSIS's relationships with its domestic and foreign partners by examining liaison activities, as well as operational cooperation and information exchanges carried out through the stations. Finally, SIRC examined site-specific developments, conditions, pressures and emerging issues that occurred during the review period.

Overall, SIRC found that the stations have maintained positive relationships with all of their partners and CSIS's presence is appreciated by its domestic partners at mission. In addition, SIRC found that, during the review period, all policies and directives on information exchanges were followed and that CSIS responded quickly to an allegation of abuse against one of its regional partners. In another case, however, SIRC recommended that the foreign arrangement profile for \_\_\_\_\_ be updated to reflect \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> CSIS's Support to Emerging Issues and Government of Canada Intelligence Priorities (2011-06); Review of International Region: CSIS's Evolving Footprint Abroad (2012-08); CSIS's Traditional and Non Traditional Foreign Partners (2015-05)

## 2 METHODOLOGY

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SIRC examined relevant documentation pertaining to the activities of [redacted] and [redacted] stations which included: station and country profiles; foreign arrangements; relevant human source files; briefing notes; planning documents; CSIS reporting and exchanges with other Government of Canada departments/agencies and foreign partners in the region; and finally, the relevant weekly accountability reports.

In addition to holding briefings with representatives from [redacted]

[redacted] and the former Head of Station, SIRC conducted on-site station visits in early February 2017. The Executive Director and a Senior Research Advisor met with CSIS personnel in order to address a wide array of issues and to gain an understanding of the working environment. SIRC also met with [redacted] and [redacted]

as well as other relevant Canadian officials at the stations, including representatives from: Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA); Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC); Department of National Defence (DND); Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP); and Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

The review assessed whether CSIS's activities were in accordance with the *CSIS Act*, Ministerial Direction, internal policies, as well as in line with CSIS's priorities and intelligence requirements. The core review period was from January 1, 2015 to

January 1, 2017 although SIRC examined documentation which fell outside this period in order to provide a complete assessment of relevant issues. With regard to [redacted] the review focused primarily, but not exclusively, on the period corresponding to the current Head of Station's tenure.

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**BACKGROUND**

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Geopolitical issues and poor administrative governance in parts have created fertile ground for violent groups to not only exist, but to thrive. has seen several attacks post 9-11,

countries are dealing with the threat from Sunni Islamic extremism,

there are clear threats to Canadian interests and Canadians travelling abroad. For example, as well as being killed in attacks, Canadians have also been targeted for hostage-taking by criminal and terrorist groups,

is a stark reminder

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of how regional threats  
that CSIS's presence  
interests abroad.

can quickly become a Government of Canada priority. It is clear  
is beneficial in gathering intelligence on threats to Canadian

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## 4 OPERATIONAL ENVIRONNEMENT AND ACTIVITIES IN

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#### 4.1

Since the arrival of the current

HoS

there have been two crises:

during that time focused on  
backburner.

The collection requirements  
pushing other interests to the

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## 5 RELATIONSHIPS IN

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An important component of a SIRC station review is examining CSIS's relationships abroad. In addition to collecting information on intelligence priorities, foreign stations must also stay apprised of emerging issues, perform a liaison function and seek out opportunities for operational collaboration. To fulfil this responsibility, CSIS personnel must maintain healthy relationships with Canadian partners at Mission, other agencies who have a presence in the country (CRs), as well as foreign partners within the station's area of operation. Foreign stations are also to explore opportunities to engage in potential relationships with new regional partners. SIRC examined these relationships by meeting with the relevant domestic partners at both stations and reviewing a number of documents, including operational exchanges with partners.

### 5.1 Domestic Partners

During its onsite visits, SIRC met with: both Heads of Mission; other GAC representatives, including two Global Security Program Reporting Officers (GSRP); the RCMP; and CBSA. IRCC, , provided the HoS written answers to SIRC's questions. **SIRC found that CSIS maintained a positive relationship with all Canadian partners in both . Additionally, SIRC found that CSIS's presence is of direct benefit to its domestic partners at both stations.**

Both HoMs gave examples of CSIS's sharing of information that contributed to the Mission's operations. In one instance, a threat to the High Commission was put into perspective when CSIS was able to confirm that their intelligence partners had reported similar threats in other parts of the world.

Domestic partners, both in highlighted how CSIS's information is important in that it can help to corroborate information they have received from their sources. Given past SIRC findings on the state of the relationship between the GSRP and CSIS personnel at other missions abroad, SIRC inquired about this relationship at both stations. Both GSRPs understand CSIS's role and working relationships appeared positive. Some of this may be attributed to personalities and good communication, however it is possible that there is very little overlap on files of interest. There was clear delineation of activities

The RCMP has a large footprint in in part, as a result of concerns. SIRC heard from RCMP representatives is one area where there has been good cooperation in the past.<sup>21</sup> Operation

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<sup>21</sup> It was noted by the RCMP that the file ebbs and flows. When there is a great deal of time and resources are required from all partners. The current HoS

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is an example of a unique model in which CSIS is able to share with the RCMP with fewer restrictions than is generally the case.

CSIS provided additional value to the RCMP

investigations by deconflicting with the

Domestic partners mentioned that without CSIS, there may be gaps related to security intelligence that they would be expected to fill. Additionally, the information that CSIS provided them with from their partners was useful.

Although relationships at the stations were positive, SIRC heard,

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has not been involved in investigation into a potential threat.

<sup>22</sup> Meeting with RCMP

although there was an

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## 5.2

### Allies

Liaising with other intelligence partners at station is key to CSIS's activities abroad.<sup>23</sup> SIRC heard that often the information received from partners in theatre, in addition to being timely, <sup>24</sup> Fostering good relationships with other agencies is important

monthly multilateral meetings the HoS participates in to discuss the threat environment.

Fostering these relationships is important not only for information sharing, but also for operational purposes.

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<sup>23</sup> For this review, SIRC focused on CSIS's cooperation with

<sup>24</sup> SIRC Briefing at

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### 5.3 Regional Partners

In examining CSIS's relationships at station with regional partners, SIRC focused on

#### 5.3.1 Corruption and Human Rights

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SIRC believes corruption is a concern that needs to be taken very seriously in terms of both operational safety and information sharing. **SIRC found that the foreign arrangement profile for [REDACTED] was not updated to reflect a serious incident of corruption**. SIRC reviewed a case

**SIRC recommends that the arrangement profile for [REDACTED] be updated to reflect an incident of corruption, and include any implications on operations or information sharing.**

In addition to corruption, [REDACTED] have poor human rights records and questionable legislative frameworks.

Although allegations do not always implicate specific partners, repressive governments and legal frameworks that do not reflect acceptable human rights practices combine to create a situation whereby mistreatment by security services cannot be discounted. SIRC examined how CSIS responded to a report

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**SIRC found that CSIS responded swiftly to the allegations of abuse by a foreign partner. Additionally, SIRC found that CSIS attached all required caveats on its information exchanges as per operational policy and that the *DDO Directive on Information Sharing with Foreign Entities* was followed.**

#### **5.4 Relationship with Headquarters**

SIRC also examined what support the stations received from CSIS HQ. As mentioned previously, [redacted] was operating in an unusual state

[redacted] The response received from HQ was swift and effective, and the prompt deployment of CSIS's [redacted] team was noted by the HoM.<sup>37</sup>

SIRC enquired as to whether [redacted] received adequate support from HQ [redacted]. Despite the strain put on the station, the HoS explained that there was flexibility built into the system and support was received where needed. Those involved felt that the support, including the Employee Assistance Program, that was made available, was adequate. In addition, [redacted] mentioned that this assistance was offered not only after [redacted] but to [redacted]

[redacted] **SIRC found that CSIS HQ provided adequate support to [redacted]**

[redacted] **. In addition, SIRC found that [redacted] received timely operational support when required.<sup>38</sup>**

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<sup>37</sup> [redacted] Weekly Highlights 2015-01-09 to 2015-01-15

<sup>38</sup> This finding is based upon interviews at Station, briefing with the former HoS for [redacted], and [redacted] document review.



## 6 SECURITY AT STATION

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While physical security at the stations was good overall,

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<sup>39</sup> See CSIS's Investigation of Foreign Fighters (2015-09)

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## 7 CONCLUSION

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Overall, SIRC found that CSIS's presence at \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ 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 of operational value. 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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