



Left-to-right, RCMP Chief Superintendent Everett Summerfield, General Sher Karimi, Chief of the Afghan National Army General Staff, Philip MacKinnon, Acting Head of Mission at the Embassy of Canada in Kabul, and Brigadier-General Jean-Marc Lanthier from ISAF Headquarters, salute during the Remembrance Day ceremony, 2011, held at the Canadian Embassy in Kabul.

Past, Present, and Future: The Evolution of Canadian Foreign Intelligence in a Globalized World

by Michael Tierney

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Introduction

Canadian foreign intelligence has been a topic of debate among foreign policy and security scholars since the end of the Second World War.¹ Since 1945, the most contentious issue within this discussion has been whether Canada should establish a foreign intelligence agency which collects human intelligence (HUMINT) similar to the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), or the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS). To this point, Canada has not instituted such an agency, even though the idea received notoriety as recently

as 2006 when the Conservatives included a Canadian Foreign Intelligence Service (CFIS) in their election platform.² The second most controversial issue has taken root in the debate with respect to where a CFIS would most appropriately fit within Canada's existing security and intelligence community. Many scholars argue that a CFIS would most appropriately be housed within the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development (DFATD) as a standalone agency, with fewer stating that it could be a good idea to broaden the Canadian Security Intelligence Service's (CSIS) mandate to include a robust foreign HUMINT collecting responsibility.³

While the subject of Canadian foreign intelligence has faced periodic review, scholars maintain that the literature focusing upon foreign intelligence in Canada is fairly limited.⁴ In addition, Commander Ted Parkinson, an Intelligence Officer in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), has stressed the need for more knowledge, understanding, and engagement on the topic of intelligence in Canada.⁵ In this way the field is relatively open to scholarly discussion. The purpose of this article is to examine Canada's previous and current foreign intelligence capabilities, and to analyze how

Canadian foreign intelligence has changed and will continue to change in the future. In doing so, the article will add to the literature on Canadian foreign intelligence, supply an outline of Canada's foreign intelligence structure and capabilities, and provide an outlook for Canadian foreign intelligence moving forward.

The article is organized into three parts. First, the literature on Canadian foreign intelligence is briefly reviewed. Second, there is discussion of Canada's previous and existing foreign intelligence structure, capabilities, and operations. Finally, there is an assessment of how Canada's foreign intelligence capabilities have changed in the post-9/11 era, and an analysis of how they might change in the future.

Literature Review

The existing literature on Canadian foreign intelligence primarily discusses whether Canada needs an expanded foreign intelligence presence, particularly in the area of HUMINT collection. Proponents and opponents of a CFIS have been debating the merits and pitfalls of foreign intelligence since at least the end of the Second World War. While this debate has lasted for decades, the context in which it occurs has changed considerably as the security environment has changed from one defined by Cold War to one defined by terrorism and the globalization of security threats.

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Therefore, it is important to review the most recent literature on the subject in order to contextualize the current affairs of foreign intelligence in Canada.

In 2002, Martin Rudner, Emeritus Professor at Carleton University's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, argued that a CFIS was required to serve Canadian national interests as it would help advance Canada's geo-strategic, economic, military, scientific, technological, environmental and social policy goals.⁶ Additionally, he emphasized that Canada needed its own HUMINT because it would give the government a full range of intelligence in dealing with global threats.⁷ In this manner, Rudner not only supported the expansion of Canadian foreign intelligence, but also advocated that Canada develop HUMINT capabilities in order to deal with the globalization of security threats. In the immediate post-9/11 era, Rudner reasoned that Canada needed to improve its foreign intelligence abilities in order to adequately secure itself and its interests. And yet, Rudner only began to bring the debate about a CFIS into the post-9/11 period.

Richard James Kott and Jerome Mellon also argued in support of a CFIS in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks. According to both, Canada required its own foreign HUMINT for political, economic, and defence purposes, as well as for



Reuters RTRPTGT/Stringer

counter-terrorism efforts. Kott specifically argued that Canada did not have the appropriate means to monitor terrorist groups of significant interest to its national security.⁸ He was also fearful that Canadian sovereignty would deteriorate as Canada became more reliant upon the US for intelligence support, which would eventually lead to Canada becoming perceived as a security liability.⁹ In addition, he felt that a dedicated and professionalized service would more successfully gather information required to protect national security in comparison to existing intelligence arrangements.¹⁰ In this way, Kott contended that Canada did not have the foreign intelligence presence needed to protect Canadian security and interests. Mellon made similar arguments to Kott, but specifically noted that by developing foreign HUMINT Canada could more competitively negotiate trade deals, maximise limited CAF resources, more successfully monitor the proliferation of uranium and nuclear technology, and more effectively combat terrorism in order to protect itself and its allies.¹¹ Thus, Mellon claimed that a CFIS would be cost-effective and would increase Canada's international standing and national security. In this way, both Kott and

Mellon agreed with Rudner's analysis that Canada had a number of strategic reasons for implementing a HUMINT-based CFIS.

In 2006, Reid Morden, the former Director of CSIS (1988-1992) and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (1991-1994), contended that a CFIS would give Canada "a unique Canadian perspective on intelligence gathered by itself and by allies," and that a "CFIS would allow Canada to collect information based on its own priorities."¹² Therefore, an increased foreign intelligence presence would protect Canada's sovereignty and allow Canada to make decisions based solely in its national interest. Similarly, Ted Parkinson asserted that with a CFIS Canada would achieve greater independence in its foreign policymaking, pursue intelligence operations for its own ends, alleviate dependence on the biased intelligence of allied states, gain a useful bargaining chip when trading information with other countries, and improve overall governmental situational awareness in policymaking and international negotiations.¹³ In this way, proponents of a CFIS have given several reasons to support the expansion of Canadian foreign intelligence. Much of their reasoning is based upon improving the security, sovereignty, competitiveness, and international standing of Canada, and it aligns with the traditional thinking of other western countries. However, some scholars have argued against the establishment of a CFIS and their opinions have undoubtedly carried weight over the last half-century.

Yet, Canadian academic, historian, and former foreign service officer Daniel Livermore has criticized the idea of a CFIS arguing that the amount of information collected by such an agency would be small in comparison to the information Canada already has access to through open sources and diplomacy, or supplied by the intelligence services of allied states.¹⁴ Additionally, he has asserted that "although maintaining Canada's network of diplomatic missions is not cheap, the covert collection of intelligence tends to be considerably more expensive" and that Canadians should not "assume that [they] could even get useful new information with greater investments in intelligence machinery [because] certain information is inherently difficult to obtain."¹⁵ From Livermore's perspective, Canada already has sufficient arrangements in place to meet its intelligence needs. Furthermore, a CFIS would be financially expensive with little return on investment in the form of new intelligence. Thus, Livermore maintains that Canada should not expand its intelligence capabilities to include foreign HUMINT.

Paul Robinson has also questioned whether a CFIS would produce sufficient intelligence to give Canada a truly independent foreign policymaking tool.¹⁶ He has additionally noted that Canada's biggest concern is 'home-grown' terrorism, and not terrorist threats coming from overseas.¹⁷ Moreover, he has warned that "foreign espionage comes at a diplomatic cost and could result in illegal activity abroad."¹⁸ Therefore, Robinson contends that Canada does not need to worry about establishing a CFIS because it would more likely result in the loss of Canada's international reputation than increase its security and independence in foreign policymaking.



The Canadian Press/Ron Poling

Then-CSIS Director Reid Morden testifying in the House of Commons, October 1989.

Livermore's and Robinson's concerns have helped build a strong enough case against a CFIS over the last half-century that Canada has not established such an agency to date. However, proponents of a CFIS have rebutted these points in recent years.

For instance, Ted Parkinson and John Thompson have downplayed concerns with respect to the potential diplomatic costs of a CFIS. Parkinson maintains that any diplomatic costs can be overcome with time and good management.¹⁹ Thompson points out that several intelligence agencies do not even believe that Canada does not have its own foreign intelligence service.²⁰ Therefore, it would not hurt Canada's reputation if it decided to establish a CFIS. Furthermore, while Thompson acknowledges that Canada does have some ability to collect foreign intelligence through existing departments and agencies, he also opines that these institutions are limited in scope and are constrained by mandate and available resources.²¹ Thus, some concerns pertaining to a CFIS may be unwarranted, and he believes it is still in the country's best interest to establish a foreign HUMINT presence.

Scholars have also debated where a potential CFIS would most appropriately fit within Canada's existing security and intelligence community. While this debate is more limited compared to the debate about whether Canada needs a CFIS at all, there are generally two suggestions brought forward: 1) create an independent agency which is operationally housed in the Department of Foreign Affairs; and 2) expand the CSIS mandate to collect foreign HUMINT. The first option is typically more popular among scholars, but there are pros and cons to both.

Reid Morden supports either option, but notes that the blending of security and foreign intelligence into the CSIS mandate would be controversial since western countries have traditionally divided those responsibilities between two separate agencies.²² However, Morden acknowledges that recently there have been significant changes in the thinking regarding intelligence practices. In particular, new models of blended intelligence services are appearing in countries like New Zealand and the Netherlands, due to the overlap between security and foreign intelligence in an era of heightened concern about globalized terrorism.²³ In this manner, it is becoming normal for countries to combine responsibilities into one agency. As Canada already has a security intelligence service, it may be suitable to simply broaden its mandate.

Daniel Livermore argues against the expansion of the CSIS role. In his opinion, if Canada is going to expand its foreign HUMINT capabilities it should "...set up a Canadian foreign intelligence agency on an appropriate legislated basis, with its own budget and director, under the appropriate minister and as part of the appropriate department [DFATD]."²⁴ Moreover, Livermore asserts that the worst decision would be to broaden the CSIS mandate, because it would "...produce the least amount of useful information for the most cost and would create the greatest potential for embarrassment to Canada."²⁵ Therefore, while Livermore is opposed to the creation of a CFIS altogether, the best of the remaining options is that Canada establishes a CFIS within DFATD, rather than CSIS.

Similarly, Richard Kott expresses concern about a possible broadening of the CSIS role. He states that CSIS is known internationally as a security intelligence service, and if it were to gain an expanded foreign intelligence mandate, suspicions could arise with respect to the nature of CSIS' activities. Increased suspicion would then make it more difficult for CSIS to collect accurate intelligence abroad and could also negatively impact Canada's foreign standing.²⁶ Kott also argues that CSIS is bound by Canadian law, as it is predominantly a domestic security intelligence service. This constraint would make it difficult for CSIS to effectively operate overseas where information is gathered by "whatever means possible."²⁷ Furthermore, CSIS is required to work closely with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), so it must continue to gather intelligence in a legal manner in order to allow information acquired to be used in court.²⁸ Thus, Kott asserts like most of the scholarly community that a CFIS would best fit in the Department of Foreign Affairs, as it is the principal consumer of foreign intelligence.²⁹ However, there are options for the federal government to consider, along with the costs and benefits of each. While Canada has not instituted a CFIS to date, it does collect some foreign intelligence through existing departments and agencies.

Canada's Foreign Intelligence Structure

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Today, there are predominantly five organizations responsible for foreign intelligence in Canada. They are DFATD, the CAF and the Department of National Defence (DND), CSIS, the RCMP, and the Communications Security Establishment (CSE). Together, these institutions collect and assess a broad range of information, ranging from open sources (OSINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), and, to a limited extent, HUMINT, in order to inform policymaking, protect national security, conduct criminal investigations, and advance

Canadian military operations. Undoubtedly, Canada does not suffer from a total lack of foreign intelligence, which is why the debate about a CFIS has centred upon the establishment of a robust HUMINT collecting body. For this reason, it is important to examine the history and capabilities of the existing Canadian security and intelligence community before analyzing how Canadian foreign intelligence might change in the future.

John Thompson notes that while the Department of Foreign Affairs is not a foreign intelligence agency, it has "...a better claim to that role than many others."³⁰ Daniel Livermore agrees, stating that:

[Canadian] diplomats gather information from friendly interlocutors inside a variety of centres of power and influence abroad. In doing so, they do not simply duplicate open-source media reports. Rather, they specialize in interpreting a number of high priority themes based on privileged contacts with real decision-makers.³¹



The US destroyer *Barry* and a US patrol aircraft inspect the Russian freighter *Anosov* on 10 November 1962 about 780 miles northeast of Puerto Rico during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In this manner, Livermore points out that Canada's expansive diplomatic network collects highly sensitive intelligence, and then filters that information into the government's decision making process.³² Richard Kott explains that Foreign Affairs Canada had a Foreign Intelligence Bureau responsible for collecting, analyzing, and distributing information across Canada's security and intelligence community until 1993.³³ Afterwards, the Department established a Security and Intelligence Bureau, which "...supports policy and operational decisions and advises the Minister [of Foreign Affairs] on intelligence activities."³⁴ One case of DFATD's role in intelligence collection occurred during the early Cold War in Cuba. Don Munton, author of *The Cuban Missile Crisis: A Concise History*, writes that "...diplomats based at the Canadian embassy in Havana conducted espionage in Castro's Cuba during the 1960s and early 1970s."³⁵ During that time, Canadians collected information, both overtly and covertly, through OSINT and HUMINT operations.³⁶ Additionally, until 1972, Canada conducted intelligence operations in Cuba for the United States, since the Americans had broken diplomatic ties with Cuba in 1961.³⁷ American requests for Canadian foreign intelligence were especially heavy during the Cuban Missile Crisis in

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October 1962, and after 1963, "Canadian efforts moved even more into clandestine collection of the sort usually carried out by trained intelligence operatives, most notably on Soviet military and communications installations."³⁸ Thus, Canada is not a complete stranger to the world of foreign HUMINT collection. While it halted covert intelligence operations in Cuba in the early-1970s, DFATD continues to play one of the larger roles in collecting and assessing foreign intelligence in the Canadian security and intelligence community.

The DND and the CAF also play a prominent role in the collection and analysis of foreign intelligence, although they have a relatively narrow mandate to conduct operations abroad. Dwight Hamilton explains the importance of Canada's military to foreign intelligence operations during the Second World War and the Cold War. He notes that during the Second World War, the Canadian and British governments jointly established Camp X near Whitby, Ontario in order to train members of Britain's Special Operations Executive, which was a division of British Military Intelligence.³⁹ It also worked alongside the American Office of Strategic Services, which was the predecessor to the CIA.⁴⁰ After 1945, the Canadian Forces Intelligence Branch worked with

allies to share information during the Cold War as well.⁴¹ In this way, the DND/CAF have worked with the foreign intelligence agencies of allied states in order to maintain international relationships and foster information sharing between allies, which has enhanced Canada's access to foreign intelligence. As Martin Rudner affirms, "Canada's own efforts in the domain of foreign intelligence are significantly augmented by exchanges of intelligence with allies and partners under various international arrangements."⁴² Yet, the DND/CAF has a responsibility to independently collect intelligence as well. For instance, J2 is Canada's defence intelligence agency. While defence intelligence is used for military purposes, particularly during missions, J2 is responsible for providing the CAF with strategic, military and security intelligence.⁴³ Its activities include "...the provision of political, strategic and tactical intelligence to CAF commanders, the deployment of Intelligence, Geomatics and Imagery detachments for CAF operations, the dispatch of Intelligence Response Teams to support peacekeeping missions, and the provision of Counter-Intelligence force protection to operational missions."⁴⁴ Thus, the DND/CAF has a foreign intelligence mandate, even if it is limited to supporting military activities. Like DFATD, the DND/CAF has one of the longest standing mandates to collect intelligence for Canada. However, the most robust foreign intelligence agency in Canada is the SIGINT- collecting CSE, which is operationally housed in Defence.

UK/USA Security Agreement came into force between Britain, the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.⁴⁷ As Martin Rudner points out, the UK/USA agreement is a partnership mechanism between allies for SIGINT collection, processing, and sharing.⁴⁸ The CSE in particular was responsible for providing intelligence to the Government of Canada, UK/USA partners, and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) members about Soviet military capabilities during the Cold War.⁴⁹ The agency *used and still uses* a variety of methods to gather information, but Rudner highlights the fact that it utilizes Canadian foreign embassies to collect signals from host countries.⁵⁰ This detail illustrates that the CSE not only works closely with the DND, but also with DFATD to collect information abroad. While it does not have a HUMINT capability, it is Canada's foremost foreign intelligence agency, and it can work with DFATD, the DND/CAF, and allies to gather information which can be used by the Government of Canada in its decision making. It also works alongside Canada's other security and intelligence organizations to protect national security and to guide investigations, both at home and abroad.

The RCMP and CSIS have important roles in collecting foreign intelligence for Canada as well. Before the creation of CSIS in 1984, the RCMP had the independent responsibility for gathering security intelligence in Canada. As the Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus at York University and Adjunct Professor of Political Science at the University of Victoria Reg Whitaker notes, the RCMP worked closely with the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) during the Cold War and exchanged information with them on an 'as required' basis.⁵¹ In addition, RCMP officials participated in a counterintelligence alliance with the US, UK, Australia, and New Zealand in order to exchange intelligence and to discuss matters of mutual interest.⁵² They also actively used double-agents against the Soviets throughout the 1950s and 1960s.⁵³ The use of double-agents and allied information would have netted the RCMP some foreign intelligence during the Cold War. Since 1984, however, CSIS has retained the mandate



Keep out sign at the wartime entrance to Camp X.

The CSE is Canada's premier foreign intelligence agency, but it does not have a HUMINT function. Rather, the CSE has a mandate to collect SIGINT, which is offensive in nature, and to protect communications by the Government of Canada, which is defensive in nature.⁴⁵ As Philip Rosen notes, "the CSE has its roots in cryptographic and crypt analytical developments during World War II, especially focusing on intercepting and analyzing the communications of Germany, Vichy France, and Japan."⁴⁶ And yet, it really came to the fore of Canadian foreign intelligence at the beginning of the Cold War when the



Camp X main gate.

to collect security intelligence in Canada and partners with the RCMP as required. And yet, while its primary responsibility is to gather security intelligence in Canada, CSIS also has a more constrained secondary mandate to collect information about the capabilities, intentions, and activities of foreign states.⁵⁴ Even though it has a severely limited ability to operate abroad, CSIS has continually increased its covert foreign operations since its inception.⁵⁵ However, it is prohibited by law from collecting non-threat-related information, or from targeting foreign government agencies.⁵⁶ In this way, CSIS is not a robust foreign HUMINT collecting agency, even though it operates abroad on occasion to collect information pertaining to the immediate security of Canada. However, CSIS may be Canada's most apparent embodiment of the blending between security and foreign intelligence in recent years. As John Thompson notes, "CSIS does everything in its power to protect Canadian citizens at home and abroad. This is done to such an extent that even warnings of assassination threats for ordinary civilians working overseas are dispensed on an individual basis."⁵⁷ Moreover, CSIS is "...a

perpetually evolving organization adapting as necessary to changes in the global environment."⁵⁸ Thus, its role in foreign intelligence is likely to continue changing into the future.

The Evolution of Canadian Foreign Intelligence

The Canadian foreign intelligence community changed substantially after 2001. Specifically, Canadian intelligence agencies became more active overseas in the aftermath of 9/11.⁵⁹ Increased foreign activity is partially the result of increased funding from the Government of Canada. For example, CSIS and the CSE were given budget increases from 2001 onwards in order to improve their foreign intelligence collecting capabilities.⁶⁰ Additionally, the CSE was given the ability to "monitor communications to or from Canada specifically for the collection of foreign intelligence."⁶¹ Likewise, CSIS has been required to more frequently operate abroad since 2001. According to former CSIS Director Ward Elcock (1994-2004), "...working covertly abroad has become an integral part of the Service's operations."⁶² John

Thompson adds: "...as expertise has grown, CSIS' foreign operations have expanded to tasking human sources to travel abroad, recruit foreign sources, and meet them in third countries."⁶³ In this way, Canada has increased its foreign intelligence presence through existing agencies over the last decade. However, these agencies continue to operate with constraints placed upon their ability to collect foreign information. For instance, while CSIS can operate abroad for security intelligence purposes, it is only allowed to collect foreign intelligence with direction from the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister of National Defence. Otherwise, CSIS can only provide the government with "non-threat related information that is collected incidentally during CSIS operations."⁶⁴ The CSE has a much broader mandate to collect foreign intelligence, but it only does so through SIGINT. Nonetheless, these two agencies, alongside the rest of the intelligence community, have intensified their collaboration since 2001, especially in the realm of counterterrorism.⁶⁵ The intensification of these agencies' collaboration illustrates that Canada has placed a heightened importance upon intelligence in recent years. It also suggests that the government has compelled its intelligence agencies to work closely together in order to increase Canada's foreign intelligence capacity.



The Canadian Press/Tom Hanson

Then-CSIS Director Ward Elcock and RCMP Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli preparing to appear before the Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 18 October 2001.

Supreme Court of Canada Collection by Philippe Landreville



The Supreme Court of Canada at night as seen from the Ottawa River.

The war in Afghanistan has also played a significant role in changing the structure and capabilities of Canada's foreign intelligence community. For example, the DND created a new Human Intelligence Unit within the military in 2008 to gather intelligence relating to operations in Afghanistan.⁶⁶ In 2013, a CAF Intelligence Group was also created, which combined five separate intelligence units under a single command mandated to provide integrated intelligence to the DND/CAF.⁶⁷ Beyond that, CSIS has conducted operations in Afghanistan, and has worked alongside Canadian Special Operations when interviewing prison detainees in that country.⁶⁸ Thus, Canada has expanded its foreign intelligence presence in Afghanistan because it has substantial interests there. The 11 September 2001 attacks and the resulting Afghanistan conflict were key events which ultimately helped broaden Canada's foreign intelligence capabilities. However, there are constantly evolving limits placed upon the activities that Canadian intelligence agencies can conduct abroad.

In 2008, the Supreme Court of Canada made a ruling with regard to an overseas electronic surveillance operation that CSIS wanted to conduct on ten suspects, nine of which were Canadian.⁶⁹ The court ruled that CSIS could not carry out the mission because

“The war in Afghanistan has also played a significant role in changing the structure and capabilities of Canada's foreign intelligence community.”

“...while the language of the CSIS Act could be inferred as allowing the agency to operate abroad, the inference is not clear enough to support the issuing of the foreign surveillance warrants.”⁷⁰ Thus, CSIS faces new restrictions on its ability to operate overseas in the post-9/11 era as well. While it can gather information that is needed to combat direct threats to Canada, it still does not have a broad mandate, like the CIA or MI6, to engage in foreign intelligence

collection to protect the interests and security of Canada and its citizens around the world. Nonetheless, CSIS is still Canada's predominant HUMINT agency, and it has expanded its overseas presence as required in the globalized threat environment.

Former CSIS Director Richard Fadden testified to Parliament in 2010 about the CSIS role in Afghanistan. In his testimony, Fadden stressed that CSIS disrupted terrorists, safeguarded soldiers, and saved Canadian lives.⁷¹ International terrorism and Canada's participation in Afghanistan has forced CSIS to regularly

act overseas in order to protect the security of Canada and of Canadians. Moreover, since 2001, CSIS has linked security and foreign HUMINT together in what it refers to as ‘blended collection.’⁷² In this manner, globalization and the merging of security and foreign intelligence have made an impact upon the way that

CSIS operates. While CSIS is not a dedicated foreign intelligence agency, it now plays a significant role in gathering information abroad. Its role in such activities may continue to expand in the coming years. As Associate Professor of History at the University of Toronto and faculty member at the Munk School of Global Affairs Wesley K. Wark points out: “In the globalized world, what couldn’t be defined as a threat to the security of Canada?”⁷³

In its 2007-2008 Public Report, CSIS stated that it had approximately 50 Foreign Officers stationed overseas in 30 countries in order to “...provide screening support to Citizenship and Immigration posts abroad, liaise and maintain relations with international partners, and collect security intelligence linked to Canada and its interests.”⁷⁴ While the agency acknowledged that these officers were declared to host countries, it also reported that it “...sends Canadian-based officers abroad to engage in intelligence activity to fulfill requirements of the *CSIS Act*.”⁷⁵ In 2009, CSIS not only detailed that it had been working in Afghanistan alongside the CAF, but also stated that it was involved in resolving the kidnappings of Canadian citizens abroad.⁷⁶ In 2010, the Service reported that it had enhanced its capacity to collect information overseas, and that in addition to working in Afghanistan, it was working in the Pakistan region as well to support Canada’s mission there.⁷⁷ In 2011, CSIS claimed that even though the combat mission had ended in Afghanistan, it was going to continue operations there in order to protect Canadian security and interests.⁷⁸ While the exact nature of CSIS operations in the Middle East is unclear, the agency has undoubtedly become more active overseas since 2001. While it continues to be constrained by its mandate in the field of

foreign intelligence, it will likely continue to expand its presence abroad alongside intelligence community partners.

For instance, the RCMP has increasingly played a role, albeit limited, in Canada’s foreign intelligence activities. Through its International Operations Branch, the Mounties deploy Liaison Officers to countries around the world in order to facilitate criminal investigations which have Canadian connections and to exchange information with foreign law enforcement agencies.⁷⁹ It also houses an International Affairs and Policy Development Branch, which ensures that “...decision-making, policies and operations abroad are intelligence-led, coordinated and strategic in a rapidly changing world, and consistent with the RCMP strategic goal of ensuring a ‘safe and secure Canada’.”⁸⁰ While the RCMP is only allowed to operate in foreign countries with the approval of host governments, it nonetheless conducts criminal investigations and collects criminal intelligence in order to protect Canada and its interests. It also has a responsibility to maintain information exchange programs with foreign law enforcement agencies, and it helps assess intelligence gathered overseas for consumption by RCMP officials, intelligence community partners, and the Government of Canada. The Algeria Gas Plant case in 2013 highlighted the RCMP’s role abroad. Such a case could also play a factor in the expansion of Canadian foreign intelligence in the years to come.

In early 2013, 32 terrorists from al-Qaeda-linked groups in Africa seized control of a Statoil/British Petroleum gas plant in Algeria. Two of the terrorists who stormed the facility were Canadian citizens, and one was later identified as a leader of the



Associated Press 25700591593 by Tsuyoshi Matsumoto

Algerian soldiers stand guard at the In Amenas gas plant facility in eastern Algeria, 31 January 2013, as the Algerian government opened the site of the Algeria hostage crisis to the media for the first time since the deadly attack there by Islamist militants on 16 January.

group.⁸¹ After taking control of the plant, the terrorists “strapped foreigners to explosives and threatened to execute their captives and blow up the facility.”⁸² In the end, 29 terrorists and 40 gas plant workers were killed in the four-day ordeal.⁸³ In the aftermath of the attack, a team of RCMP officers was deployed to Algeria to investigate and confirm any Canadian involvement in the plot.⁸⁴ Such an example illustrates the role of the RCMP in Canadian foreign intelligence efforts. While it does not operate abroad in order to collect true foreign intelligence, it has a responsibility to investigate crimes committed by Canadians overseas. In doing so, it relays information back to Canadian officials, which can then be used for various purposes. The Algeria Gas Plant case may demonstrate a possible avenue for the expansion of Canadian foreign intelligence moving forward. This possibility is bolstered by the fact that the Algeria case is not the only recent event in which Canadians were involved in international terrorism or foreign conflicts.

In September 2013 it was reported that former ‘Toronto 18’ member Ali Mohamed Dirie had left prison and had subsequently left

Canada with a false passport in order to fight alongside extremists in Syria.⁸⁵ While in Syria, Dirie was killed.⁸⁶ Cases such as these may cause Canadian intelligence agencies to enhance their foreign operations in the years to come. Currently, the intelligence community acts with limited capacity overseas, and HUMINT efforts have mostly been restricted to operations in Afghanistan. However, Canadians have become involved in various conflicts with different groups abroad in the recent past. Thus, an agency like CSIS may adjust its foreign intelligence activities to include operations in other areas in order to gather information important for protecting Canadian security and interests. While the responsibilities of dedicated foreign intelligence agencies certainly go beyond international terrorism, such prevalent cases in the Canadian context may allow CSIS to begin conducting more HUMINT operations overseas. Such a development would seem like the next logical step for an agency and a community which has increasingly looked to expand its foreign intelligence capabilities in the years since 9/11.

Conclusion

While other western countries created foreign HUMINT agencies during or immediately following the Second World War, Canada never followed suit. It has instead relied upon several departments and agencies, as well as agreements with allied states, to collect foreign intelligence. To increase its access to the HUMINT gathered by allies, Canada places emphasis upon collecting SIGINT through the CSE. It also allows many of its intelligence gathering institutions to operate abroad in a limited fashion. While most information comes through open sources, signals, and criminal investigations, more sensitive intelligence is also gathered for defence and security intelligence purposes.

Since 9/11, Canada’s security and intelligence agencies have become more active overseas. In addition to the CSE increasing its SIGINT collecting capabilities, CSIS, the DND/CAF, and the RCMP have enhanced their foreign intelligence presence as well. The evolving nature of the international and domestic threat environment has precipitated such change. Key events such as the

9/11 attacks and the war in Afghanistan have served as platforms for CSIS and others to begin operating abroad on a more frequent basis. As foreign and security intelligence have become overlapped in a globalized world, CSIS has also begun collecting ‘blended intelligence’ in order to protect Canadian security and interests. Restructuring and updating the intelligence community has allowed Canada more access to foreign information. Collaboration and globalization are now important concepts in the Canadian intelligence community. Yet, the institutions still face strict constraints on their ability to operate overseas.

“While the intelligence community has increased Canada’s access to foreign intelligence, none of the members have a robust mandate to collect foreign HUMINT.”

While the intelligence community has increased Canada’s access to foreign intelligence, none the members have a robust mandate to collect foreign HUMINT. This lack of capability will likely continue until the federal government decides to institute a CFIS, or to give a broad foreign intelligence mandate to CSIS. Neither of those decisions appears to be ‘on the horizon.’ Nonetheless, CSIS will continue to operate abroad as required as it has increasingly done since 2001. Other departments and agencies will also operate

internationally to fulfill their mandates. Cases of Canadian connections to global terrorism may cause CSIS to begin conducting international missions on a broader scale. While terrorism is not the sole focus of a foreign intelligence service, such cases provide a logical next step for an agency and a community which has continually filled the Canadian foreign intelligence vacuum over the last half-century.



NOTES

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3. Reid Morden, “A Canadian Foreign Intelligence Service: A new necessity or an expensive frill?” Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute Paper Series (2006), pp. 5-6.
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12. Morden, p. 3.
13. Parkinson, 16-20.
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15. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
16. Robinson, pp. 709-710.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 708.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 713.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
22. Morden, p. 6.
23. *Ibid.*



Superintendent Joe McAllister of the RCMP looks out from a tower to survey the new Sarposh prison, 23 June 2008. He was part of a civilian police force in Kandahar, Afghanistan, supporting aid to the Afghan Police Force in the city.

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