



SECURITY INTELLIGENCE
REVIEW COMMITTEE

An Operational Audit of CSIS Activities

**Annual Report
1996 - 1997**

Canada

The Honourable Andy Scott, P.C., M.P.
Solicitor General of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

30 September 1997

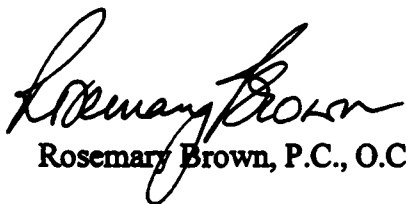
Dear Mr. Scott:

As required by section 53 of the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act*, we transmit to you the Annual Report of the Security Intelligence Review Committee for the fiscal year 1996-97, for your submission to Parliament.

Yours sincerely,



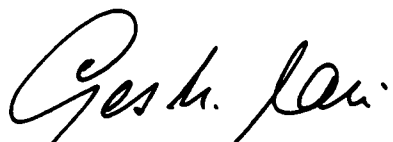
Paule Gauthier, P.C., O.C., Q.C.
Chair



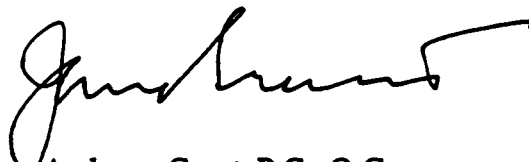
Rosemary Brown, P.C., O.C., O.B.C.



Edwin A. Goodman, P.C., O.C., Q.C.



George W. Vari, P.C., O.C., C.L.H.



James Andrews Grant, P.C., Q.C.

Introduction

This year's Annual Report is presented in a new format and its contents are organized so as to be accessible and readable. To reflect these changes and to more precisely describe the subject of the Report, the title now includes the phrase "An operational audit of CSIS activities." The revised Annual Report is but one of the initiatives undertaken by the Security Intelligence Review Committee in its continuing effort to meet a core strategic objective: to be the most trusted and widely used independent source of information about CSIS activities.

The Committee has set up a Web site¹ that includes its annual reports as well as a wealth of other information and relevant documents. A list of the Committee's classified reports is also available, and there are cross references to books, monographs, articles, and other Web sites that we believe would be worthwhile reading for those interested in security intelligence matters. The Web site, since its inception in October 1996, has already received over eighty-five thousand visits.

A third focus of the Committee's efforts is the ongoing professional working relationship with the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on National Security. The Chair and Members of the Review Committee will continue to make every effort to provide the Sub-Committee with the information it seeks, and to answer MP's questions as fully and forthrightly as

possible within the constraints of national security and without jeopardizing the safety of Canadians.

Finally, the Committee will place renewed emphasis on the practice of meeting academic experts and other well-informed individuals in every region of the country. Their views and assessments help guide Members' decisions when making judgements about complaints cases, Ministerial reports, or the appropriateness of particular CSIS activities. Clearly, the threat environment evolves and the circumstances of Canadians change; an action or policy appropriate at one time may no longer be acceptable. Only by staying in close touch with public and expert opinion can the Committee hope to make judgements that are consonant with prevailing standards.

The *CSIS Act*, though not flawless, established a governance structure for security intelligence matters that is being emulated in many other countries. Our senior officials are invited to describe Canada's system to the emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe, and foreign delegations visit Canada and the Committee for the same purpose. However, it sometimes seems that our accountability structure is less well-regarded here at home than it is abroad. The Committee hopes to change this perception by demonstrating to Canadians that it is fulfilling the role set out for it in the *CSIS Act* transparently and with considerable effectiveness. The Committee welcomes com-

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1. www.sirc-csars.gc.ca

ments on the format, utility, or any other aspect of its Annual Report or its Web site.

How SIRC's Annual Audit Report is Organized

Readers familiar with past SIRC annual reports will find all of the information presented in previous years. However, the material is presented in a new and, we believe, more functional format.

We have also attempted to make a clear differentiation between Committee comments, observations and recommendations bearing directly on our major task — reviewing CSIS and associated activities for a certain period of time — and the more general background material we are making available with the aim of assisting Canadians and other readers to understand the context in which security and intelligence work is carried on.

The latter category consists of shaded boxes set apart from the main text that address single topics the Committee believes will be of historical, background or technical interest to readers. Unlike the main body of the report, they do not reflect Committee opinion or conclusions as such and are intended to be strictly factual in nature.

In general, the report is organized to reflect the Committee's primary functions: first, to review CSIS intelligence activities, second, to investigate complaints about CSIS and associated matters, and third, to act in concert with other parts of the

governance system to protect Canada and Canadians from threats to security.

- **Section 1** presents the Committee's review and audit of what the Service does and how it does it. The subsections represent the different methods the Committee employs on an ongoing basis to make this assessment.
- **Section 2** deals with the Committee's role as a quasi-judicial tribunal with the power to investigate complaints of various kinds.
- **Section 3** brings together under a new heading — CSIS Accountability Structure — the Committee's review of the multiple administrative and legal mechanisms that hold the Service accountable to government, Parliament and the people of Canada.

The Review Committee will continue to make every effort to provide the Sub-Committee with the information it seeks