

Supply

individual rights and freedoms. The Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act defines the mandate of CSIS and gives it the necessary powers to fulfill it.

It provides a unique operational framework for CSIS. It defines the powers of the service and specifies its limits. These take the form of various control mechanisms: political controls, subject to ministerial accountability and responsibility; judicial controls and external controls by the Security Intelligence Review Committee, or SIRC.

The act also provides a mechanism allowing any person or group of persons to complain about any aspect of CSIS activities. Furthermore, the Security Offences Act, which was passed at the same time as the CSIS Act, confirms the RCMP's responsibility concerning security offences, as well as its responsibility in preventing such offences.

These two acts provide a legislative framework flexible enough to adapt efficiently to the circumstances of each case. Furthermore it should be emphasized that the political and judicial structure of these two acts is unique in the world. The government used policy directives to guide their interpretation and implementation.

The main stakeholders in the Canadian security intelligence system made sure that the legislation was practical and efficient. The service has developed and follows a strict and satisfactory investigation procedure. Since 1984, the Inspector General and the Security Intelligence Review Committee have played their role in an orderly and strict manner.

The Solicitor General relies a great deal on their work, especially on the reports of the Inspector General that enable him to make sure that the service is conforming to legislation and following departmental directives on orientations. The review committee's annual report that the Solicitor General tables in Parliament completes the annual cycle of public accountability.

Finally, the RCMP and CSIS have established measures and developed mechanisms for co-operation. This is how the legislation works today. Solid legislation, detailed government instructions and an efficient internal administration are the elements which allow the service to fulfil the mandate it received from Parliament ten years ago.

The government does not stop there. I wish to remind everyone that this government is constantly trying to find means to improve the quality of the service. As the minister responsible for CSIS the Solicitor General must make sure that in its daily operations the service maintains a fair balance between national security requirements and the rights and freedoms of Canadians. The minister does that by using his authority to approve and to

give directions and also by relying on the reports of the Inspector General and the review committee.

Therefore, his task is to exercise a ministerial control. He answers for the CSIS to cabinet and to Parliament. Two main processes allow the minister to fulfil that responsibility. The first one is his approval or concurring authority.

● (1205)

In keeping with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, the Solicitor General must personally approve all investigation warrant requests, all agreements concluded between CSIS and other organizations, departments, provinces and foreign countries, and all requests for data collection in Canada by CSIS on behalf of foreign countries.

Now, let us examine the other act, passed in 1994, the Security Offences Act. This act confirms the RCMP's overriding responsibility in investigating certain security offences. Intelligence gathering, protection and enforcement are the three pillars of our security system.

The RCMP and CSIS have complementary functions. Each service assumes a distinct role within the wider framework of our national security system. CSIS is responsible for gathering intelligence concerning threats to security and giving warning about such threats. The RCMP is responsible for investigating into offences, either planned or committed and, above all, for crime prevention.

In order to facilitate CSIS's task, the CSIS Act contains detailed definitions of possible threats to the security of Canada.

This enables CSIS to rapidly adapt to circumstances in our constantly evolving world and to ensuing threats, as was Parliament's wish ten years ago. For example, the CSIS Act has allowed this organization to adapt to political and economic upheavals in the world during the last ten years.

Although areas of concern are not the same, we can still feel very strongly that hostile intelligence services threaten our national security. In matters of terrorism, new threats to the security of Canada have evolved as a consequence of foreign conflicts being unfortunately introduced into Canada. Terrorism is a scourge that spares no nation on Earth. Unfortunately it does not seem to be receding, quite the contrary.

Ever since its creation in 1984, CSIS has been able to evolve considerably thanks to the flexibility provided by the act and to ministerial directives. The act continues to give us the necessary means to face any subversive action. Naturally, because of its very nature, a security intelligence service must remain secret. This is particularly necessary in some cases, when the right of someone to privacy is to be protected.