

CHAPTER TWO

Mandates of the Service

2.1 In General

The Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) is a civilian agency controlled and managed by its Director under the direction of the Solicitor General. The Service does not have law enforcement powers and, as an intelligence agency, is not authorized to engage in offensive or “countering” activities. This means that its employees do not have the powers of peace officers to collect criminal evidence or effect arrests and that its activities are largely defensive in nature. CSIS has both a primary mandate and several secondary mandates.

2.2 Primary Mandate

The Service’s primary mandate is established by section 12 of the *CSIS Act*. It is required to collect, by investigation or otherwise, to the extent that is strictly necessary, and to analyze and retain, information and intelligence about activities that are on reasonable grounds suspected of constituting a threat to the security of Canada. The Service reports to and advises the Government of Canada on these activities.

Section 12 of the *CSIS Act* must be read in conjunction with the section 2 definition of “threats to the security of Canada”. Threats to the security of Canada are defined as espionage or sabotage, foreign-influenced activities, terrorism and subversion. Under this definition, lawful advocacy, protest and dissent are not in and of themselves to be considered threats to the security of Canada unless carried on in conjunction with one of the elements of the definition. The combination of section 12 and the definition of threats to the security of Canada sets out the Service’s security intelligence mandate.

2.3 Secondary Mandates

The Service has three secondary mandates. They are set out in sections 13, 14 and 16 of the Act.

Under section 13 of the *CSIS Act*, CSIS provides security assessments to departments and agencies of the government of Canada, which in turn make their own security clearance decisions in relation to employees and contractors under the Government Security Policy. With the Solicitor General’s approval, CSIS may enter into arrangements with provincial governments, provincial government departments or police