

*Routine Proceedings*

International competition for advanced technology, including weapons technology, continues unabated.

[*Translation*]

In brief, Canadians are right to judge the future to be more promising than the past.

[*English*]

While we hope for a brighter future, we have to take precautions against current and potential threats.

Our origins, our diverse population, and our national interest mean that we will continue to have important links with the world beyond our shores. In light of those changes that are taking place in the world, I have asked the director of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service to prepare and submit to me an assessment of how the evolving security environment might affect the service's mandate over time.

The review will consider future security intelligence needs, examine how the service ought to be structured to meet those needs, and determine the resource implications of any measures that might be recommended.

I have instructed the director to be mindful of budget realities and the government's commitment to improving the efficiency of government operations. Canadians can be reassured that public safety will be the government's highest priority in the national security sector. We will continue to place a high priority on protecting democratic rights, freedoms and institutions; ensuring economic security; promoting international peace and security; and safeguarding those human intellectual and physical assets that the government manages in trust for the people of Canada. These priorities are long-standing.

[*Translation*]

The service's primary mandate is to investigate suspected threats to the security of Canada. These can take many forms, including espionage, terrorism and attempts by foreign governments to exert clandestine influence in Canada against Canadian interests.

[*English*]

The service also has a mandate to provide security assessments to departments and to provide security advice on applications for immigration and citizenship.

Last August an attempted coup in Moscow offered a pointed reminder of the fragility of democracy in Russia and eastern Europe and of the need to remain vigilant. Until the situation clarifies, we will be faced with many questions.

Will the former servants of Soviet imperialism be content to fade into obscurity? How will the new governments in the region use the offensive intelligence services that they have inherited? Will they restrict themselves to open sources, or will they engage in espionage? Will they target only neighbouring countries or more distant states such as Canada? Will governments that have inherited economies which have been devastated by decades of mismanagement use their intelligence sources to acquire other scientific and technical data?

In the meantime we know that governments elsewhere have continued to mount offensive intelligent collection efforts against us. High-tech industries, especially nuclear technology, appear to have been attractive targets. The proliferation of sophisticated weapons and delivery systems is a global concern. When the arsenals of dictators include chemical, bacteriological and perhaps even nuclear weapons, we cannot be complacent.

Clearly we will need a capacity to defend ourselves against foreign intelligence services as long as people are prepared to use deceit and deception to their advantage.

The political and economic discontent found in so many parts of the world has also had consequences for us which warrant close attention.

[*Translation*]

One such consequence has been terrorism.

[*English*]

Last year after a period of decline there was a resurgence of international terrorism, prompted in part by events in the Persian Gulf. Fortunately Canada has never been a target for terrorism the way some European states have been, but neither have we been immune.