

the HERALD Outlook

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On the spy scene here in Canada

Report
from Ottawa

By RENEE MacKENZIE

OTTAWA - The federal government has been told it should create another agency to slake its constant thirst for knowledge culled from the shadowy world of spies and secret agents.

In its annual report to Parliament, the watchdog group that monitors the country's civilian spy agency says it has uncovered a gap in the services rendered by the government's numerous intelligence bureaus.

The government is not getting all the basic intelligence-in-depth information on other countries and subjects—that it requires, the Security and Intelligence Review Committee says in its report.

The committee's review of the activities of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service found that the service's analysts are concentrating on intelligence that alerts government to potential emergencies and specific issues.

"A steady stream of current intelligence reports can result in security intelligence being dealt with as a series of 'flaps' rather than as an ongoing, long-term process," the committee says.

The problem appears to be a general lack of experience in the analysis branch of CSIS. About half the analysts are newcomers "cutting their teeth on short-term, current intelligence projects."

The service, however, is not to blame for any failure to deliver adequate levels of information to the decision-makers.

"It's a common criticism in the security intelligence field throughout the western world that governments do not give their intelligence agencies clear enough direction, and this appears to be true in Canada," the report concludes.

To fill the intelligence gap, the committee has proposed an agency be established along the lines of Australia's Office of National Assessments. The committee discovered the ONA on a recent trip to Australia to study the intelligence community there and compare its operations to those in Canada.

The ONA, it found, operates outside the Australian Security Intelligence Organization, assessing information acquired from ASIO and a variety of other sources. In its report, the committee describes the ONA as the "institutional critic of the quality and quantity" of all intelligence data.

The committee notes that the CSIS analysis branch has been improving its operations but suggests at several points in the report that it is hobbled by personnel policies and operating practices. It bluntly recommends that if an adequate assessment group does not fit within the service, "the government could consider creating one elsewhere."

SIRC chairman Ron Atkey says his committee is not convinced the service is the body to conduct this type of extensive analysis, but CSIS Director Reid Morden disagrees. He claims the intelligence analysis function is a legitimate part of CSIS operations. Morden adds that his service is improving in the area of strategic, long range and trend analysis.

NOT EVERYTHING

But Morden won't tell Atkey all that goes on, and Atkey can't tell everyone all that SIRC has discovered going on. And it's possible that within the extensive, intricate intelligence network knitted by successive governments that someone is already doing the job proposed by the Atkey group.

Before becoming CSIS director, Morden held a senior post in the Privy Council Office, the government's central policy-making secretariat and the highest authority for the dozen or more intelligence services operating within government departments.

Sooner or later, all intelligence data and matter finds its way through the system to one of several security and intelligence committees at the PCO, through an intelligence co-ordinator and, eventually, to the cabinet committed on security intelligence chaired by the prime minister.

But in the murky world of intelligence-gatherers, there is no handy directory. CSIS and the RCMP are the only services that operate under public scrutiny. Others, identified in the SIRC's and other reports, operate in partial or total secrecy, their budgets often camouflaged or fragmented in the government's annual spending documents and their presence not always admitted.

Canadians have been allowed brief glimpses of that world through reports of blunders or oversights, inquiries and special studies. And the images of the intelligence community have never been flattering.

The network has been undergoing a major restructuring over the last several years, with the PCO drawing together a number of existing services and setting up new lines of communication.

If a new service of the type proposed by Atkey's group is not already in place, it is very likely to be on the PCO agenda. And in spite of any intentions the CSIS director may have of expanding the role of his own analysis branch, it's unlikely the PCO would want a new intelligence operation subject to the scrutiny of a public watchdog like SIRC.

Through the interdepartmental committee structure that it now commands, the PCO has access to volumes of data collected by Canadians and foreign intelligence services and channelled into it through its own people. Elaborate charts of the intelligence and security network suggest that the PCO exercises great control without the burden of an oversight or review committee.

Two's a Crowd

By BILL BUTTLE



"The boss has finally realized you need some help . . . you're getting a second 'in' tray!"

Head off the tragedy

Your
Business
Diane Maley
Thomson News Service

Victims of free trade. The words have a tragic sound, calling for immediate action to relieve the suffering. People who lose their jobs to free trade need special help, it seems. But how will we know who these people are? And why should they get more help than any other person who has been laid off?

These are sensitive questions. Politicians are responding by saying all those who lose their jobs are being helped by existing programs. Business leaders, not known for their sensitivity, are responding by taking the offensive, calling for big cuts in unemployment insurance spending.

Some business people want the burden of unemployment to be shifted to the unemployed; others are calling for unemployment insurance money to be spent on job retraining instead. "If a person loses a job today, why not start retraining tomorrow?" asks Thomas d'Aquino, director of the Business Council on National Issues.

That's a good question. In the past, job retraining has been a forgotten field - ineffective, inefficient and under-funded. Governments spent billions of dollars training people in areas where their skills were not needed or were not what employers wanted. Meanwhile, we have to import specialists such as air traffic controllers from the United States.

CAN WE TALK?

The immediate problem is to find some reasonable way to discuss something as emotionally charged as entitlements. The experience of the recent federal election leaves little reason to be hopeful in that respect. Attempts to channel money away from universal entitlement programs to areas where it is most needed tend to be greeted with howls of protest. Mind you, a recent Gallup poll

turned up some interesting results, although they were not widely reported by the media. Seventy-eight per cent of Canadians favor raising family allowance payments and giving them only to families in need, the poll shows. Sixty-seven per cent would raise old age pensions and give them only to those who need them.

In short, a majority of Canadians would put an end to universal entitlements. Yet when Finance Minister Michael Wilson tried to do something similar a few years back he was met with fierce opposition.

As it stands, Canada spends about \$12 billion a year on "labor adjustment programs," \$10 billion of it on jobless benefits. This money could be put to better use, business groups say. Proportionally most countries spend about half of their labor-related budget on job retraining; Canada spends only 15 per cent, a recent report by the Economic Council of Canada shows.

True, the council could be dismissed as just another business group, promoting the needs of business over those of workers. But do people really prefer to collect pogy rather than to develop new skills?

The clamor over the free trade agreement is helping to focus the government's attention on the whole problem of job retraining. No one will know for sure whether people are being laid off because of the free trade deal or whether they would have been laid off anyway. But with luck the increased pressure on government will result in more help - and better training - for everyone who needs it.

As the drama unfolds, business and government must bear in mind that older workers will need the most help. Too often, when the sun sets on a dying industry, the people it once employed are forced to fall back on social welfare for the rest of their lives. This is the real tragedy of economic adjustment; the tragedy of people whose skills are no longer needed, of people who are no longer needed.

Business and government should take care not to throw away older workers like so much obsolete machinery.

Ugly spectre



Staff
Comment

Brian MacLeod

One has to wonder what the world will be like in 50 years now that the Americans and the Russians aren't fighting with each other anymore.

One has to wonder if the Americans and Soviets will find new enemies, or just dig up old ones.

The plain fact is the US and the Soviet Union haven't been "enemies" since the death of former Soviet Leader Leonid Brezhnev in 1982.

We're all revelling in this new period of Glasnost, yet it's really just a formal name for something that's been happening for a long time. Let's face it, the Russians had no desire to tangle with the Americans and vice versa. Neither country would have wanted to lay their future or political leadership on the line by engaging in warfare - conventional or otherwise - with the other. Neither wanted to be forced into a losing situation with the other. A nuclear response, I believe, to a lost conventional warfare tangle in some exotic land, would never have been considered. The losing country would have just taken their lumps.

Both countries have this huge military industrial complex. To have it lay idle, hurts their pride and their pocketbooks.

So in the past decade, we find the Russians have managed to occupy themselves in Afghanistan, and the US has had much more time to practise on such formidable opponents as Grenada and Libya.

Yes, Libya. The country led by the world's "madman" Moammar Khadafy is now the real enemy in the eyes of the American people. It's true, Khadafy is someone who needs to be put in his place. An advocate of terrorism, Khadafy is obviously someone leading a country badly in need of a military coup. But he's only managed to steal the spotlight since the Americans and the Soviets decided they really weren't going to shoot each other, for whatever reason.

Khadafy isn't someone to lament too long over the potential loss of two fighter pilots (apparently, they parachuted out safely) by the actions of the two US F-14 fighters on Wednesday. He probably sees it as a chance to get into the action again. After all, he's really been out of commission since the US bombed Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986.

But it's confrontations with smaller nations, I think, that should worry us more than a manufactured cold war with the Soviets. Two nations (the US and the Soviets) can stare each other down until they're blue in the face but never engage in war. But those smaller countries - countries who don't have a bureaucracy able to pull in the reins on their egotistical leaders - are willing to tangle with the big guys.

What happens if those smaller countries, Libya, Iraq, Iran, Syria and the like, get a hold of a nuclear bomb?

Lateral proliferation of nuclear power has always been a problem, but never has it had the potential of doing so much damage. The spectre of the joke that the US "turn Iran into a big parking lot" common during the hostage taking incident in 1980, suddenly becomes quite ugly when it may actually have a place in reality.